

# Dean Frohnmayer looking forward to second year

By Martin Fisher  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Preparing to begin his second full year as dean of the University School of Law, Dave Frohnmayer is optimistic about the school's current situation and its future.

"Putting aside the wreckage Measure 5 is doing to the state's public services in general, we've had a very good year," Frohnmayer said.

Frohnmayer credits "strong and engaged students" and "a wonderful year of new faculty recruitment" as two indicators that the school is moving forward in spite of the state's fiscal troubled waters.

"Our star is definitely continuing to rise," he said.

Frohnmayer became dean of the law school in January 1992, after having served as Oregon's attorney general for 11 years. He said the job is different than what he thought it would be.

"I was warned about the piles of paper that deans have to process," he said, "but I didn't have any real sense for just how much paper from every conceivable source crosses your desk."

Frohnmayer said he was also unprepared for how much time he would have to spend on the road attending conferences and fund-raising, as well as being active in civic and public service organizations, including the state bar association.

Another surprise awaiting Frohnmayer was Ballot Measure 5, the property tax limitation measure passed by Oregon voters in 1990.

"We have taken some budget cuts over the last three years," Frohnmayer said, "but we've also found other sources of revenue, and our students pay a higher proportion of their education than do other students in graduate programs in the state system of higher education."

Frohnmayer said the perception of dam-

age done by Measure 5 is greater than the actual damage, but "there's no question that it is scaring off Oregon students."

However, Frohnmayer claims the law school is one of two premiere law schools in the Northwest, the other being at the University of Washington. There are six law schools in Oregon and Washington.

"We end up being one of the major schools of choice for the region, and, in some cases, the nation," he said.

As a public school, one of the law school's most important functions is to provide access to a professional education that students otherwise could not afford, Frohnmayer said.

Another important role the school plays is public service, Frohnmayer said. Faculty and students at the law school work in clinics, such as the environmental law clinic, and are active in legal reform in the state.

Environmental law is one of the school's strongest programs, yet Frohnmayer expressed surprise on his part and that of the faculty upon learning that *U.S. News and World Report* listed Lewis and Clark Northwestern School of Law in Portland as one of the top five environmental law programs in the country, while giving no mention to the University program.

"I don't know what it's based on," he said of the report. "We have a broader curriculum and the largest grass-roots conference in the United States, maybe the world, and have had for maybe a dozen years."

"I don't want to make our case by bashing a sister law school," Frohnmayer said, "but we don't take second fiddle to anybody."

Frohnmayer said although environmental law is one of the law school's stronger programs, it is not the only strong



Dave Frohnmayer

program.

"To have a school of broad public service capabilities, you need to have multiple strengths," he said. "In addition to natural resources, one of our traditional strengths has been in public law, public service."

Frohnmayer said he also believes the school "has a role to play in the emerging entrepreneurial economy of the 21st century."

"That's the high wage, family wage economy that we want to both import here and strengthen that that is already here," he said.

"We have an obligation to serve the small businesses that are the core of the Northwest economy," he said, adding that "the interesting thing is that there is hardly a law school in the country that has that as a focus."

"A lot of law schools are in this sort of 19th-century, or early 20th-century, Harvard law school model, and they don't necessarily see that they have a mission to be part of the society," he said.

Frohnmayer is positive in his outlook for the school's future.

"I think it's very bright," he said. "I see us being the school of choice for the region. I see us playing a major role in public decisions of all kinds that have legal implications, with a real service and outreach component."

Frohnmayer also wants to develop more of a connection between the law school and the rest of the University.

Frohnmayer said he was pleased by the interest shown last winter in an experimental law course designed for undergraduate students. Law 410, Perspectives in Law, was very well received, he said.

Because of its success, the class will be offered this year during fall and winter terms.

As for his own future, Frohnmayer is vague. After having spent 11 years as attorney general and losing a gubernatorial race to Barbara Roberts, does Frohnmayer ever consider someday returning to the public arena?

"My crystal ball is very opaque," he said. "I don't have a master calendar and a master game plan."

"Right now I think I'm doing something that is valuable, and I'm trying to do it well," he said of being dean. "In the short 18 months that I've been here, I've got a lot of help, but I've got a lot to look back on and to be real proud of."

"You tend to do those things that you get positive reinforcement for having done, and so far the reinforcement has been positive," he said.

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