

University's harassment code doesn't match law

□ University has known for years that codes don't conform, advocate says

By Colleen Pohlig
Emerald Associate Editor

The University has known for at least three years that its definition of sexual harassment doesn't conform with state and federal law, the director of the Office of Student Advocacy said.

Marlene Drescher, whose salary is paid through student incidental fees and not by the University, said she has requested that the University administration come into compliance with the state's definition and rules for several years.

In a June 8, 1992 letter from Alison Baker, executive assistant to University President Myles Brand, to the President's Office, Baker writes that "the University has been engaged in reconsidering its approaches to sexual harassment for more than five years and has not yet come up with rules that work" and "our definition of sexual harassment does not comport with the law."

Baker said the University is in the process of drafting a new definition of sexual harassment that would conform with the law, and she expects the proposed rule change to go through the University hearings process before the end of the academic year.

The University's definition of sexual harassment in Oregon Administrative Rule number 571-13-025 sub-section 1 (C) reads: "It takes the form of physical contact or imminently threatened physical contact which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working, or academic environment for the individual who is the object of such conduct."

This sub-section is the problem area,

Baker said, because as it reads, a hostile work environment can only be created through physical contact.

"You can create a hostile environment with actions and conduct without physical contact," Baker said. "It can be non-verbal like putting dirty posters on the walls, etcetera, and those kinds of things are just as offensive."

"Our rule implies only pinching or petting can create a hostile environment, and to that extent, our rule isn't in compliance," Baker said.

Baker said though technically the definition isn't in compliance with state and federal law, the University has been "ignoring our own rule" in complaints of sexual harassment.

Dan Williams and Norman Wessells, the two vice presidents who make the final decisions regarding disciplinary actions for discrimination cases, both said they were unaware that the University's definition of sexual harassment hasn't been in compliance with state and federal law.

"The distinctions between the law are not that important," Williams said. "If you think sexual harassment in the workplace is unhealthy, the distinct definitions of the law become less important."

The University has also violated the mandatory 30-day completion date of investigations in some cases, Baker said.

In at least one case last summer, the Office of Human Resources extended the case deadline by one month, so that the investigation lasted two months until completion, which was a violation of state law.

Another complaint Drescher had with the University's affirmative action process of handling sexual harassment cases is that the victim is prohibited from knowing the outcome of the complaint and investigation. Because of state public

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Mall vaulting



Photo by Michael Shindler

Steve Coxon, a pole vaulter from Lane Community College, was one of nine pole vaulters who took part in a promotion Wednesday for the Eugene Indoor Track and Field meet series, this weekend at the Lane County Fairgrounds. The event took place at Valley River Center.



Photo by Jeff Pailey

(From left) Neil Johnson, Edward Cabs, James Jessie and Sean Burwell are part of the Kappa Alpha Psi step show.

Kappas to step it up Saturday

Early African rhythms, chants and dances will mix with the Americanized art form of stepping this weekend at the annual step show hosted by the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

The show will begin at 3 p.m. Saturday in the EMU Ballroom. From 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., the Kappas will also host a dance.

Neil Johnson, a Kappa and step performer, said the rhythmic chants and beats are similar to African tribal dances, but the process has been Americanized.

"Our stepping came from ancient African ceremonies," Johnson said. "A tribe off the west coast of Angola called the Nupes used sticks in their

dance."

Johnson said the sticks have evolved into canes, now a trademark in Kappa stepping.

Johnson said the judges will be looking for unison of moves, enthusiasm and crowd response in determining the winner. A trophy and \$100 will go to the winning fraternity or sorority.

Efrem Mehretab, also a Kappa member, said that stepping is a very popular "black greek thing" in the South.

This year, step groups from the University of Washington, Oregon State University and Portland State University will come to compete against the Kappas.

WEATHER

The mercury will slide down just a little bit, as temperatures go down into the 40s once more. Cloudy skies are also under way.

Today in History

Twenty years ago, in 1973, a cease-fire officially went into effect in the Vietnam war.

INCREASE THE PEACE IN NYC

NEW YORK (AP) - After months of protest, diatribes and sitdowns, the city of New York is trying another approach to racial healing: laughter.

An assortment of top comics will appear June 6 at the Lincoln Center in a benefit for the city's Increase the Peace volunteers, a group that works to ease racial tensions around the Big Apple.

Organizer and comedian Alan King promised the festival would attract "everybody from Henny Youngman to Dennis Leary." The exact line-up will be announced April 18.

New York City Mayor David Dinkins credited his Increase the Peace volunteers with helping to keep the city calm after the Rodney King verdict.

SPORTS

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) - Dale Brown's first ejection in 35 years of coaching was a little on the bland side.

"Those guys are gutless," he said of the officiating after watching from the locker room tunnel as No. four Kentucky completed a 102-65 drubbing of the Tigers. Brown, who went all last season and 17 games of this one without so much as a technical, got two Tuesday night, good for an automatic ejection.

"There were times I should have been thrown out, but not tonight," he said. "I was sitting down. I did not say profanity. I wasn't mad, I didn't yell. I just said 'Call a foul,' and he turned around and said, 'You're out of here.'"