

FUNDING

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folks outside the field of education," said Kirk Bailey, who has met with board members as ASUO co-president. "They're not clueless — they are concerned and caring people."

Bailey said he doesn't blame education budget problems on any one group or individual, but sees it as a problem with the overall system of government.

"There's a conflict in Oregon between our democratic referendum style of government and the needs of education," he said. "I can remember several

times when high school and junior high school levies have failed in Oregon."

College students need to become more vocal about funding for their institutions, Bailey said.

"People are just starting to take the problem seriously," he said. "If students can't get into classes because of a lack of funding, they need to speak out, call a state legislator or have their parents speak out."

Bailey said he would like to see state bodies cooperate to solve funding problems. "The state Legislature, governor and the state board need to come together and create a master plan

to increase funding for higher education," he said.

The Oregon Student Lobby is one office working to increase higher education funding.

"Faculty salaries are important and we have lobbied hard for an increase in the past," said Lynn Pinkney, OSU executive director in Salem.

Oregon is currently in the bottom fifth among the nation's schools for faculty salary levels.

In the last six years, salary increases for Oregon university faculty have not kept up with inflation, and the problem may only get worse.

"A huge number of faculty

will retire in the next ten years," Pinkney said. "Combined with a decrease in the number of doctorates being awarded nationwide, this means that hiring will become very competitive."

Pinkney's sentiment is echoed in the introduction to the state board's 1991-93 budget proposal, scheduled to be sent to the governor Sept. 1.

"Oregon is losing good faculty and often failing to recruit vital replacements, thus jeopardizing the talent pool that required two decades or more to build," the statement reads.

Pinkney's office is also trying to persuade the legislature to

raise its spending cap. "Revenues show that Oregon has the money, we just need to use it," she said.

Legislators' most recent solution to higher education budget problems was to create a new lottery. In 1989, they created Sports Action and directed most funds generated by the game to intercollegiate athletics and student aid.

At its inception, the game was expected to generate \$8 million for higher education; 88 percent of the money was to go to athletics and 12 percent to student aid, said Dave Quenzer, the state board's associate vice chancellor for budget and fiscal policy.

However, legislators, concerned that a popular Sports Action game would divert revenue from the regular state lottery, added a safety net to the legislation calling for funds to be transferred from Sports Action whenever the regular lottery suffered.

As a result of fund transfers the state higher education system has received a mere \$450,000 from Sports Action.

"The state board of higher education will go to the governor and suggest that Sports Action be decoupled from the regular lottery," Quenzer said.

The two-year budget currently on the table has good news for students and faculty alike — if it passes the scrutiny of the governor and the Legislature.

Tuition for resident and out-of-state students will increase by only 6.7 percent per year in the next two years. This rate should preserve the University's current national rank for funding.

The state board is also suggesting that overall funding be increased at a rate equal to inflation — 4.8 percent.

In addition to matching inflation, the board is also proposing some "decision packages" totaling \$116.9 million to supplement the budget in specific areas.

The largest package earmarks \$50 million for faculty salary increases, long the state system's biggest concern. Of that amount, \$5 million is intended for faculty support in forms other than salaries, including supplies and hiring more teaching assistants.

Another package would provide outreach services for non-traditional students and increase international competence for students and staff.

"Oregon is a leader in contacting nations in the Pacific Rim nations," Quenzer said. "We need to spend more money financing student exchange."

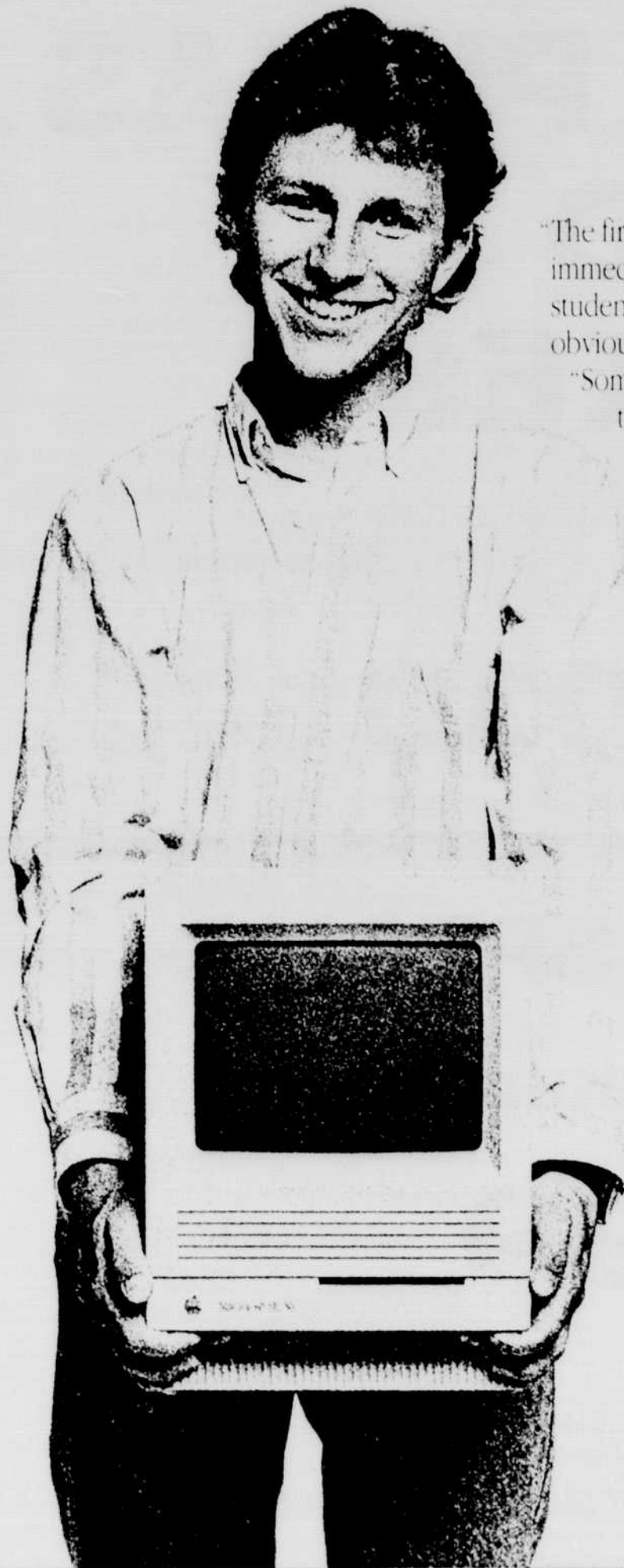
Another package in the new budget would expand higher education benefits in the Portland area by spending \$3 million on the Center for Graduate and Professional Education at Portland State University.

Oregon State University would also receive an extra \$6.4 million for its agricultural and forest research departments.

The largest package proposed for a single institution is \$15.1 million for Oregon Health Sciences University.

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Greg Gallent
Consumer Economics and Housing
Cornell University



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