

Streetwise

What do you think about the recent survey which rates Oregon as the most politically active campus in the country?



ZOE BANKS
senior

I think that's great. It's really important that people be politically aware because it seems that there is a lot of apathy among people of this age group.



KOBAY COX
Eugene resident

Right on. That's why I'm living here, people have open minds.



LUCY BARR
sophomore

I'm not involved in the politics here but I know there are a lot of groups that are trying to get students involved."

Compiled by Gina Kayser

University lives up to top activist rating

Rebecca Merritt
Oregon Daily Emerald

Like many student activists, Katy Anthes came to the University of Oregon because of the diverse campus environment.

"I knew that it would sort of breed activism," said Anthes, who is chairwoman of the University chapter of the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

"I think Eugene is sort of a melting pot for different types of people which brings up a lot of new ideas."

Anthes and other University activists aren't surprised by a recent survey in *Mother Jones* magazine which ranked the University of Oregon as the top activist campus in the nation.

"I'm certainly not going to argue with it," said Matt Rabin, campus organizer for OSPIRG.

Neither would President Bill Clinton, who took his 1992 presidential campaign to Eugene because the University registered more voters than any campus in the nation. About 10,000 people crowded into McArthur Court while another 10,000 were turned away at the door.

Political awareness has always been part of the University education. Since the late 1800s, University students have picketed, screamed and rallied any time the government, political groups or the University does something they disagree with.

Keith Richard, University archivist, said the earliest student protest recorded was in 1883, when students demonstrated against "ten commandments," which included rules about dating and other student behavior, compiled by University faculty.

Antiwar demonstrations jolted the campus throughout the century, beginning in 1936 and ending with the 1991 Gulf War. During the University's most radical period, the early 1970s, protesters bombed campus buildings, threw bags of animal blood on ROTC recruiters, refused to attend classes and blocked off 13th Avenue with concrete and stone walls. Some protests were broken up by police with tear gas.

Today, students fight for the environment, gay-rights and other political issues. And although student protests in the 90s are more peaceful, the level of commitment of campus activists remains high.

The OSPIRG chapter has about 300 active volunteers. About 8,000 students said they were interested in joining the group during the first three weeks of classes, Rabin said.

Rabin said activism on campus has changed since the 60s and 70s. More students have to work just to afford college tuition so they have



Thousands of University students protested the Gulf War in 1991. Several demonstrators were arrested by Eugene police officers.



University students and other activists carry signs in protest of the 1991 Gulf War.

less time to dedicate to political causes. Activists are more challenged, which makes their victories "that much sweeter," he said.

Kalpana Krishnamurthy, another University

activist, said activists today realize they need to get involved with creating change rather than just picketing and yelling.

"I think we do that a little more effectively now than in the 60s," she said. "Now the sense of urgency has set in and we need to get out there and fix the problem."

Students say the new breed of campus activists are mainly concerned with the environment. Many out-of-state students don't want Oregon to fall victim to some of the problems that have plagued other areas.

"I think they're seeing Oregon and they're seeing the natural beauty here and they want to protect it," Krishnamurthy said.

Rabin said most students are concerned about protecting the quality-of-life here.

But no matter what the issue, most activists say once they've started fighting for a cause, it's hard to turn their backs. Some even say activism can be addictive.

"I think people's commitment to the issues tend to be long term," Rabin said.

Krishnamurthy agreed.

"Once you find out about a problem, it's very hard to let it go until you find a solution," she said.

Diverse University groups team up to increase student vote

Abe Estimada
Oregon Daily Emerald

Politics does indeed make for very strange partnerships. Who could have ever imagined the Nov. 8 election bringing College Republicans together with the College Democrats and OSPIRG to get more students to vote?

"Obviously, there are no other groups on campus who I would disagree with more than those two groups," said Mark Numainville, membership officer for the College Republicans. "But getting people involved and seeing students take an active role in government is not a partisan issue."

Together with the ASUO, College Republicans, College Democrats, OSPIRG and University Housing registered 7,000 new voters — the highest in the nation for a non-presidential election year.

This broad coalition organized the voter registration rally last October. The drive also brought gubernatorial candidate John Kitzhaber to campus.

And now these strange partners are working together once again to get the University electorate to the polls through phone banks and voter education tables. If these efforts are not enough to increase student participation, University Housing is thinking of providing transportation to polling stations in Eugene.

"It's a real testament to how hard the coalition is working," said Matt Rabin, OSPIRG campus organizer. "The '92 elections were more glitzy. But we've shown a genuine commitment to mobilizing students."

Today, the ASUO and OSPIRG, along with the College Republicans and College Democrats, will be putting on Voter Mobilization Day. Vol-

unteers from each of the groups will be canvassing the EMU and the campus reminding students to vote through voter education tables, which provide information on ballot measures and maps to polling stations in Eugene.

Green Voter Project Coordinator Jennifer Robertson of OSPIRG is encouraging student groups "who have a stake" in this year's elections to help operate voter education tables on Nov. 7. OSPIRG has 125 volunteers operating voter education tables outside of the Fish Bowl at various times since the beginning of the term, Robertson said.

During the voter registration drive, Robertson said OSPIRG was responsible for registering between 400 and 500 students who stopped at their tables.

OSPIRG State Board Chairwoman Kalpana Krishnamurthy said her group handed out over 1,000 voter registration forms and spoke before approximately 8,000 students in lecture halls and classroom across the campus in two and half weeks.

On the eve of the Nov. 8 election, the coalition will be operating a 2,000-number phone bank set up by the ASUO and OSPIRG to remind students to vote.

Rich Bernstein, chairman of the College Democrats, plans to send about five volunteers to help operate the phone bank.

The College Democrats have worked with other organizations on campus to help inform voters about candidates and ballot measures.

Bernstein's group has worked with the campus radio station, KWVA, to talk about different initiatives such as Measure 15. Measure 15 would require the Oregon legislature to fund

schools and community colleges at no less than 1993-1995 fund levels.

"It hits home," Bernstein said of Measure 15. "If they know that, the more likely they will vote."

During the voter registration drive, Bernstein's group provided some of the manpower the coalition used to hand out voter registration cards at the U of O Bookstore and the EMU.

The College Democrats were also responsible for bringing the media and Democratic candidates to the voter registration rally. Bernstein estimates his group was responsible for registering 150 to 200 students.

Numainville said the College Republicans have been providing information on gubernatorial candidate Denny Smith and other local Republican candidates through tables in the EMU lobby. Ten to fifteen people have been running the informational tables every Wednesday since the beginning of school.

Numainville did not know how many students the College Republicans registered. "The one thing that struck me was the number of people registered. You almost had to look for people to register," he said.

Sally Smith, assistant director for residence, said in the past, University Housing has provided vans to transport students to polling stations. University Housing is thinking about using the vans for the November elections again, she said.

Smith also said University Housing distributed more than 2,000 voter registration forms when dorm residents checked into their rooms on Sept. 19. ASUO State Affairs Coordinator Ryan Coonerty said University Housing registered about 1,800 students.