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UNIVERSITY

Loan checks venue changes

By Edward Klopfenstein

Oregon Daily Emerald

At 8 a.m. last Thursday, doors to the financial aid office at Oregon Hall opened and a rush of money-poor students lined up for their loan checks. Within a few minutes, the line reached to the street outside.

The bustling scene made one man especially happy.

"So far, it's working OK," said Jim Heiss, Perkins Student Loan manager and the person who switched student loan check pick-up points from the EMU Ballroom to Oregon Hall.

This is the first year checks are being disbursed from the business building. Along with the University's new monthly billing system, the change represents a more than 20-year effort to streamline student business services through one central location. The new billing system started in August for the fall term. A company in Seattle helps coordinate student payments.

Ever since the initial design of Oregon Hall in the late 1960s, the intent of the building was for it to become the University's center for its business affairs, Heiss said.

The old system of disbursement was too costly for his department and too frustrating for the students, he said.

At the ballroom, students often stood in line for at least 20 minutes for their checks and then stood in another line to pay the cashier.

At the start of spring term, Heiss said the head

cashier for the cashier department decided not to set her cashiers up at the ballroom in the fall because students could pay through the new billing system. Two days later, Heiss decided loan checks would not be disbursed in the ballroom either.

"(Students) don't have to go to the cashier," he said, "so we don't have to go to the ballroom."

Jaonna Drew, a freshman majoring in romance languages, said she waited about 20 minutes when interviewed halfway through the line. "It's hurry up and wait," she said.

Paul Dondero, a graduate student in music, said that because more people were in his line at the ballroom, the A through D line, he thought moving everyone through one line to six different stations was better.

"It's more equitable this way," Dondero said. "Everybody gets to wait the same amount of time."

Employees acting as crowd control said people took about 40 minutes to get through the line.

"We'll see how it does after fall, winter and spring," Heiss said.

The change reduced the department's setup costs this term, said Heiss, because his department could use its existing facilities instead of recreating the same system in the ballroom.

Heiss hired several people as line managers, but that also is a cost he wishes to reduce as students become more accustomed to the system and need less direction.

BILLS

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processes the bills more cheaply than the University can, Tergesen said.

"This is another way we can be more efficient. Measure 5 has made us look for ways to cut down — especially since we're facing future cuts," Doerksen said.

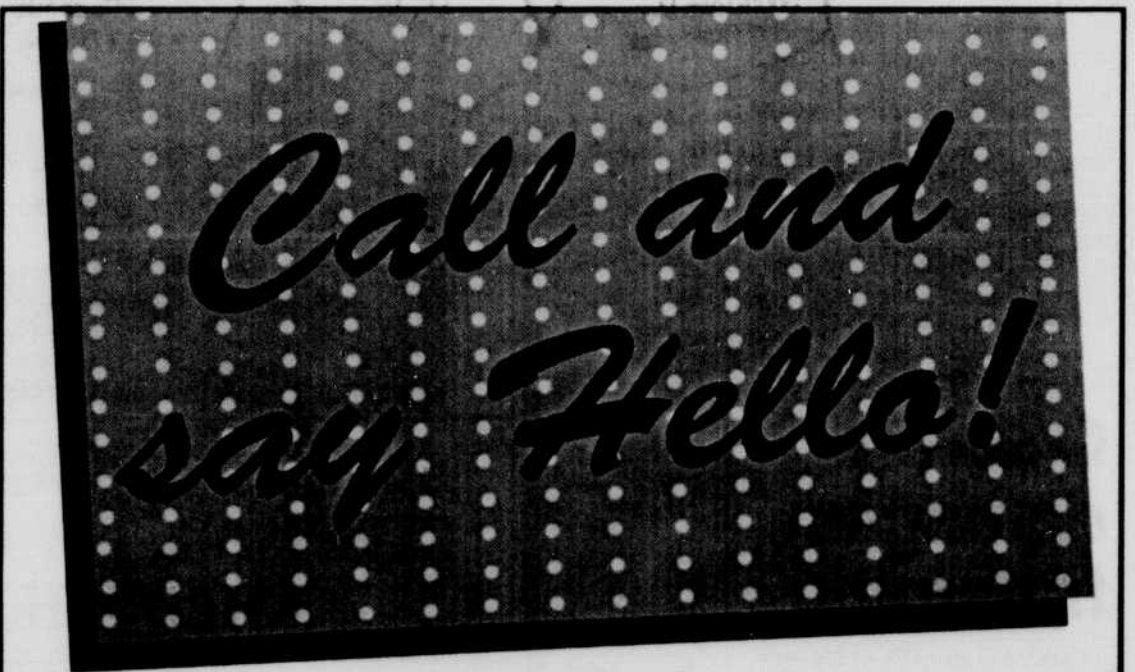
Students having difficulties paying their increased tuition because of Measure 5 may be happy that the \$50 late registration fee has been abolished.

Business office employees decided to get rid of all individual fines in exchange for a nine percent annual interest rate on the unpaid balance and a \$5 monthly re-billing charge.

"The billing used to be really tricky," Tergesen said, referring to the former late registration fine, the \$5 late fine for short-term and deferred-tuition loans, and varying late fines for dormitory and rental housing.

Besides being simpler, the new format is also more professional, he said.

"It's much more business-like."



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