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City workings easy to understand

*Internships, neighborhood associations,
voting, all ways students can get involved*

By Cathy Peterson
Emerald Reporter

The city of Eugene has come a long way from the city once called Skinner's Mudhole. However, the city government hasn't changed that much since the first city council election in 1865.

The city hall building at 777 Pearl St. need not be a mystery to University students. Students can participate in local government by serving on commissions, attending meetings, or voting.

For students who want experience working in city government, there are internships or work-study positions with city departments.

Before jumping in, here's a primer on Eugene city government for the uninitiated.

The Oregon Legislature granted Eugene self-government in 1862, according to a pamphlet produced by the city on its government. The city adopted a charter two years later to guide officials in their decision-making.

In 1944, citizens adopted a council-manager form of government, which separates the executive-legislative-judicial functions from administrative functions.

The executive branch consists of the mayor of Eugene and the mayor's staff. Eugene Mayor Jeff Miller, is the chairman of the city council and is elected by the city at large for a four-year-term of office. The mayor does not vote on council matters, except to break a tie

vote.

In addition to a charter, the city is governed by ordinances enacted by a city council, made up of representatives from the city's eight wards. The city council is the legislative branch of government. The University falls into Ward 4, and the city council representative is Rob Bennett, who will be up for election in 1991.

The council has the power to change the city ordinances at any time. If this seems unfair to citizens, the Oregon Legislature granted them the rights of initiative, recall and referendum, as a balance.

The power of initiative gives any citizen the right to draw up proposed laws and submit them to the voters for approval, after they have collected a number of signatures.

The power of referendum allows people to vote to change or keep existing laws. The right to recall permits citizens to petition for an election to remove elected officials from public office.

The city manager, appointed by the city council, is the chief administrator who manages the city's staff and departments. Eugene's city manager is Mike Gleason.

Although the city manager is appointed to the job, the actual day-to-day management is done by the assistant city manager, Dave Whitlow. The heads of departments also report to the assistant manager.

The judicial branch is made up of a municipal judge and an assistant municipal judge ap-



Jeff Miller

pointed by the city council.

Much of the day to day government business takes place in the city departments. These departments include public works, public safety, planning and support services for city government.

City advisory boards and commissions are made up of citizens appointed by the council, and include a human rights commission, downtown commission, bicycle commission and planning commission, as well as many others.

For students who want to work in government, internships and work-study positions are available in many of the departments.

"The departments have been very enthusiastic about the internship program," said Nora McCoy, the city's cooperative work-study and work-experience program director.

"It's a help to us, and we give students help, whether through extra income, or expe-

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