

O'Kelley looks forward to challenges of new position

By Kaly Soto
Oregon Daily Emerald

Like the White House, the University has been playing musical administrators.

Dave Frohnmayer's move to the president's office left a vacancy at the dean's office in the law school. Charles O'Kelley has been chosen to fill that vacancy.

O'Kelley who earned his bachelor's degree from University of the South in 1970, and his law degree from University of Texas at Austin in 1972, began teaching at the University in 1982.

His main focus at the University and throughout life has been business law. Before coming to the University O'Kelley practiced law in Atlanta and taught law at Tulane Law School and University of Alabama Law School.

O'Kelley decided to start teaching because he enjoyed private practice so much. "For most people who teach law it's not a question of which you do because you continue to be involved in the practice life even as you teach. I really enjoy working with students, and have always, in the back of my mind, thought I would be a teacher, even in high school."

In addition to his duties as an instructor and his research in business law O'Kelley is the current chair of the admissions committee for the law school. O'Kelley is confident that his position as dean will not hinder his ability to be keep in touch with students.

Before his appointment as dean O'Kelley was associate dean of students, he finds the differences between the two posts to be mainly administrative.

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— Charles O'Kelley,
interim dean, School of Law

"There are two big differences. The first is that the associate dean focuses primarily on internal aspects of the school as they relate to inside the building whereas the dean has to focus on external issues and constituencies or relations inside the University and carry out the school's strategic plan everywhere," he said.

During his time as dean, O'Kelley would like to concentrate on getting the law school technologically up to date.

"I think the biggest challenge facing the law school, and the University in general is technology.

"We are as a university affected by our location. It is an advantage because Eugene is a wonderful place to live and to be, but we don't have access to the very top practitioners in Portland.

"Technology is going to make it possible for us to do distance learning in a way that would have seemed impossible two years ago. It will make it possible to have really interactive instruction from other locations and vice versa," O'Kelley said.

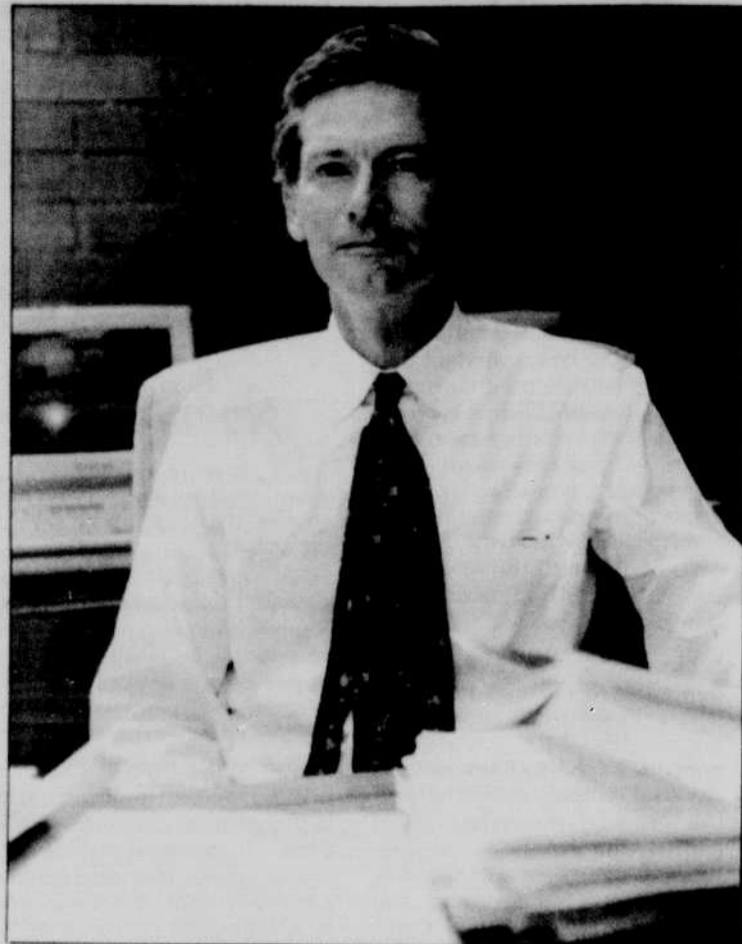
O'Kelley stressed the importance of technology in education, not only as a benefit for students, but as a necessity for

the University.

"I think there is a tremendous shaking out in education, just like there is in other industries. Only the fit are going to survive. In order to survive we're going to have to be on the cutting edge of technology as an institution. We're going to have to offer our students an environment in which they can be really up to speed in how computers affect whatever discipline they are in."

Like other administrators around the state O'Kelley is going to try to rectify the damage done to the law school by 1990's Measure 5. Rather than being devastated by the effect the measure has had on the school, O'Kelley seemed thankful that the University and the school have been forced to find new and innovative ways to fund their programs.

