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## AIDS activist speaks at Mac Court

Abe Estimada

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Victims of HIV are more afraid of rejection than of the deadly virus itself, and only compassion and courage can fight the discrimination AIDS sufferers face from society, prominent AIDS activist Mary Fisher said.

Fisher's 25-minute regionally televised speech drew hundreds of people with different ages, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds to McArthur Court Thursday morning.

"We are each of us somehow afraid that all the rest of you will not like us," she said. "We live in fear of being rejected, unpopular, hurt and isolated. It's also true of victims of AIDS."

The biggest fear isn't the virus, sickness or even death. We learn to accept what we cannot change. ... It's the fear of not dying; it's living with contempt, hatred and shame, and that somehow we earned this slow death," Fisher said.

Fisher, a mother of two boys and an assistant to former President Gerald Ford, gained national attention when she announced to the 1992 Republican National Convention she was HIV-positive.

She contracted the virus from her former husband, who died of the disease a year ago. Fisher's plight helps to dispel the



FISHER

myth that AIDS afflicts only gay men and intravenous drug abusers.

A large portion of the Mac Court crowd Thursday were University and high school students, one of two groups more vulnerable to contracting the deadly virus, she said.

Fisher said adolescents and women were the two groups more at risk of catching the disease through heterosexual contact. In 1994, one out of four diagnosed cases were people under 20, she said.

"The virus is happy to find us and invade any one of us," Fisher said. "AIDS has only one eligibility test. You must be human."

Currently, state health statistics show 3,000 cases of HIV have been reported in Oregon, 1,700 of whom have died. In Lane County, 101 people have died from the disease out of a reported 181 cases.

She urged anyone who has had unprotected sex or shared a needle to get tested.

"I appeal to you as a colleague

and a friend, as someone who has no more or less fears than you have, to act responsibly," Fisher said. "If you have been at risk of AIDS, please get tested. ... Whether you are faculty or students or administrators watching from the back row of this auditorium or a distant classroom or from the kitchen of your home, it doesn't matter."

Fisher also said even if the test results are negative, she said she hopes the testing process will persuade people to be more careful with their behavior.

"And if the test confirms your worst fears and you are HIV-positive, I welcome you to join the millions of people like you who are pilgrims on the road to AIDS," she said.

Fisher fielded questions from the audience after her speech, including one asking whether or not AIDS education was adequate enough to persuade people to act responsibly or dispel myths about the disease.

"We need to know all the facts ... but what I'm most fond of telling you and when we talk about compassion, is the way we don't get this disease," she said. "We don't get this disease by loving one another, and we don't get this disease by being a friend or taking care of each other."

## OSPIRG

Continued from Page 1

us. Just a little bit of a sour victory."

The group requested a zero percent budget increase, but a recent budget increase at another OSPIRG's four Oregon chapters created a budget surplus. The budget committee at Lewis and Clark College gave OSPIRG a \$2,750 increase Thursday morning, creating an income surplus that the group didn't have time to account for.

The University's committee seized the opportunity, unanimously voting to cut OSPIRG's funding so that the group had just enough budget money to meet its needs.

Nearly three dozen OSPIRG supporters, including two state representatives, came from all across the state, filling the meeting.

The group has spent the last month working with student senators and finance committee members to address concerns about the group. On Wednesday, the Student Senate passed the group's goal statement nearly unanimously.

The committee also passed its own budget, allocating \$9,831 for next year's members. The committee cut stipends in order to "treat ourselves like we've treated others all year," member Jason Leek said. The voted was approved three to one with

Leek against.

The Multi Cultural Center had its budget reviewed after the committee sustained ASUO Executive President Leslie Warren's veto of its original budget. Warren vetoed the budget because the committee cut two GTF positions.

The committee reconsidered its original \$17,850 allocation, deciding to give the center the money for the two GTFs. The extra \$6,470 for the two positions brought the new budget total to \$24,610. The committee approved the budget five to one with member Matt McGinnis against.

Some of the most emotional debate of the night came during the Hawaii Club's appeal of its \$300 budget allocation. The club has been on campus since 1955, but has never received student fees. Under a self-imposed guideline, the committee limits first-year groups to only \$300.

The committee contemplated increasing the group's funding since it has been on campus so long, an action McGinnis called "crappy, irresponsible and dumb."

The committee unanimously voted to refer the club's appeal to the full Student Senate. Funding the Hawaii Club "could pit groups [in a similar situation] against each other," said committee member Chris Kantowitz.

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