

What's up
at the movies?
See Pages 6 & 7

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Bills seek recognition for community colleges

By Chris Norred
Of the Emerald

Community college officials' request for their own state agency, which would gain more recognition for their schools in state government, has divided members of the House Education Committee.

munity Colleges Association, an association of board members and presidents from Oregon's 15 community colleges.

The bill would create an independent department of community colleges headed by a chancellor.

Currently, community colleges are under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education, which governs kindergarten through 12th grade programs as well. Public, four-year colleges and universities are governed by the separate State Board of Higher Education.

Supporters of HB 2530 say the State Board of Education, led by Superintendent of Public Instruction Verne Duncan, has not paid enough attention to community college issues and has not sufficiently pushed the community college cause in state government.

"Our concern is one of being lost in a department," said Roger Bassett, executive

Turn to Colleges, Page 3



Women fight to take back the night

About 150 people participated in the ninth annual "Take Back the Night" march Thursday night to signal the end of Rape Awareness Week. A pre-march rally included poetry, singing and even sign-language, said Heather McTaggart, ASUO Women's Task Force coordinator.

Photo by Sherlyn Bjorkgren



Legislative issues

The committee is considering two separate bills, both of which would increase the role of community colleges in state government.

Backers of the two measures agree that community colleges have gone too long without proper respect in state government, but the two measures and their sponsors disagree in how far the Legislature should go to correct the problem.

House Bill 2530 is being pushed by the Oregon Com-

IFC debates legal services budget during grueling four-hour session

By Carolyn Lamberson
Of the Emerald

In a marathon session lasting more than four hours, the Incidental Fee Committee allocated \$98,101 to three organizations and granted two special requests Thursday.

The budget hearing for ASUO Legal Services sparked the most debate of the evening. Legal Services Attorney Karsten Rasmussen presented the \$53,801 budget proposal and stressed how much the office has changed in the three years he has been there.

"Before, there was no representation in change of plea, no representation in trial," Rasmussen said. "This is not a 20-hour-a-week job."

"My contract says that I'm required to average 20 hours of client counseling a week. There is no lawyer in this state who can have 20 hours of work a week in client counseling and then walk away from the office and do nothing else," Rasmussen said, adding that he rarely spends less than 25 hours a week working and sometimes more.

Committee member Ron Munion expressed concern with the ASUO's plan to extend the legal services contract from a required 20 hours a week to a 40-hour-a-week position and raise the salary \$4,000. He said this proposal would prevent Rasmussen from applying for the position when the legal services contract is made available this summer, even though Munion was one of a group of students who called for ASUO President Steve Nelson and Rasmussen's resignation last month in relation to the Lone Star Insurance matter.

"I do not want inexperience in that office next year," Munion said.

Rasmussen would be unable to apply for that position because he operates a private practice outside of the work he does for ASUO legal services.

Also present at the IFC meeting was third year University law student Anne Morrison who has been working to reduce the amount of

money received by the legal services attorney for the last three months.

"I am concerned that the \$28,500 is much too high a price for an attorney in this position," she said. "My concern is that Steve (Nelson) has relied too heavily on Karsten for the information that he used to arrive at that \$28,500 figure."

She also questioned Rasmussen's reasoning in justifying such an "outrageous" salary with his expenditures on taxes and other expenses.

Rasmussen countered Morrison's argument with his contention that \$5,500 of his contracted price — not salary — goes toward the cost of operating the office. He also said he believed that attorneys in poverty law, areas like public defense and legal aid, are notoriously underpaid.

"It seems really stupid to say that since all these people are underpaid, we should underpay the person we have doing the legal services job here," Rasmussen said.

The committee voted unanimously on all line items of the budget with the exception of the \$28,500 payment to a full-time director. That item passed with a 3-2-1 majority; Laurie Clark and Ron Munion were opposed and Armando Morales abstained from voting.

The IFC also allocated \$38,056 to the Office of Student Advocacy. This represents an increase of almost \$12,000 over this year's budget. Nelson stressed that this year's budget has a \$5,000 deficit, so the only real increases are shown in creation of an assistant director's position and a raise in Student Advocacy Director Lucille Kaplan's contract price.

The Panhellenic Council received a total of \$5,250. The organization had originally requested another \$750 to help pay for their Impact Training Course, a program designed to help members of the Greek community with alcohol and drug awareness.

Bill would cut payments for work-related injuries

By Nick Reed
Of the Emerald

Workers' compensation benefits would be cut drastically if a new bill introduced into the Oregon House is passed.

House Bill 2340 would substantially change the current

employees earn, is facing another increase of \$200 per \$1,000 earned. He said he just won't be able to pay.

That means the loss of jobs, decreased income to his community and more people on the unemployment rolls.

It also means college students, who typically are the labor market for small businesses such as Washington's, will scramble even harder for summer and part-time work.

"I'm still suffering from a claim on a worker injured more than three years ago," Washington said, adding that the worker eventually settled, but now the company's insurance premiums will be raised.

The plight of Washington typifies the problem of many employers statewide.

Jim Bernau, director of the National Association of Independent Businesses, Oregon chapter, said Oregon is among the top five states nationwide with the highest workers compensation cost.

"It's the system (in our state) that's to blame," he said. "Our aim is to revamp the entire compensation system statewide."

Bernau claimed that about 40 percent of the injured workers get more money off the job than when working. This kills the incentive to return to their jobs, he said.



Legislative issues

compensation system in Oregon.

The bill, sponsored by a coalition of business groups calling itself Jobs For Oregon, reflects the growing frustration of businesses statewide with meeting the rising costs of compensation insurance.

According to the JFO report, Oregon employers will be required to pay an estimated \$500 million in workers compensation premiums, which amounts to roughly half of what Oregonians pay in state personal income tax.

Such enormous expense, claims the coalition, is "destroying small businesses" in Oregon.

Harold Washington, owner of a small roofing company in Lafayette, said his employees may not be going to work after Oct. 1 because his workers compensation policy is due for renewal.

Washington, who must pay \$688 for every \$1,000 his

Turn to Benefits, Page 3