

## EMU board needs freedom from IFC

The Incidental Fee Committee and the EMU Board of Directors have clashed repeatedly during the past two years. At issue is the method the IFC uses to allocate student funds to the EMU.

Right now, the IFC leadership is trying to exercise increased control over the operations of the EMU board. Rather than simply distribute money based on the EMU budget committee's recommendations, which is what the University administration originally intended several years ago, some IFC committee members want to have veto power over individual items within the budget.

In other words, if the IFC doesn't believe Oregon Club Sports or the EMU Craft Center is using student money effectively, it would restrict the program's use of student money without asking the EMU board. In essence, the IFC would use its budget authority to control EMU programs. The EMU board would be unnecessary.

Last week, University President Myles Brand proposed restructuring the relationship between the IFC and the EMU. Essentially, he wants to bypass the IFC's role in the EMU budget. Instead of submitting a budget for IFC Chairman Steve Masat and friends to review, the EMU board would send its budget directly to the ASUO Executive, which would then send it to Brand.

The solution is a good one — it puts the IFC back in its proper place and keeps EMU authority intact.

The IFC was never meant to be the sole governing body of student government, which is what Masat represents pushing for. He argues that the IFC best represents student interests, and the EMU board allows administrators to unjustly influence control of student money.

His argument would have merit if the EMU board entirely comprised faculty or staff. However, the board contains only four faculty members, none of whom will be allowed to vote on budget items. The remaining 11 members of the board are students — including IFC members Masat and Lydia Lerma. As Vice Provost Gerard Moseley said, "This is a transfer of authority of student fees from one student group to another."

By trying to control the EMU's use of student money, the IFC leadership is guilty of petty political posturing and power-grabbing. The EMU board is more familiar with EMU operations than the IFC, and thus is more qualified to distribute money among EMU programs. The IFC, simply because it has the authority to allocate student funds, does not have the right to micro-manage groups, including the EMU board, the athletic department or campus publications.

This was made explicit in Brand's memo. He said the IFC may not exercise control over the affairs of the EMU board, and "it should not seek to do so under any form of subterfuge or by intimidation." Quite simply, that would give too much power to one group on campus. Certainly students should have power over the use of student fees, but allowing one group to have all of the power is excessive.

Brand's plan would send a message to future IFC leaders that the group must work within the student government system, not rise above it.



**COMMENTARY**

## Make your voice heard in Salem

By Ryan P. Deckert

I just arrived back in Eugene. I spent my time away speaking with members of the Oregon Legislature about funding for the University. I concluded from my conversations that for higher education to become a valued investment in Oregon's infrastructure, some attitudes are going to have to change.

Higher education is being looked at as a luxury that the state can do without. Our state leaders, our neighbors, parents, teachers, our friends need to support higher education for the best possible future. Higher education is vitally important to the economy's development.

Oregon is going through an economic transition. Between 1980 and the year 2000, more than 150,000 new jobs that require college-level skills are being created in Oregon. A college graduate has a much greater earning power than even a community college graduate. This strengthens the economy, supports a stronger tax base and reduces our need for state services.

Through direct infusions of community and research dollars, higher education brings millions to Oregon's economy. Higher education provides direct assistance to businesses and communities throughout Oregon.

In the coming years, Oregonians will need even more access to higher education. Nearly 40 percent more students will graduate from Oregon's high schools by the year 2000 than graduated last year, which means there will be a dramatic increase in the number of students seeking a college education.

Even at the current levels of enrollment, Oregon will need 80,000 students enrolled in the higher education system by the year 2000. Oregon will not meet that need. We now have the ability to serve about 56,000 students, and that ability is shrinking. Our decisions today have grave implications for the future.

Oregon is losing its ability to retain its older-than-average college students. Unless thoughtful decisions are made, Oregon soon will not have room for the traditional-age student. But suppose we had the room. It is still unlikely the numbers of Oregonians able to pay the soaring tuition costs of the state system would be able to keep up with economic demands.

Thus it is the poor and middle-class students who are being

denied the chance at furthering their educations. Oregon is making a grave public policy decision to mortgage its future, and for what? What do we gain by denying our young the chance of a better future? Students from other states might be able to take up some of the slack, but at what cost to Oregon?

Recent polls show Oregonians support Oregon's higher education system. Seventy-one percent of Oregonians polled by the LL Stewart Foundation this past November opposed reducing state funding support for colleges and universities. Seventy-five percent of business responding to the Oregon business poll rated graduates of Oregon's higher education systems as either "above average" or "very high quality."

However, 43.5 percent of businesses said they had to recruit out of state for graduate-level positions last year because there are not enough Oregon graduates available.

I urge all students to take ownership of this problem. Students can make a difference. We are 58,000 strong, and now we are allied with students of Oregon's community colleges, who make us more than 458,000 strong. That kind of electoral power will not be ignored if we speak out.

Your options are clear. Write a letter to your elected representatives. Addresses can be found in your local newspaper, library or the ASUO office. Call your lawmakers; tell them your personal story about how the cuts in higher education have affected you and your friends.

Schedule a personal visit with our state leaders. Go in a small group and ask them directly what they plan to do for Oregon's future. Join ASUO and help organize other students; help them to find their voice.

The Oregon Student Lobby and the student governments of the state's community colleges are organizing a statewide student lobby day Wednesday, Mar. 3. I would like to see you there. Gov. Barbara Roberts, statewide student leaders and legislators will participate in this unprecedented event. We will provide transportation to the capitol, leaving campus at 10:30 a.m. You provide a voice for Oregon's future.

Ryan P. Deckert is a political science major who works for ASUO state affairs and is a member of the Oregon Student Lobby Board of Directors.

### To faculty

Wednesday, March 3, the ASUO, in collaboration with the Oregon Student Lobby, will be sponsoring a lobby day in Salem with the goal of informing legislators of the need for tax reform and enlightening them to the value of higher education.

Students will be meeting with individual legislators, observing committee hearings and attending a rally. For many students, this will be their first experience directly participating in our representative government.

Some of the students who are interested in attending may face the difficult choice between this opportunity to directly participate in the legislative process and missing an important class. Under the serious budget crisis we are all living with, we urge you to provide some flexibility for these students in the assignments or class activities scheduled for Wednesday.

We fully appreciate the importance of our classroom experience in our education. If we didn't value this, we wouldn't be fighting so hard in Salem.

We urge you to take all of this into consideration in planning your classroom activities Wednesday so those students participating in the Lobby Day will not face the dilemma of jeopardizing their academic status in your class as a result of working to preserve the University as a whole.

Thank you for your support.

**Bobby Lee**  
ASUO President

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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