

Coordinator questions low EMU Ballroom capacity

By Mandy Baucum
Emerald Reporter

The Nov. 6 Public Enemy concert in the EMU Ballroom may have seemed a success to many students but only added to the disappointment of one University Cultural Forum coordinator.

Adam Zacks, national music coordinator for the Cultural Forum, said he believed he could give students a better price and allow more students to attend the show, if it weren't for the low maximum capacity limit.

Presently the ballroom has a capacity of 1,000 people, down 400 from the capacity allowed about four years ago.

Zacks said he is in favor of raising the ballroom's occupancy to its previous 1,400 maximum.

"It's obvious there is room for 300 more people," Zacks said. "(A larger ballroom capacity) would drastically lower the ticket price and allow more people to go to sold out concerts like Public Enemy."

Sacia Stiles, a sophomore who attended the Public Enemy

concert, said the ballroom could have easily housed more people.

"There was a lot of people, but it's not like that was the maximum capacity or anything," Stiles said.

The EMU Ballroom was remodeled in 1986. But Frank Geltner, EMU associate director, said the remodeling had no bearing on changing capacity. Instead, Geltner said Reggie Augsburg, the EMU's newly appointed fire marshal, made the capacity change.

Geltner said he has been

working with the EMU for 15 years and that 1,400 was always the number for strict standup concerts.

However, Augsburg, deputy fire marshal for the Eugene Fire Department, said he has been with the force for 15 years and has never heard of the 1,400 figure.

Augsburger said as far as he knows, the 1,000 code has been standard since he began working with the fire department.

A room's maximum capacity is found by dividing its square

footage by seven. Because the EMU Ballroom's square footage is 7,128, the maximum occupancy is 1,018, Augsburg said.

"Fourteen hundred would have never been in the realm of possibility," Augsburg said, "not legally."

Linda Dievendorf, the EMU's program advisor, said the ballroom's capacity changed about the same time Augsburg became the EMU's fire marshal.

"It's real possible the fire marshal doesn't have that history," Dievendorf said.

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