

Student voter registration rally draws small turnout

By Chester Allen
Emerald Reporter

What if they held a student rally and nobody came?

University President Myles Brand and ASUO President Bobby Lee almost got a chance to find out during a student voter registration rally in the EMU courtyard at 11 a.m. Thursday.

Under a gray, cloudy sky, Brand, Lee and other speakers urged a small crowd of less than 75 people to register to vote in time for the November election. The rally was sponsored by ASUO and OSPIRG as part of National Student Voter Education Day.

"A lot of folks were concentrated around the Street Faire," Lee said. "They were pretty busy over there, but we did sign up a lot of students."

Despite the rally's low turnout, Lee said student volunteers registered 400 new voters.

Lee said the ASUO hopes to register 8,000 students by the Oct. 13 voter registration deadline.

Brand told the crowd students are an important group of voters.

"Registering to vote is the most important thing you can do now," Brand said. "You are the decision makers. You decide what happens."

Matt Aberbach, OSPIRG campus director, asked students to educate themselves about election issues.

"Registering to vote is only the first step," Aberbach said. "You need to educate yourself on the issues and get out and vote."

Cynthia Wooten, Democratic candidate for the state District 41 House of Representatives seat, said students need to register and vote to protect their educational opportunities.



The Duck shows freshman Kyle Wroblewski the ropes on how to register to vote.

"Perhaps for the first time in a long time, there is a line drawn in the sand, and it affects each one of you in terms of your education," Wooten said.

University students had a variety of reactions to the rally.

Jennifer Nelson, 22, said she had already registered on campus.



Photo by Dylan Coulter

At a rally on campus Thursday, University President Myles Brand (right) and ASUO President Bobby Lee urged students to register to vote and participate in the Nov. 3 election.

"I just stopped by to listen to the speakers," she said. "I have been out of Oregon for the past six months, and I'm trying to get educated on the issues."

Richard Cantwell, a political science major, said the rally prompted him to register to vote.

"I just moved to Eugene, and I was planning on registering," Cantwell said. "This just made registering really convenient."

Chemistry major Maxwell Johnson had his own reason for registering to vote.

"I'm going to take part in the revolution," Johnson said. "I registered because I want the revolution to start today."

Lee said the rally was part of concentrated campaign to register new student voters.

"There will be another rally next week, and we will be hitting classrooms, too," Lee said. "We will also be going door-to-door this weekend."

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