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USSA to become independent from ASUO by the end of 1990

By Dan Eisler
Emerald Reporter

The Incidental Fee Committee's April 12 allocation to the United States Student Association effectively re-establishes the University chapter's independence after five years of ASUO oversight.

The change has been prompted by concern of inefficiency in reaching out to students and of political manipulation, said Tim Hughes, USSA chair of the Northwest Pacific region.

A confederation of student bodies at American colleges and universities, USSA represents 4.5 million students. It is the nation's largest registered federal lobbying organization of its kind, and has been the recognized voice of students at Congress and the Education Department.

IFC allocated \$17,731 to USSA for the 1990-91 budget season. Last year USSA received a \$12,839 allocation from the IFC.

"It's a done deal in my mind, as soon as the line-item budget passed," Hughes said.

The chapter would effectively become independent by the end of this year, said Scott Wyckoff, ASUO vice president, adding that locating new office



Karen Gaffney

Typically, once a program is strong enough it moves out from under the wing of ASUO, said Karen Gaffney, USSA national affairs coordinator and former ASUO president. Gaffney cited Project Saferide as an example of this.

"This is an awkward year for us because we're kind of in-between," Hughes said. The existing USSA budget continues travel and dues money, but "it doesn't include lobbying, printing, duplication (and) phone calls, and the ASUO has absorbed that out of its mam-



Tim Hughes

moth budget of \$150,000," Hughes said.

Next year's budget allocation will cover those costs, Hughes said.

The chapter won't receive IFC funds after the 1990-91 year, Hughes said; instead, the chapter will go to the ballot for funding every three years, as provided for by the chapter's budget papers. "The idea is to make USSA accountable to students."

"If students vote 'no' we're not going to be members, which means the chapter will have to do its work of outreach," Hughes said.

Any criticism to be made of the USSA is that it hasn't effectively approached the average student, Hughes told IFC at its Feb. 27 meeting. IFC allocation at that meeting was postponed pending further study and of Hughes' return from Congressional lobbying in Washington, D.C.

The amount of outreach to students has been lacking,

which affects the way they feel about USSA, Wyckoff said. "I think they'll later be able to do a more effective job," Wyckoff said. "Out from the shelter of ASUO they'll go out (and) contact students."

In a reorganization of student offices the ASUO felt it would be best for USSA to become independent, rather than being locked up in ASUO, Wyckoff said. "It was a joint thing between some USSA members and the ASUO executive," Wyckoff said. "We just questioned whether they should be in the office."

"This year I think they have done better on getting out to University students," Wyckoff said. "My greatest fear with USSA is it's been something that works outside student government and yet claims benefits for students," Wyckoff said.

"I think Andy Clark and I were the first who questioned the service that it provided," he said. "Andy and I believed in having a campus-oriented office, instead of flying off to Washington, D.C."

The association deals with a lot of important issues made more difficult when it's locked up in the office, Wyckoff said, adding that the new independence will prevent USSA from limiting the chapter and who it reaches out to.

It took election as ASUO vice president for him to hear about USSA for the first time in the four years he's attended the University, he added.

"When you lock it up in ASUO you want to maintain control of it with insiders," Wyckoff said. "By focusing it on outsiders you get a broader representation."

"Someone in the ASUO executive has always been involved in USSA," Hughes told IFC on Feb. 27, and the new budget will "prevent any

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— Scott Wyckoff

space is the biggest obstacle. USSA is currently working out of EMU Suite 4.

The chapter asked for a lineitem budget to prevent potential abuse or mispending of funds, Hughes said, adding that next fall's budget will be similar to that of other groups.

A line-item is a specific item listed in a budget.

The setup of USSA is different on every campus, Hughes said. For the most part, USSA chapters are independent to work in close cooperation with student government.

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