

Mediation office ready to intercede in student disputes

By Sarah Kitchen
Of the Emerald

The Office of Mediation, which was proposed by a University graduate student last term, is now open to handle student disputes.

The office, co-sponsored by the ASUO Executive Committee and the University, will operate for a six-month trial period. Sheila Hale, a student in the Interdisciplinary Specialized Individualized Program, presented the idea to the ASUO in October. Hale had studied

and worked with mediation while working on her master's thesis.

Mediation is a problem-solving process in which a neutral third party facilitates resolution between conflicting parties, Hale said.

The mediation office is able to handle student-to-student disputes such as roommate disagreements and disputes between co-workers or neighbors. It also can handle student-faculty disputes. In such a case,

the mediation office may be used as a first step before a formal grievance is filed.

Hale hopes to attract students through two methods. One is self-referral, and the other is by making presentations to programs and academic departments.

"When a student calls or goes into the Office of Student Advocacy they are asked for the nature of their concern and whether or not it involves another student. If it involves another student, they cannot be helped and will be told about our office," Hale said.

A committee, to be appointed by both the ASUO and the University, will work with Hale on further developing the office. The committee is to consist of three students and two members of the administration, said ASUO President Steve

Nelson.

Hale hopes the committee will give her more ideas that will help increase the options available for the office, she said.

"The ideas that come up within the committee will have the backing, the knowledge and the support of at least those people in the committee. For example: If we have a faculty member on the committee who could see that mediation would be very useful at the lowest level of the grievance procedure for academic issues, then that faculty member may be just the spark to make the program grow in that direction," Hale said.

In the future, Hale said she would like to see conflict-resolution training so that people can learn to use those skills in their daily lives. This could be narrow, that is, focused on a certain population, or wide and

offered for academic credit, she said.

"One of my goals is to help people to learn collaborative problem solving," Hale said. "No change can take place without conflict, and it can be either productive or unproductive, and learning how to make conflict productive would be a great contribution to make to a person's future."

The role of the committee is to work directly with Hale on the pilot program in the hope of developing the program into a regular academic office, Nelson said.

The mediation office is to be reviewed during spring term when the decision will be made whether it should be fully funded by both the University and the ASUO.

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While busy serving crowds of students in the registration process Friday, employees at Oregon Hall were asked to be on the lookout for anything appearing or sounding strange, sources said.

"We were told to search around our area and look for anything suspicious, and then report it immediately," said Vicki Wanner, management assistant to Business Affairs Director William McLaughlin, whose office is located in Oregon Hall.

"I personally would have felt

more secure having a person here who is trained to search for this sort of thing, but evidently they thought we were qualified," she said.

Police later conducted thorough searches for explosives in all three buildings, Glenn said.

In the 11-and-a-half years Wanner has worked at Oregon Hall, this is the first time she and her co-workers have been asked to look for a bomb, she said.

"I figured it was my job to look," said Eva Abbott, an ad-

ministrative assistant in the business affairs office in Oregon Hall. "If I had been afraid I would have left. But I didn't feel very apprehensive at all."

About six bomb threats have been received on campus since fall term began, Glenn said, "no more than the usual amount."

"Over a period of 16 years you learn a lot of these threats come for certain buildings during certain times of the year, like during finals week when a student doesn't want to take a test," he said. "It gets to be so routine after a while."

Testing Continued from Page 1

Specifically:

•Would the delivery of and disclosure of the Athletic Department's policy and drug-testing protocol prior to a student athlete's consent to participate in the testing serve as a valid waiver of a student's

rights under the U.S. Constitution, 14th and Fourth amendments, and under the Oregon Constitution, Article I, Section Nine when consent is given before the first practice and first test.

•Would informed consent ob-

tained prior to the recruited athlete's signing an NCAA Letter of Intent serve as a valid waiver for athletes' same constitutional rights when consent is given before the first practice and first test.

•Would the same procedure for both recruited and non-recruited student athletes be modified to call for mandatory analysis of the urine sample only for performance-enhancing drugs (and eliminate the mandatory testing of marijuana) serve as a valid waiver for athletes' same constitutional rights.

•Would implementation of the consent-to program in accordance with the policy and protocol satisfy procedural due process requirements under the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment and under the Oregon Constitution, Article I, Section 10.

•Is there a right or a privilege to compete in intercollegiate athletics at an OSSHE institution without agreeing to follow procedures and qualifications required of all team members.

•Is the denial, suspension or termination of the ability to play/practice for failure to abide by disclosed and consented-to procedures, behaving contrary or acquiring a condition out of compliance from previously disclosed coaching rules or qualifications a denial or revocation of a right or privilege.

•Should the University engage in rulemaking under the Oregon APA when it wishes to implement a program of mandatory, sometimes randomized, drug testing only for intercollegiate athletes.

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