

# Several student-related bills advance

■ **LEGISLATURE:** Among bills which had a hearing are those to cut incidental fees and alter housing rules

By Sarah Keech  
Higher Education Reporter

As of Friday, all bills in the state legislature that have not had a hearing will proceed no further in the legislative process.

"All of the bills we are supporting this session made it past the hearings phase," explained Jon Isaacs, field organizer for the Oregon Student Association.

Along with the supported bills came some the OSA wants stopped, Issacs said.

"House Bill (HB) 3644 is still alive and headed to a work session in the next week or two," he said.

During the work session, HB 3644, which proposes to eliminate student incidental fees, is expected to be amended to change the bill's focus.

"One amendment that is expected to be added would exclude athletics and student union buildings from the proposed check-off system," Isaacs said.

This means that students would not have to worry about funding athletic programs and

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— Jon Isaacs  
Oregon Student Association

student union buildings like the EMU; these fees would be absorbed into regular tuition.

One of the other bills being closely watched by the OSA is Senate Bill (SB) 5530, relating to the Oregon need grant.

"The Oregon need grant is the only financial aid given by the state. About 25 percent of Oregon college students who are eligible for the Oregon need grant are not covered because the state lacks the funds," Isaacs said.

The association is seeking to find an additional \$6.1 million from the state legislature to ensure all students eligible for the need grant receive it.

Other student-related bills that have made it past the hearings phase include SB 1158, relating to tax credits for working students, and SB 760, relating to student status in housing discrimination.

"SB 760 has a better chance of

the two of having a work session," said Jef Green, an aide in Senator Randy Leonard's office in Salem.

"But, there is so little support for that bill that it may not even make it to a work session," he said.

SB 760 would add student enrollment status to a list of reasons a property owner or rental agency cannot discriminate. Currently, student enrollment status can be a factor in denying rental privileges.

In Eugene, apartment complexes like Parkgrove limit the number of students that live in their facilities.

"It is such a simple issue, it would be such an easy thing to get through the legislature. Our problem is that there is little support; there are not many people who care enough about the issue," Green said.

The other student related-bill sponsored by Leonard's office is SB 1158. This bill had a group gavel hearing and must have a regular hearing before it can proceed through the legislature.

The only deadline ahead is the end of the legislative session, set for late spring or early summer. Any bills that have not passed through the House and Senate will die and not become law.

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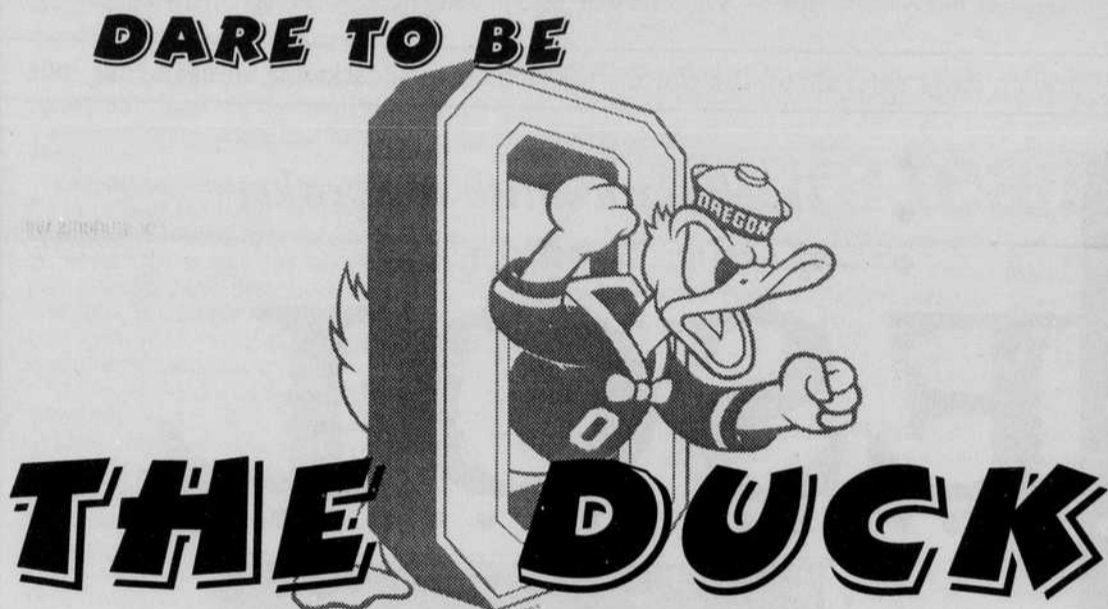
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