

Student Senate attacks past apathy with intelligent use of committees

By Carolyn Lamberson
Of the Emerald

In recent years, the Student Senate has had a problem keeping positions filled, said current Chairman Randy MacDonald.

"Historically, there has been an understaffing of the Student Senate," he said, pointing out that the senate was originally the sole student governing body and the senate chairman was the student body president. The executive branch was created out of a desire by the president to do various projects that would require a more administrative branch, he said.

Then in the mid-70's, students voted the senate out of existence.

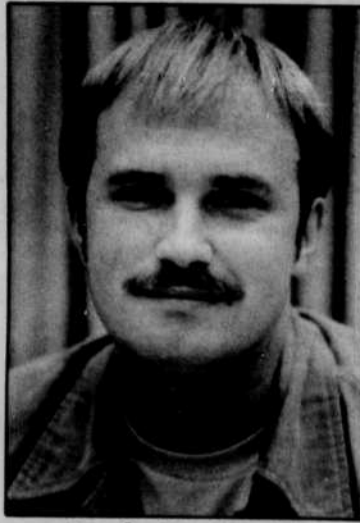
"Just in recent years, it got re-established basically to represent students on the University Senate, and that still is one of the most important functions of the Student Senate," MacDonald said.

MacDonald sees the past vacancy problems as stemming from general apathy and a lack of awareness of the role of the senate on the part of both the student body and the senate itself.

"I don't really blame the senators from past years because there wasn't that much the student senate did," he said. "And we're still fighting that."

Former student Senator Roscoe Caron agrees with MacDonald on that point.

"Historically, there has been



Randy MacDonald

a minimum of active students on the senate. There were always a lot of resume-line filler-uppers though," Caron said. "And then those on the senate were faced with having to be realistic about exactly what the Student Senate could accomplish."

MacDonald attributes the lack of awareness and apathy towards the Student Senate to the fact that the senate has one of the more vague roles in student government.

"The Student Senate is the least-understood branch of student government because we don't deal with hands-on programs like the ASUO, we don't deal hands-on with the budget like the IFC does, and we don't deal directly with interpreting

the constitution like the Constitution Court," he said.

"What we do is deal with policies and issues; and so the legislative process is necessarily more ambiguous than the clear-cut responsibility of the ASUO Executive, for example," MacDonald continued. "Student senators didn't by-and-large realize that they had the power to really change things on this campus through legislation."

MacDonald said he is trying to make senators understand what they can accomplish by developing various subcommittees within the senate.

"We had a subcommittee to evaluate the 17 credit-hour limit at Mac Court during registration, we have a subcommittee on wheelchair accessibility around campus, and we have a subcommittee on drug testing," he said. "We have also established some permanent posts within the senate: grievance and information officer, the committee on committees chairperson and publicity coordinator."

"Structuring it that way has helped us define our organization, MacDonald added. "I'm encouraged to say that we now have strong attendance at our meetings."

The beginning of the year did not look so promising, however, he said.

"There are ideally 18 senate members: 17 representatives from the various departments and one chair," he said. "People were elected to all the seats in the spring, but when the fall came around, a lot of them didn't show up. They either dropped out of school or decid-

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before we're talking about self," he said.

Once the self-esteem problems have been identified, Boerman frequently will refer the person with compulsive behaviors to an on-going counselor.

Making contact with the unconscious part of the mind is one way to treat compulsive disorders and addictions, said Tom Broeker, a therapist at the Eugene Counseling and Hypnosis Center, 132 E. Broadway.

"Somehow, by relaxing, we are able to get in touch with a very powerful part of our brain that we don't communicate with consciously," he said.

It is this part of the brain that is responsible for the destructive behavior, he added.

When people talk with this part of themselves, they usually find that the behavior is meant to protect or relax them, Broeker said. They then can ask this part of themselves to find a better method of protection or relaxation, he said.

The method often works quickly and easily, but with some difficult behaviors, such as heroin addiction, it may take a long time to change the behavior, Broeker said.

If people are uncomfortable with hypnosis, Broeker will use relaxation, metaphors, meditation or prayer to facilitate the dialogue between the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind.

Other therapies for obsessive-compulsive disorders include psychoanalytic or behavioral therapies, Davison and Neale said.

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