

## POLITICS

# Higher ed faculties face uncertainty

By Joe Kidd  
Emerald Politics Editor

SALEM — Alarm flared in the Capitol Wednesday over potential faculty flight from Oregon's colleges and universities as higher education's future budgets face the financial demands of Measure 5.



A representative of all faculty members in the State System of Higher Education demanded that the Legislature consider the scare that future Measure 5 cuts will cause, saying that the state could lose even more faculty and staff members than the 700 who will be laid off because of 1991-93 cuts.

Professor Charles Wright, the president of the Inter-institutional Faculty Senate, told the Joint Ways and Means education subcommittee that some form of a "safety net" is needed to avoid fingering faculty and staff members for layoff as Measure 5's 1993-95 cuts approach.

Wright, who is a University math professor, personalized the Measure 5 scare by describing the response of a newly hired member of his department.

Wright told of a numerical analyst the mathematics department hired as part of the department's long-range strategy.

Because of massive budget and program cuts, "He now feels insecure," Wright said. "He feels unappreciated, and he is leaving."

"What do you say if you're the department head?" Wright asked the legislators. "Could you look him in the eye and say, 'You're safe here.'"

While the legislative panel has contemplated a slough of tough trade-offs during its two weeks of 1991-93 higher education budget analysis, Wright's

concerns gave the hearings a new twist by highlighting crises that will arise in light of 1993-95 cuts — budget scenarios even further in the future.

The crucial element is all a matter of timing.

Unlike other state agencies, higher education must give its faculty and staff employees a year's advance notice before laying them off.

Looming 1993-95 cuts could total \$150 million from higher education — almost double the 1991-93 reductions. In response to 1993-95 cuts, higher education would have to notify faculty members of potential layoffs by the summer of 1992.

Passage of a new tax before that summer could prevent the cuts, avoiding otherwise inevitable layoffs. But according to the current political atmosphere, the chances are dimming that a new revenue source could find its way through the legislative maze to a ballot and vote by Oregonians before the summer of 1992.

And in light of even further cuts, Wright said many faculty members would anticipate a new round of layoffs and look for work elsewhere.

Moreover, the Legislature is

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Volume 4, Issue 2 April 1991

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