"We have become much more tuition dependent as opposed to dependent on direct state funding. As with the rest of higher education, I think we've become much more entrepreneurial. There are now incentives for doing our jobs better. We get to keep the revenues we generate and we never were allowed to do that before. So, just as you see more competition in the economy you



Charles O'Kelley took his post as interim dean earlier this summer.

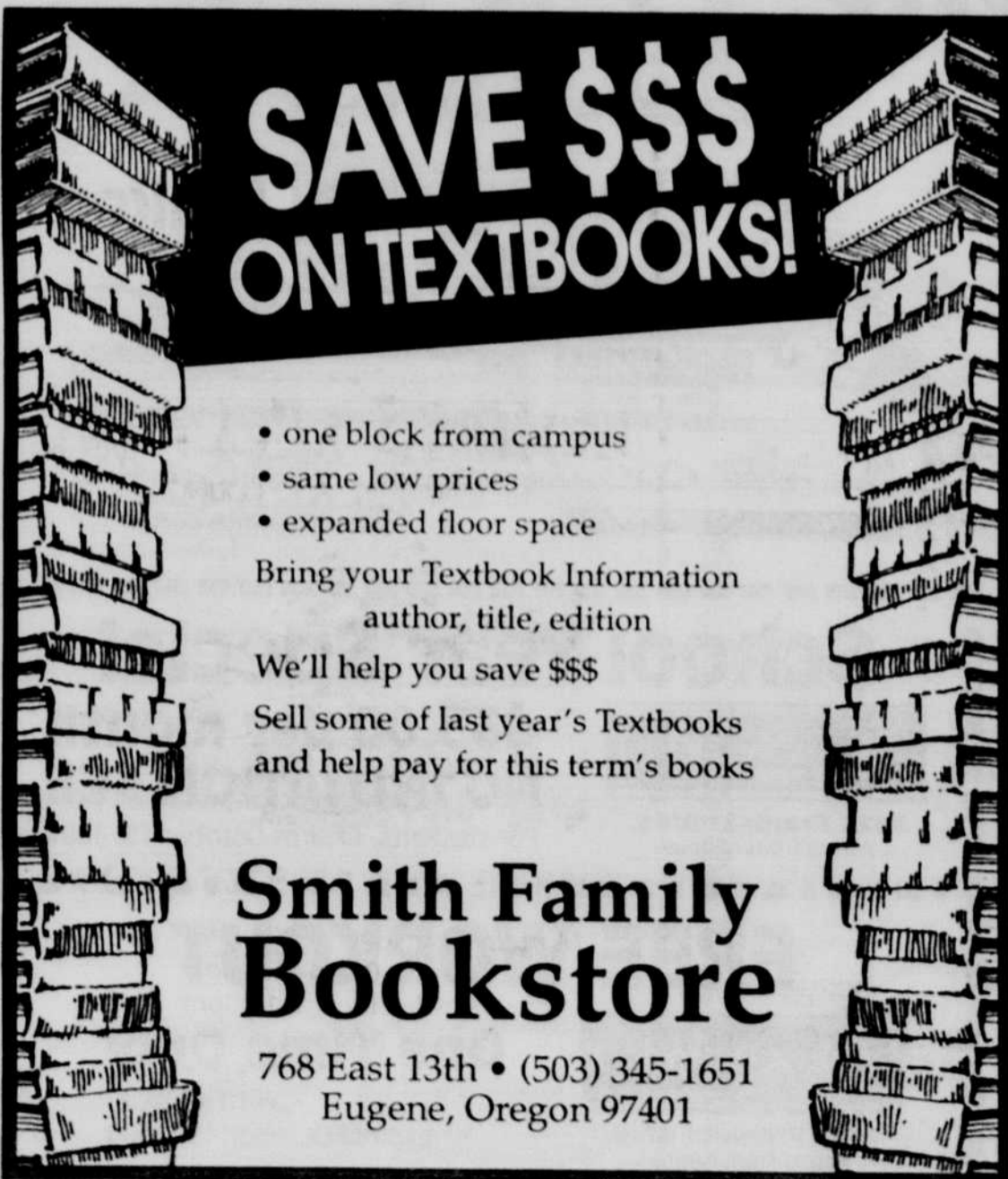
will see more competition in higher education because of Measure 5.

"The obvious disadvantage (of Measure 5) is that the product costs more. But you see a much better product at the University generally and at the law school in particular than you did five years ago. You see more caring faculty and more time devoted to program development."

When asked if he thought the end result of Measure 5 would

be to drive talented faculty out of the state in search of better paying jobs elsewhere, O'Kelley responded in a manner that was atypical for an employee of Oregon's higher education system.

"It becomes a challenge to keep those faculty and find ways to finance education so that you don't lose them. And I think if you look at the University law school you'd say that this is a much better University than it was 5 years ago."



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