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University

Students may be asked to think about job social responsibility

By Pat Malach
Emerald Reporter

If some students on campus get their way, participants at the 1990 University graduation ceremonies will have the option of signing a pledge saying they will thoroughly investigate and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job opportunity they consider.

Kathy Taylor, the student who has been organizing the drive to include the pledge, said graduates would have the option of signing the pledge after they receive their degree.

"Students would have the option of signing it right there in front of their peers," Taylor said. "Or they could take it home and look it over and sign it, or throw it away if they wanted."

Students would be exposed to the idea before the ceremony so they knew what was going on. There would also be informational pamphlets handed out to guests at the ceremony.

"We would get the word out so they know what's going on and that it is not just some table sitting in the corner," Taylor said.

The graduation pledge has received support from the Student Senate and the ASUO Executive Office. The Senate unanimously passed a resolution asking the ASUO, the faculty and the administration to support the idea, said Senate chairwoman Tiffany Weed.

The ASUO Executive Office endorsed the resolution that the Senate passed. Weed said the next step will be to take the resolution to the University Senate for an endorsement.

There are also hopes of getting the pledge issue included on the general elections ballot this spring. According to Senate member Brian Hoop, it will be necessary to get 900 signatures on a petition in order to get the issue on the ballot.

Even if the students approve of the pledge in the elections, the final decision will still be the administration's, Hoop said. He added the combined efforts of the ballot measure, the Student Senate, the University Senate and the University Assembly would more than likely convince the administration to support the pledge.

The graduation pledge idea originated at Humboldt State University, and since then other universities including Stanford, the University of Utah and the College of Redwoods have been adding the pledge to their ceremonies.

In addition, several California high schools are now including the pledge at their graduations, Taylor said.

The Graduation Pledge Alliance of Humboldt has been spreading the idea across the country. Those efforts have included the publishing of ma-

terials instructing students on how to get the pledge included at their school and a pamphlet titled "How to Investigate Potential Employers: A Guide for the responsible Student."

Matt Nicodemus, the Humboldt student that began the pledge idea at that school, has expressed an interest in coming to the University to talk to students about the pledge and instruct them on how to investigate a future employer, Taylor said.

The pledge's ability to raise the awareness of all students on campus is appealing to the people who are supporting the idea.

"I would hope that this would generate discussion and provoke students to think about their choices on both an individual level and University wide," Hoop said.

The pledge and the effort to include it in the graduation ceremony will help get students to start thinking about what they want to do with their education, Taylor said. She added there are some classes, such as an ethics in business class, that already deal with the issue of responsibility in making business decisions.

Taylor has been talking to student groups and organizations in hopes of forming a coalition to support the pledge idea. She also plans to address letters to faculty members encouraging them to bring the discussion of post-college ethics into the classroom.

Taylor hopes the pledge will bring the efforts of the students and faculty members together and formalize the concept of educating people on how to investigate a potential employer.

"Education is supposed to make us responsible citizens," Taylor said. "This is one way to show that."

The wording of the pledge leaves it open to people of all ideologies, Taylor said.

"Everyone's definition of social and environmental responsibility will be different," she said.

Taylor stressed the pledge should be a personal commitment. She added that coercing people into signing it would make it a very shallow statement.

"I think here it will just be something that you will be personally choosing on your own at that ceremony," Hoop said. "You can recognize yourself with your family and friends. Graduation means many different things to different people. Some individuals appreciate the opportunity to make a public stance and we're simply giving them that opportunity."

Correction

Tonight's Incidental Fee Committee meeting was mistakenly printed as being Monday night in Monday's Et als column. The *Emerald* regrets the error, and apologizes for any inconvenience it may have caused.

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