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State board dumps Olum

By Mike Drummond
Emerald Associate Editor

With a telephone conference call Wednesday afternoon, the State Board of Higher Education terminated Paul Olum's presidency, effective June 30, 1989.

More than 400 spectators crammed into the EMU's Gumwood Room to hear the board's discussion and final decision. After a round-house debate whether to delay voting on Olum's retirement, the board decided 9-2 to retire Olum in 1989. ASUO President Kasey Brooks and board member Arlene Schnitzer of Portland dissented.

Board President James Petersen reiterated the board's reason for retiring Olum in 1989, three years earlier than Olum's preferred retirement date.

"As retirement nears (for higher education employees)...the policy of the board has been to provide adequate planning and an orderly transition of management," Petersen said.

Petersen added that the board was "looking down the next decade at the University...and it just seemed appropriate to look at the future sooner rather than later."

During Wednesday's deliberations, Schnitzer questioned the board's decision-making process and told board members they had an obligation to the public to state reasons other than those given by Petersen.

"I'm deeply disturbed over my perception about what the process and procedure has been leading to this meeting. I suggest...the board to make a comprehensive and understandable statement outlining its reasoning behind this decision," Schnitzer said.

Petersen retorted that Olum and the public would receive further reasons after the vote. However, he did not specify when those reasons would be issued.

Schnitzer and fellow board member George Richardson of Portland also indicated some board members believed they were not fully informed about

the Olum retirement proceedings.

As an example, both Schnitzer and Richardson were unaware Olum had contacted board Vice President Richard Hensley earlier on Wednesday to discuss a compromise date of June 30, 1991.

In a press conference after the phone meeting, Olum said Petersen called him during the day and said there was no indication the board would support a compromise date.

Disappointment showed on the faces of people who quietly shuffled from the Gumwood Room following the board's decision. University Provost Dick Hill expressed his frustration following the conference call.

Hill said University projects, such as the search for a new provost and implementation of the capital campaign now are in jeopardy.

Hill also said the board offered no credible reason for its decision, and the one it did offer was unacceptable.

"If the primary concern is the orderly transition, the appropriate time to provide that orderly transition is when those projects are complete or near completion," Hill said.

Hill added he believes the board had reasons other than the one Petersen expressed for retiring Olum, but he declined to speculate on what they might be.

During the meeting, board member Mark Dodson of Portland said the board was looking for a president who would represent statewide interest, implying the board has a "team player" in mind to replace Olum. However, Dodson screened phone calls to his office after the meeting and could not be reached to elaborate on his statement.

During his press conference, Olum stated he was disappointed with the board's vote. He said he doesn't

believe the board offered valid reasons for its decision, and he added he also believes the board had ulterior motives for retiring him in 1989. But like Hill, he declined to speculate on those motives.

"I have to believe they have reasons beyond" the

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Photo by Andre Ranieri

Under the glare of television lights, more than 400 people sat and listened to the state board decide Paul Olum's fate Wednesday afternoon.

ASUO asks for query of board

By Will Holbert
Emerald Associate Editor

The ASUO reacted swiftly to the State Board of Higher Education's Wednesday decision to retire University President Paul Olum, calling for a "formal evaluation" of the board and its decision-making process.

"It's gone way beyond just Dr. Olum at this point," ASUO Vice President Karen Gaffney said after the board's decision. "We're looking at a state board that refuses to be accountable to the people in the state of Oregon and refuses to be accountable to the students who are the consumers of the education here."

Gaffney, along with former ASUO President Steve Nelson, represented the ASUO at a press conference held after the board voted nine to two to retire Olum in June 1989, three years earlier than his preferred retirement date. ASUO President Kasey Brooks, a member of board, voted against the retirement motion along with board member Arlene Schnitzer.

During the teleconference, Brooks and Schnitzer protested other board members' secrecy on why they wanted Olum to retire. Brooks later said she never heard any information as to why Olum should retire while she has served on the board.

The prevailing attitude on the board was that the vote was a foregone conclusion, Brooks said.

"I don't think anybody's mind changed since last Friday," she said.

Gaffney released a letter after the vote containing the ASUO's demand for an evaluation of the board.

"Regardless of the decision of the (board) concerning the retirement date of Dr. Paul Olum...the process for making this decision has been flawed," the letter stated. The letter concludes with a request to Gov. Neil Goldschmidt to initiate an investigation.

Gaffney said the ASUO met with representatives of the governor's office on Tuesday to discuss their dissatisfaction with the board.

Olum held a press conference of his own after the vote.

"The magnitude of it (student support) bowled me over, I had no idea that the support would be so magnificent," Olum said.

Input process for research park continues to raise dissent

By Andrew LaMar
Emerald Reporter

The already controversial Riverfront Research Park is receiving more criticism from University students and faculty members who say the process for public input has been unfair.

Planners "didn't really respond to people's concerns about the riverfront and preservation of the riverfront," said Ron Lovinger, University professor of landscape architecture.

Planners held four public forums on the proposed design — March 5, April 16, Oct. 8 and Nov. 4. Diane Wiley, the University research park project representative, said no more public forums on the master site plan will be held.

However, the public can attend all meetings of the two planning committees, the Riverfront Research Park Commission and the University Design Advisory Committee.

Many suggestions made at the forums

were incorporated into the design, Wiley said.

After the third public forum on Oct. 8, architects changed the plan, moved the soccer field to a north-south orientation and pushed back buildings from the pedestrian bridge that runs across Willamette River toward Autzen Stadium. Those changes were taken from suggestions made at that forum, Wiley said.

"Those who get up and continually say they don't like the process, it's because they don't like the decisions that have been made," Wiley said.

But University geology professor Al Urquhart disagrees. He said the process did not seem fair and blamed city and University planners.

"There has been no chance to question the basic ideas of location of the research park nor to question the basic idea of the amount of square footage that is to go in there," Urquhart said.

He attended two of the forums and more than 50 planning meetings before them, he said. Urquhart also challenged

the City Council's decision to rezone the Willamette Greenway.

In fall 1985 the City Council adopted the Riverfront Park Study and amended the Eugene/Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan, changing the Willamette Greenway's zoning to allow for development of the research park.

Urquhart appealed the decision to the state Land Use Board of Appeals and again later to the state Court of Appeals, claiming the change was not in accordance with statewide planning goals and guidelines. He lost both cases.

Since the first meetings on the plan, research park planners have categorized anyone who objects to the plan as opponents of the process, Urquhart said.

"Now they're saying, and I think they are incorrect, that of course early on was the time" to discuss the site of the park, Urquhart said. "Well, they wouldn't listen to it early on. They have not listened at any point, absolutely no point from the time it reached a public discussion."

Dan Stotter, is a University law student, ASUO Riverfront Research Park

liason and president of the political action committee, Citizens for Responsible Land Use, which opposes the research park. Because Stotter believes the process has been unfair, he is attempting to put an initiative on a spring ballot to request the rezoning of the site's land north of the railroad tracks, he said.

"In the early part (of the planning) when one raised the issue of saving certain specific areas...we were told that we were jumping the gun and that these suggestions would have ample opportunity at a later date," Stotter said. "When we got to a later date I was told it was too late — the decisions were already made."

However, Wiley said the City Council held several public hearings on the rezoning of the riverfront area and incorporated them into the final amendments of the metropolitan plan. The public had a fair chance to respond to the siting of the park, she said.

"This is a large project, a very large

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