

# Student input needed to pass bills

By Christopher Blair  
Emerald Reporter

When people find the political climate not to their liking, they jokingly are told to write to their representatives.

Members of the Legislative Action Alliance (LAA), a campaign to increase student letter-writing to the Oregon Legislature, have decided to take this advice seriously.

"(Students) represent a very influential group, especially here in Oregon where higher education is an important issue," said LAA member Justin McKenna, who also is ASUO assistant coordinator of state affairs.

Students wishing to voice their opinions on bills facing the recently convened Oregon Legislature are asked to fill out a card in the ASUO office, checking off the issues they are interested in. Students then are encouraged to write letters to their representatives and voice their opinions.

The Legislature is faced with

bills concerning child care subsidies for college students, expansion of need-based financial aid and student control of surplus incidental fees.

A loud and united student voice is essential to pass bills of concern to students, said both McKenna and LAA Coordinator Tim Goss, who also is the ASUO State Affairs Coordinator.

"Without the grassroots base you don't stand a chance," Goss said. "You can't just take a bill up to Salem and say 'This is a great idea.'"

In addition to letter-writing, students will have the chance to testify before the Legislature on issues they are concerned about, Goss said.

"Letter-writing and testifying is something anyone can do," McKenna said. "It's important that you write letters. It's important that you get involved."

In an attempt to reach more students throughout the University, the ASUO and LAA have teamed up with the Oregon Students Public Research

Interest Group (OSPIRG), Goss said. Representatives from OSPIRG also will be encouraging students to voice their opinions on three environmental bills.

Students who come to the University from another part of Oregon have the opportunity to practice "dual-constituency," writing legislators from their home towns as well as those representing the University, Goss said.

In order to garner more participation in the campaign, Goss and McKenna will be visiting classrooms, student and minority groups, as well as fraternity and sorority houses.

The group's goal is to get students of all political persuasions to write letters, McKenna said, adding that some issues that face the Legislature concern all students, regardless of their beliefs.

"It's not really political ideology that we're after here," McKenna said. "I want more students involved, I don't care where they come from."

# King's life to be focus

Food, music and displays will highlight the University's Black Student Union's commemoration of the life of Martin Luther King Jr. on Sunday.

The "Celebration of Humanity IX," which will be held in the EMU Ballroom, is a free three-hour, multicultural celebration, said Julie Sprague, BSU director.

University students and student groups have joined together and pooled their talents to make the celebration a success, Sprague said.

"We want to stress that

Dr. King stood for all people and their rights," she said. "He was not just the leader of the black community. He stood for all of us and fell for all of us."

Scheduled events for the evening include a taekwondo demonstration by members of the Asian/Pacific American Student Union, a presentation by Native American drummers and dancers, and musical performances by both MEChA, the Chicano/Latino Student Union, and the BSU.

Events begin at 4 p.m.

# Senators air new plans

The Student Senate on Thursday discussed plans for producing an informational senate pamphlet and simplifying the process of class evaluations.

The informational pamphlet that senators want to release this term will contain a description of procedures and positions and will be given to students interested in holding a senate position.

Senators also aired suggestions on ways of making the results of class evaluations easier to understand and more accessible to students. Among some of the ideas aired was the possibility of evaluating classes based on a five-criteria system.

Although numerous ideas were bandied around, no set criteria were established. The results of these evaluation then would be made available to all students before registration each term.

In other business, student senators suggested that the group sponsor a seminar or video production about University issues and affairs in an attempt to educate students about the University.

Senators also are investigating the possibility of making more University events open to students under 21-years-old by separating those events into alcoholic and non-alcoholic sections.

The senate will hold its next meeting Thursday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the EMU Century Room E. A speaker on animal rights will be featured.

## Correction

Willamette AIDS Council member Sally Sheklow's name was misspelled in a story about the Willamette AIDS Council forum, which appeared in the Jan. 12 issue of the Emerald.

The Emerald apologize for any inconvenience that may have resulted from the error.



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