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GRADUATION 1997

Grads can remain involved with UO

By joining the Alumni Association, University graduates can receive benefits and remain active

By Heidi Loranger
Freelance Reporter

Just because seniors are graduating doesn't mean they have to sever their ties to the University.

The University of Oregon Alumni Association (UOAA) helps graduates to stay active and to receive some of the alumni benefits offered by their alma mater.

"The Association's main goal is to help graduates stay involved," said Kelly Evans, assistant director of communications for UOAA.

Established in 1897 to serve the University's first five alumni, the association now has more than 14,000 members.

New graduates have a discounted annual membership fee of \$25 and receive a free license plate frame. Evans said all money raised through dues goes back into the University.

Some benefits of membership include invitations to special University and community events, networking with fellow alumni, various discounts on e-mail, travel services, the University Career Center, recreation facilities, athletic events, the Bookstore and access to all Uni-

versity libraries.

"The Alumni Insider newsletter is my favorite thing about being a member," said Ann Reeder, a 1990 graduate.

The newsletter is published five times a year and features alumni profiles, membership opportunities, alumni events and coverage of campus news and Duck sports.

Reeder said she is a member because she thinks it is an admirable way to be a part of things and to stay affiliated with the University.

Alumni have the chance to become members of the UOAA's advocacy program, which is one of the most influential higher education lobbying groups in the state. Started in 1985 in connection with other Oregon State universities, it was designed to build legislative support of higher education. The program now has over 1,000 acting alumni and friends.

The association also provides short-term medical insurance for graduates and raises money for student scholarships.

The best way to stay involved is to get to know a local chapter. Chapters are a big part of the UOAA, Evans said. Each chapter is a group of former graduates who work to bring alumni together for fellowship, networking and social events. Chapters raise money for scholarships with popular events such as golf tournaments, she

"The [Student Alumni Association] acts as a liaison trying to bring all different aspects of the community together."

Kendra Smith

Student Alumni Association president

said.

The association has chapters located in various countries around the world, including eleven regions in Oregon and eight throughout the United States.

The Student Alumni Association (SAA) runs in conjunction with and receives funding from the UOAA, its parent organization. The SAA is comprised only of enrolled students that help coordinate and run annual events such as Homecoming, reunions, blood drives and the Senior Send-off.

The SAA provides interactions with students, alumni, parents and the community.

"The SAA acts as a liaison trying to bring all different aspects of the community together," said Kendra Smith, president of the SAA.

For more information or for a membership application, call the UO Alumni Association at 346-5656 or the Student Alumni Association at 346-2107.

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