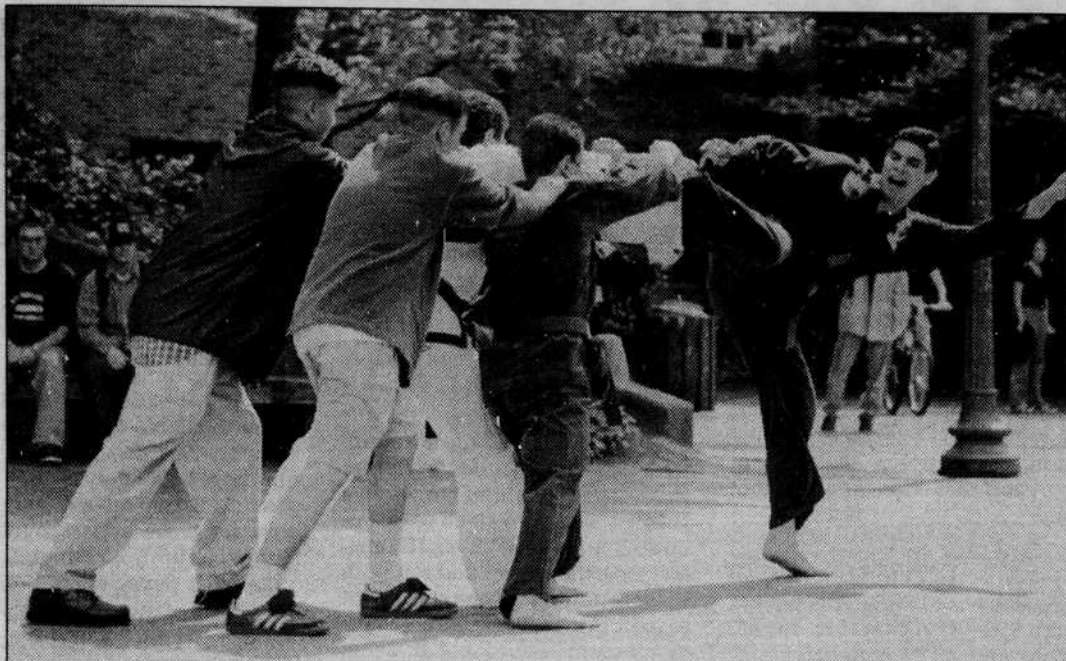


Concentrated force



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald
Jeff Ghazal from the Eugene Academy of Tae Kwon Do demonstrates his Korean martial art skills with the help of members from the audience during a presentation in the EMU Courtyard Wednesday.

City officials opt for public safety

■ **OPTION ONE:** The city's proposed plan will cut back on recreation, including support for the Hult Center

By Eric Collins
Community Reporter

Public safety, the library, city parks and an at-risk youth program were chiefly preserved Wednesday night, while recreation and cultural programs were slated for major cuts by Eugene officials in a budget-cutting strategy recommendation that will go to the public next Wednesday.

In the committee's recommended scenario, community and senior centers, along with athletic and aquatics programs, will all be eliminated or privatized, while the Hult Center will lose all general fund support.

In the meantime, policing and prevention, medical and fire emergency services and maintenance of city parks will receive minor reductions in funding. The library will suffer a minor loss in service hours, and the Outdoor Program will continue to be funded in part by the city.

The Council Committee on Ballot Measure 47—comprised of city council members, budget committee members and the mayor—has been working throughout April to form a strategy to eliminate approximately \$12 million in services and administrative costs

from the city's budget.

If the Council approves the committee's recommendation, the cuts won't go into effect until July 1. Eugene voters will get a chance to fund back some city services if the \$32.7 million serial levy, Measure 20-83, is passed May 20.

Wednesday's session brought at least one cultural program back into the city-service picture. The Outdoor Program, a primarily at-risk youth service, took a cut in funding, but the committee approved \$138,000 for the ten-year-old organization.

Many other recreational services were left unprotected from funding cuts, much to the chagrin of forty community center and recreation program supporters who gathered outside the McNutt Room prior to the meeting.

However, this didn't hinder further discussion on funding recreation programs. Budget committee members Howard Bonnett, Ryan Darwish and Alan Zelenka all supported a proposal that would redirect public safety money to the recreation programs. Darwish said the recreation programs were of more value to the citizens of Eugene because they dealt with crime issues in a proactive way as opposed to adding money to enforcement.

Zelenka said he believed other organizations would not step in to

“It's far from clear if anyone will keep the programs open. The dozens of people who are here tonight disagreed with what the city is doing.”

— Alan Zelenka
Budget committee

run the services if they were cut.

“It's far from clear if anyone will keep the programs open,” Zelenka said. “The dozens of people who are here tonight disagreed with what the city is doing.”

Nevertheless, some council members reminded the committee that their job was to prioritize services that could only be provided by the city, with public safety as an example. Bobby Lee, the city councilman from the University area, said the committee had already decided to put public safety ahead of recreational services.

“If there was an emergency situation in this city, and we can't provide it, then who is?” Lee said.

The public will have a chance to comment on the committee's recommendation Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall.

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