

Measure 1 tax revenue could benefit students

Higher education would benefit indirectly from implementation of sales tax

By Julie Swensen
Oregon Daily Emerald

University students may be wondering why they should vote for a five percent sales tax when its proceeds would be devoted only for K-12 and community college education.

Higher education was excluded from the measure because that option was most appealing to voters, said Ed Dennis, field director for the Oregon Student Lobby. Because only about 20 percent of Oregonians have a college degree, many people view higher education almost as a "privilege," but favor K-12 and community college education because they can relate to it, he said.

Still, without that direct revenue from

the sales tax, Oregon colleges and universities would still indirectly benefit. As a sales tax devoted to K-12 and community colleges would take a burden off the state general fund, more money could be made available for higher education institutions. For that reason, the Oregon Student Lobby wasn't too upset when the measure excluded higher education, Dennis said.

"If this were to pass, it would still do tremendous things for us," he said.

One expected benefit is that University students would see a lower rate of tuition increases, University President Myles Brand said.

But the extent of Measure 1's benefits is uncertain, according to University and legislative officials.

The University's anticipated gain from the proposed sales tax is "up in the air," said Trent Spradling, budget director for

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Measure 5 cuts may push University to privatization

State education system asks schools to consider privatizing in near future

By Doreen Johnson
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The next four to six years may see the University make the transformation to a private institution, as 1990's Ballot Measure 5 forces state schools to examine such a future.

The passage of Measure 5 came on the heels of 10 years of recession and budget reductions for the institutions in the Oregon State System of Higher Education. The effects of the tax cut are being phased in over a period of four years. Without tax

base restructuring, public colleges and universities will have to accept major financial changes.

Privatizing the University is one of several possible new directions considered by the state system. The result of the switch could mean the cost of a college education may shift more to the students and may change the governing structure of the school.

State Representative Carolyn Oakley, R-Albany and chairwoman of the House Education Committee, and Vice Chairman Jim Whitty have asked Oregon to consider the effects of such a transition.

University Senior Vice Provost Gerald Kissler understands that such a change

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Administration faces problem of balancing productivity, funding

University hopes productivity plan could offer a new sense of direction

By Rivers Janssen
Oregon Daily Emerald

If University administrators had their way, the scenario would go like this: A student begins her first year at the University and joins a Freshmen Interest Group, which guides her through a variety of social and classroom activities. She enjoys the experience and believes the University provided her with a personal, interactive education.

Her second year, she goes to academic advising and is helped closely by faculty counselors. They not only plan her course load, but also give her a career direction so she doesn't feel as if she's drifting aimlessly through school.

Her last two years, she toils at internships, takes seminars where she can work closely with a professor doing research, and labors at a campus lab. In other words, she begins "intensive applied learning," a favorite University phrase to describe students taking the initiative toward improving their own education.

She is in and out of the University in four years, making room for someone else.

If every University student were to follow that pattern, administrators figure student retention would be much higher. And student retention needs to be high because University President Myles Brand is kicking around the idea of expanding enrollment from about 16,500 to roughly 18,000 or 19,000.

This would both soften the blow of another \$10 million in cuts per year from 1995-97 by adding the tuition money of another few thousand students, and help the state prepare for the estimated 40 percent increase in Oregon high school graduates by the year 2000. At the same time, Brand says the University can't add any more faculty or staff because it doesn't have the money.

Welcome to the next crisis in higher education at the University.

There are several dilemmas that the administration faces. First, how do you attract more students to a University that is offering higher tuition and fewer programs than it would like?

Second, how do you teach several thousand more students with the same number of faculty without creating a robo-education environment, where students feel like statistics rather than people?

Third, how do you retain those students once they're here — particularly the non-residents whose tuition money contributes heavily to the school's operating budget?

And fourth, how can you maintain the University's mission as a research institution, as Brand has continually advocated, while you're trying to figure out how to accommodate these students?

The answer: Nobody knows for sure. The only thing they do know is something has to be done.

Charley Wright, a math professor at the University, wrote in a faculty memo that: "Given the facts, we're forced to depend on increased tuition, especially from out-of-state students. That means that we have to make

our programs attractive and to offer perceived value for money, provide solid learning opportunities, and minimize the barriers we set up for students. If we don't, if we can't attract and keep out-of-state students, then it's all over."

The University is currently working on a productivity plan to present to the state chancellor by March. The plan is mandated by Chancellor Thomas Bartlett's office for all state colleges and universities as a way to hopefully resolve some of these questions. And while no one knows what ideas the planning committee will come up with, it's hoped that there will be enough concrete ideas to come up with a few answers.

The chancellor's office gave the committee five areas to focus on. The first is student self-paced learning projects, specifically related to technology. Brand discusses the possibility of students spending only two hours of a four credit course in lecture and spending the other two working with a computer. That way the professor could lecture more classes without increasing his or her workload.

Jerry Kissler, senior vice provost for the University, says that such a program is feasible as long as students learn the class material.

"There may be pockets of opportunity," Kissler said. "Particular courses could be taught differently, and the technology could be used differently. The challenge is to make the students learn the same amount of material but in different ways than going to a lecture for three or four hours."

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Devil in disguise



Five-year-old Sean Maher takes a walk with his family Wednesday afternoon. Sean dressed up as a devil and went looking for pumpkins and cats on 19th Street.

JEFF PASLAY/Emerald