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Gender roles explored at upcoming conference

By Mary Courtis
 Of the Emerald

Investigating the ways children think about gender and social roles will be the subject of the keynote address at a state conference on women and women's studies to be held at the University Saturday.

Sandra Bem, a Cornell University professor and prominent researcher, will deliver the address to some 100 faculty members. She is well known in the social science field for her work on androgyny, or the study of the combination of male and female personality traits in individuals.

This interest led to her present concern of how children develop gender concepts and why they place so much importance in them, Bem said.

"My approach questions why is it and how is it that little girls and little boys are turned into psychologically male and female people," she said. "I believe that people look at the world through 'gender lenses.'

"In other words, what we see is gender colored," Bem said. "We ask, what sex is this thing? What am I? If the thing's sex and the person's match, then they are likely to check it out. But if something, such as a particular behavior, does not match up with our sex, then we are less likely to explore it," she said.

Why this process occurs is

also an important focus for Bem.

"My view says that children pay so much attention to gender not because it is natural to them, but because our culture communicates that it is a very important quality."

Rethinking how children think about gender can also have important implications, especially in terms of psychological theory and traditional concepts of male and female.

"Sex doesn't necessarily have to be so important or entail so many other implications as it does in our culture," she said. "Adults, like children, look at themselves through gender lenses. We need to take these lenses off to start looking at ourselves and others in a new

way."

Bem also believes that the concept of gender lenses can be used to explain other psychosexual phenomenon, such as transsexualism.

"Transsexuals are people who are saying that, 'I am one sex psychologically, and my body is another sex,'" she said. "Transsexuals are extra heavy wearers of gender lenses, just like ultra-masculine men and feminine women. If culture didn't consider that sex and gender were so important, there might be fewer transsexuals," she said.

The current trend toward more flexible gender identities and roles in our society can be

Turn to Gender, Page 9

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IFC grants requests of student groups

At Thursday's Incidental Fee Committee meeting, the Peace Week steering committee was granted their request, as was the

Oregon Daily Emerald and the ASUO Executive.

The Peace Week steering committee, which is sponsored by the ASUO and various other University and community organizations, requested \$2,000 to be used toward paying a \$3,500 speaker fee for Perez Esquivel, the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner; a \$3,000 speaker fee for Betty Williams, a 1977 Nobel Peace Prize winner; and a \$1,500 speaker fee for Linus Pauling, a 1954 Nobel Prize winner.

Peace week will be held the week of April 6-10 on campus.

The IFC passed the request 6-1, with Ron Munion voting against it.

The Emerald requested that it be put on the ballot during spring term elections. The Emerald will request an increase from \$1.99 per student per term to \$2.25 during the spring term ASUO elections.

IFC member Bob Baldwin

said he was worried that not enough information regarding the request would be gathered if the Emerald requested funding through the ballot.

Michelle Brence, Emerald editor, assured the IFC that she and other staff members will be available to talk to students about the budget request.

The IFC passed the request 5-2, with Baldwin and Jodie Mooney voting against the proposal.

The ASUO requested to return \$9,000 it was granted by the IFC last year to be used for audio-visual equipment.

Originally, the money was intended to be used to purchase equipment the ASUO could either lease or give to ASUO programs as a money-saving device. However, after the plan was researched, it was determined by the ASUO that the idea would not save money because of replacement costs of the equipment and its parts.

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