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Bill calls for grant increases, excludes direct loan plan

□ Senate Higher Education Act brings mixed reactions from student lobbyists pushing for financial aid changes

By Kirsten Lucas
Emerald Reporter

The U.S. Senate version of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, overwhelmingly approved last Thursday, garnered a lukewarm response among student lobbyists in Oregon and Washington, D.C. late last week.

However, lobbyists remain optimistic about upcoming action on federal financial aid in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Higher Education Act, which sets standards for federal financial aid, is reauthorized by Congress every five years.

The Senate bill calls for an increase in the maximum amount of money available through Pell Grants and expands grant eligibility for middle-income students. However, the bill left out two key changes that students have been lobbying for since 1990 — grant entitlement and direct loans.

"We are disappointed, but at the same time we have to look at it in a positive light," said Kate Menard of the Oregon Student Lobby. "Increasing the maximum Pell Grant and increasing eligibility are two amazing developments."

Tajel Shah, president of the United States Students Association, and Sheila Stickel, USSA's Northwest Regional chairwoman, echoed Menard's response.

The Senate bill would allow more middle-income students to be eligible for the Pell Grant program by raising the family income limit to \$42,000. The limit is now around \$30,000. The maximum grant would increase from the current \$2,400 to \$3,600 in 1993 and to \$4,800 in 1997.

"This goes quite a ways to closing the

gap for those students who need aid but don't qualify," Menard said.

However, the Pell Grant program currently receives annual federal appropriations, meaning not everyone who qualifies for grants receives them, because a limited amount of money is available.

OSL and USSA have been pushing to change the Pell Grant program into an entitlement program. If this were the case, Pell Grant money would be made available to anyone eligible to receive it.

Shah said the White House staunchly opposes grant entitlement, and President Bush threatened to veto the Senate bill if the entitlement measure was included.

Another loss for students in the Senate bill, also due to White House opposition, was the exclusion of a direct loans provision.

Sens. Paul Simon, D-Ill., and David Durenberger, R-Minn., proposed the modification to the Guaranteed Student Loan program to eliminate banks from the lending process, making it a direct loan program.

University President Myles Brand had been lobbying along with USSA and OSL for the Simon-Durenberger Act.

"Traditionally, financial aid is a bipartisan issue," Shah said. "President Bush has definitely made this a partisan issue ... and that's too bad."

Menard agreed. "It's all smoke and mirrors from an education president that doesn't support education," she said.

Despite White House opposition, Shah said entitlement and direct loans will be proposed again in the House of Representatives, where strong support is expected.

Once the House bill is approved, the House and Senate versions will go into a conference of senators and representatives. They will merge the two bills into a final version to be voted on by both houses of Congress.

Detecting for dollars



Photo by Michael Shindler

Septuagenarian treasure hunter Gene Jennings seeks lost artifacts in the field by 13th Avenue and the PLC building. Jennings is the youngest of a group of men who spend time treasure detecting. He said he has found old coins dating as far back as 1890. "It's a nice way to get exercise," he said.

Health and safety topics to dominate ASUO winter symposium

□ Panels and workshops on self-defense, AIDS and eating disorders are just part of this week's activities.

By Mandy Baucum
Emerald Contributor

"Personal Health and Safety" is the theme of this year's ASUO winter symposium.

Throughout this week, students and the community are invited to a variety of informational workshops, lectures and panel discussions. In the past, symposiums have been characterized by heated discussions over controversial issues, but Caitilin Twain, this year's events coordinator, has set out to change all that.

The home and safety workshop, put on by the Office of Public Safety, will be extending information on how

to better secure homes against theft or unwanted entrances.

OPS director Carey Drayton said his focus will be on general safety and "some of the things we need to do to minimize our chances of being victims."

Twain also wants to reach women who want to learn more about protecting themselves against assault.

By hosting the self-defense workshop taught by University instructor Nadia Telsey, Twain hopes to provide a group of women with the opportunity to learn from her. Telsey's teaching style approaches defense from an awareness point of view and emphasizes self-defense from the inside out.

Despite Twain's effort to eliminate controversial issues, she felt it necessary to include a lecture given by Planned Parenthood on "Current Issues and Reproductive Rights."

"I didn't feel the symposium would be complete

without women's issues," Twain said.

Because reproductive rights issues are a threat to women's safety and health, Twain felt justified in including the lecture.

Letting people know whom they can turn to in a time of crisis is another issue Twain feels is important. By putting together a resource faire consisting of about 15 local groups, she wants to give people a chance to see the assistance they have access to.

"It's amazing the benefits we can reap if we just know what's out there," Twain said.

The AIDS Prevention Teen Theater is another of the many groups that will be at the symposium. The Teen Theater is open to all Eugene high school students but now consists mostly of South Eugene High School students.

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ACTING!

Acting students say they are taking to the stage for love, not money.

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NUCLEAR DANGERS

A University assistant professor in a Friday speech traced the hazardous history of the Hanford nuclear facility.

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SWEET HOME?

The Oregon women's basketball team lost its fifth home game in a row Saturday.

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