

OSL to fight for quality education

Student lobby group enlists support of state campuses

By Catherine Hawley
Emerald News Editor

Oregon Student Lobby Executive Director Lynn Pinckney is optimistic about the fate of higher education in the 1991 Oregon Legislature.

Despite potentially devastating tuition hikes and program cuts proposed for Oregon's public colleges and universities, Pinckney says higher education should get support this session from legislators, from other human services organizations and from students.

"I am encouraged by an awareness that Oregon needs its higher education system," she said. "Whether or not funds are there is another matter."

OSL was formed in 1975 by student associations at each of the seven schools in Oregon's higher education system to represent student interests at the Legislature and at other state agencies.

The executive director and two other full-time staff members carry out policies determined at monthly meetings by a board of directors, composed of two representatives from each institution.

Pinckney, a University graduate and 1985-86 ASUO presi-

dent, has served as executive director since 1989.

Before voters passed Ballot Measure 5 in November, Pinckney and other OSL staff members had hoped to lobby for improvements to higher education, including faculty salary increases and larger allocations for libraries.

Now, she said, "it's a matter of hanging on" to the state system's current programs and tuition levels.

"Our top agenda item was handed to us when Measure 5 passed: Minimize cuts and tuition increases," she said.

Fighting to preserve quality in higher education this session will be difficult, she said, because "it's not contained in just one bill — it's a process that will take place over several months."

After November's elections, higher education Chancellor Thomas Bartlett asked the system's seven schools to identify \$90 million in cuts that could be made in their budgets — a sum equal to the funding the system provides to Oregon State University in Corvallis and to one regional state college.

Although the exact amount of state support for higher education budget depends on the

Legislature, tuition increases, enrollment drops and the loss of programs and faculty are certain, said Sheila Stickel and Traci Manning, the University's OSL representatives.

"We can't downscale fast enough," said Sheila Stickel, who is also ASUO co-president and has attended meetings with the chancellor and with University administrators to discuss effects of Measure 5.

The University and other state system institutions still haven't recovered from relatively minor budget reductions made in the early 1980s, Pinck-



Photo by Andre Kanier
Lynn Pinckney (foreground), executive director of the OSL, will lobby the Oregon Legislature this year to "hang on" to quality higher education in the face of Measure 5 cuts.

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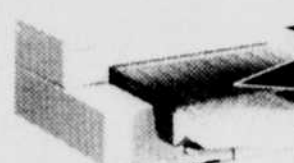


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