

dollars in the past four years. Legislators and union officials are unsure where the study stands.

More about the study probably won't be known until the unions and the Executive Department enter bargaining talks, says Lisa Sieracki, the local president of the University Oregon Public Employees Union. Bargaining has been postponed twice in the past two weeks, she says. "Pay equity bargaining is confusing because the players keep changing, and now there are going to be new Executive Department personnel," Sieracki says.

Informal negotiations have been undertaken by union representatives, Executive Department personnel and Sen. Larry Hill, D-Eugene, the chairman of the Senate Labor Committee.

"The job value study is the state's thing; it's their responsibility," Sieracki says. The union doesn't actively oppose the new study, but "the union can say, 'Go ahead develop these new classifications, and we'll work with you, but no matter what, we're going to bargain for pay equity,'" she says.

"We do have to get over the negative fallout from the last study," says Margaret Hallock, an OPEU representative. "That's one reason we're calling this pay equity instead of comparable worth although it's basically the same thing.

"If you take comparable worth to its extreme, you get some real weird results," Hallock says.

"Gov. Atiyeh made a big mistake," says Hill. "He spent a half-million dollars on a (job-value) reclassification study, but it was a study that was conducted behind closed doors with no participation by legislators or employees.

"As a result, legislators and state employees don't have a lot of confidence in the study. The new classifications probably will not be implemented immediately because of that lack of confidence. There seems to be a consensus to that," he says.

The job-value study will be phased in for state jobs during the next two years, Hill says. The slow, phase-in process will give legislators and employees a chance to review

the new job-value classifications.

"The pay equity money and the reclassification would not be directly linked, but both would be phased in over time in two years," Hill says.

"Some of the money for pay equity could be divided based on the current classifications," he says. But the new job-value classes will not be thrown out. "Our current classifications are so antique that we have a classification for mule-team drivers. So we must do a reclassification, but the problem is that Atiyeh did not include other people.

"The new classification developed... with Atiyeh's half-million will be reviewed, we won't just throw it out. The changes that may be brought into the job-value study will probably be minor but until it's reviewed; we can't implement it without the input from the Legislature and employees."

The fate of the million-dollar, job-value study hangs uncertainly in the legislative breeze.

But legislators are predicting widespread support for pay equity raises, even if those raises are made under old job-value categories.

"If last session was any basis, the majority support it," says Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-West Linn. "The issue this session will be how much money to put into it."

Hooley notes that Atiyeh began the 1985 session with a \$15 million pay equity recommendation, and by the end of the session that shrank to \$5 million and was then vetoed.

"There are a lot of wonderful new programs and terrific ideas floating around that cost money," she says. "People generally agree on the concept of pay equity. The whole secret will be, 'Can we hang on to the \$10 million.'"

The chances of going beyond the governor's recommendation are slim to zero, she says.

"I think there seems to be a pretty firm desire on the part of at least some legislators that this was supposed to happen last time and didn't; now it's their time, they've been waiting since '81.

"A whole lot of those pro-

grams are very worthy and make so much sense, but pay equity is at the top of my list of priorities because they've had to wait for it and their time has come."

State employee unions see Goldschmidt's recommendation as a wonderful first step. "We're absolutely delighted that he thought it appropriate to include a separate recommendation for pay equity," Hallock says. But the union hopes to see more than the \$10 million.

"From our point of view, (the \$10 million) has to be done; it's a housekeeping measure... The \$10 million is certainly sufficient to upgrade the clerical and service jobs by approximately 5 to 6 percent.

"There may be discussions down the road on whether that was the first step or the only step," Hallock says.

Hill says he wants to make sure the basics of pay equity legislation are agreed upon by the governor and the employee unions before the new pay equity bill, Senate Bill 288, passes out of his committee.

He says the informal negotiation with the different parties will determine the common ground. The bill may go through minor changes, but "it won't come out of my committee until there's basic agreement between the two unions and the governor's office," Hill says. "If there isn't that basic agreement, then the chances are greater that the money would be siphoned off for something else."

And pay equity legislation has to be a primary concern of the state this session because of the Washington state lawsuit, Hill says.

"Unless we address this issue, the state's probably going to get sued," he says. "I don't know if it'd win, but the courts are moving in that direction.

"We should require bargaining between labor and management to reduce inequities," Hill says.

"Each time a contract is signed, it should reduce the pay inequities that exist between jobs dominated by women and jobs dominated by men." □

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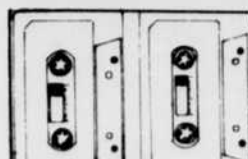
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