

Financial aid faces cuts by Congress

■ **MONEY:** An ASUO campaign is designed to inspire students to speak out against the cuts

By Jennifer Carter
Student Activities Reporter

The chalk body outlines on campus today represent students who won't be able to afford higher education if cuts slated for next year's federal financial aid become reality.

It's a message the student government wants to send to the University community and legislators in Washington, D.C.

The educational campaign titled "Students are Getting Slashed," is a statewide event coordinated by the ASUO. Its goal is to educate students about the \$7.8-10.5 billion cuts proposed to federal financial aid.

Last year, 7,759 University students applied for financial aid. Of those students, 7,197 received about \$47 million in financial aid from the federal government.

With the proposed cuts, University students' financial aid may be reduced, said Kevin Easton, federal affairs coordinator for the ASUO. He said it all depends on the action of Congress in the next few weeks.

Today in the EMU Courtyard, students will hear how the proposed financial aid cuts will affect them. University President Dave Frohnmayer will speak along with Ed Vignoul, director of student financial aid, and ASUO President Jennifer Williamson.

Students can also call their representatives at the Capitol to tell them first-hand how

important they think financial aid is. Cellular phones will be provided for students to make free phone calls to Washington, D.C.

Easton said his goal is to make students aware. He said the cuts have been proposed in an attempt to reduce the deficit.

"Deficit reduction is supposed to help our generation," he said, "but the reality is that our generation is the one that is being affected."

Similar news conferences are scheduled at all universities and community colleges across the state.

"Many people look at financial aid and think it is guaranteed, but that is not the case," Easton said. "These cuts are the largest ever proposed in history, and we need to take action to stop them."

Easton said financial aid programs could be maintained if students are able to lobby Congress before the proposed cuts become law.

President Clinton has until Oct. 1 to sign a new budget or veto Congress' version. Currently, the Senate is drafting a bill with \$7.8 billion of cuts to federal financial aid programs. The House of Representatives version slates \$10.5 billion of cuts over the next seven years.

The House's cuts include elimination of both the Perkins Loan Program and the Oregon Need Grant, a program that gives students funds from both the federal government and the Oregon state government.

Both the House and Senate are also discussing changes to the direct-lending program and the creation of a tax on colleges and

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universities based on the volume of their federal student loans. The tax would be paid by the institution based on the number of students who received federal loans.

Financial aid director Vignoul said elimination of the Perkins Loan Program would have little effect on University students because the University no longer receives federal money for the program. Instead, the Perkins program is financed through a revolving fund.

Changes to direct-lending, including elimination or cap of the program, however, could impact University students.

"Direct lending is faster and easier for students," Easton said. "They don't have to stand in financial aid lines, and they don't have to worry about their loan changing banks."

The House and Senate are expected to meet later this week to review both versions of the federal budget and reach a compromise to present to President Clinton.

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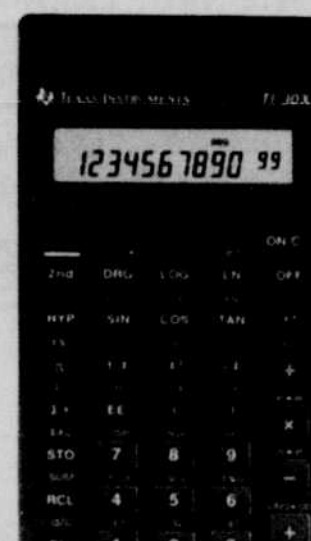
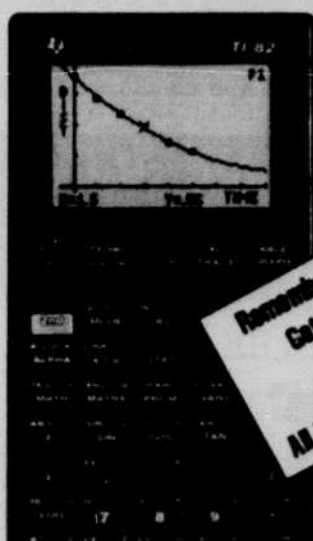
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