

State employee union starts to bargain for pay equity

By Shawn Wirtz
Of the Emerald

The Oregon Public Employees Union will announce its bargaining proposals today, and union officials are confident the most controversial ticket item, pay equity, will have a good reception with the governor, said Bentley Gilbert, OPEU spokesman.

Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's budget proposal to set aside \$10 million to fund pay equity raises has created the optimism, Gilbert said. "I really don't want to say it's enough," Gilbert said, "but it is a start to change those jobs so they are

more in tune with the skills." "Personally, I think it's a good step in the right direction," said Lisa Sieracki, University library employee and president of the OPEU Local 085.

"We're very pleased that Goldschmidt supports pay equity and put it in his budget," she said. Even so, "it needs to be more. It's not going to solve it," she added.

The salary increase would benefit both men and women whose pay is less than that of other employees whose jobs require comparable skill and

responsibility, but the proposal would primarily affect women.

Opponents have contended that the implementation of pay equity would require some workers to take a wage cut, but Sieracki disagreed. "The union position is that nobody's salary is going to be cut or frozen," Sieracki said.

While Gilbert expects Goldschmidt to drive a hard bargain, "One of the satisfactions we have with Gov. Goldschmidt is that we have a strong belief that he has a better understanding of collective bargaining," Gilbert said.

Former Gov. Vic Atiyeh vetoed a pay equity bill in the last session. "There was a lot of games, and I think there will be less of that," Gilbert said.

The current OPEU contract expires June 30. OPEU Executive Director Alice Dale will be the union's chief negotiator. OPEU represents 15,834 state employees in 45 state agencies.

Dale and OPEU President Kei Quitevis-Smith also will present proposals concerning pay, health and dental insurance, working conditions and union rights.



Lisa Sieracki

Student building fee proposed by higher education board

By Chris Norred
Of the Emerald

SALEM — A bill proposing to increase the building fee that students must pay each term was introduced in the Oregon House of Representatives Thursday.

House Bill 2095, sponsored by the State Board of Higher Education, would raise the building fee from \$12.50 to \$15 per term for each student at the eight colleges and universities in the State System of Higher Education next year.

The student building fee is collected each term as part of students' general fees and is used to cover the cost of debts owed on bonds that were used to finance campus building construction.

The State Board is proposing to increase the fee because of a predicted increase in debt that may arise from building projects included in the State Board's six-year capital construction plan.

"Based upon the most recent enrollment projections and the capital construction program approved for the 1987-1989 biennium, it is predicted that by the end of fiscal year 1992-93, building fee reserves will fall below the requirements established by Board Internal Management Directives," according to a State System staff report.

"An increase of \$2.50 per term effective in 1987-88 would provide adequate funds to keep the reserves at the required level. If this rather

modest increase is not made in 1987-88, a much larger one will be required at a later date," the report said.

The student building fee has not been increased since 1975, when it was raised from \$10 per term to the present \$12.50.

The State Board authorized the bill last June, at which time Vice Chancellor Bill Lemman explained that if the Board's ambitious capital construction plan, which contains a number of projects to be financed with the student building fee, is approved by the Legislature in both of the succeeding two sessions, a large student building fee increase would be required.

Also in the Capital on Thursday, Senate President John Kitzhaber and House Speaker Vera Katz announced their appointments of members to Joint Ways and Means subcommittees.

The education subcommittee will be led by Chairman Tom Mason, D-Portland, an attorney and part-time instructor at Portland State University. Mason said there is a possibility the education subcommittee will hold hearings at each of the State System's major universities.

Also on the education subcommittee are Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-West Linn; Rep. Tony Van Vliet, R-Corvallis; Sen. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene; Sen. Lenn Hannon, R-Ashland; and Sen. Frank Roberts, D-Portland.

Goldschmidt

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Goldschmidt's proposed level of funding for basic school support may cause the fight that will end the honeymoon period between Goldschmidt and legislators, but "I would expect we'll continue to have excellent communications," said Senate President John Kitzhaber, who also attended the gathering.

Nonetheless, Goldschmidt is hopeful that the Legislature can come up with "something that

is passable and at the earliest possible time," he said. Goldschmidt will support whatever the Legislature comes up with, he said.

"It really is my job to pass it," he said. "That's our mission."

The Republican caucus is willing to work closely with Goldschmidt on his legislative priorities, said Sen. Minority Leader Tony Meeker. "We view things in a different light now

that we're a true minority," Meeker said.

Meeker praised Goldschmidt for getting his budget out in "record time" and said, "By and large, the communications have been better than usual."

In response to questions, House Speaker Vera Katz said, "The House Democrats never take a caucus position on issues."

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