

ASUO: On-line voting may be possible next year

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said Christy Lorenzini, ASUO elections manager. "You should be proud of your student government, too."

The elections board has been working since January to develop and promote a successful spring election.

The biggest difficulty is keeping the polling stations close to an ethernet hookup so the poll staffers can check a voter's status at the University and prevent multiple voting.

"The new student IDs make the execution [of elections] a lot more difficult due to the limitations of the ethernet," elections manager Jennifer Wilson said. "We would like to pull [the polls] out toward the street, but we have to keep

them relatively close to buildings."

This year Patrick Chinn, University computer specialist, developed a more secure database verification program, Wilson said. Last year the database allowed poll staffers to erase previously entered information about a student's vote.

The elections board is hoping for a 30 percent turnout this year, but previous years have shown only a 7 to 8 percent turnout.

"Besides blatantly ignoring what's going on on campus, you can't miss it," Wilson said.

ASUO President Bill Miner hopes more students will vote in this year's election. His administration has tried to be active on campus to get the ASUO name out there, he explained.

"We rely on organizations like housing, greeks, athletic teams, ASUO programs and the candidates themselves to remind students to vote," Miner said. With issues such as OSPIRG's funding at risk on the ballot this year, more students may be inclined to voice their opinion, he said.

Low voter turnout can be attributed to students not knowing about the election process or students not caring what the ASUO does because they don't see its immediate impact on tuition, incidental fees or programming, Miner said.

"I would rather have 8 percent of the educated student population vote, than 70 percent of the students vote on a ballot they don't know anything about," Miner said.

The elections board has organized several events students can attend to learn more about the candidates. The Candidate Fair in front of the EMU Fishbowl will be staffed with students running for office until Friday, and a senatorial debate is scheduled in 100 Willamette from 7 to 9 p.m. on April 21.

"It's a big chance to get involved and ask questions about concerns or issues students have," Lorenzini said.

Another option the elections board is developing for next year is voting via the Internet.

A number of other schools, such as Eastern Oregon University, have implemented on-line voting, Lorenzini said. Wilson said the board has placed a request with the Registrar's office to look into

developing a plan for next year.

"It is a very feasible idea, but I don't have the computer expertise or the funding to develop the program," Wilson explained.

The program would require a link to a secure database to verify enrollment and student fee payment, allow students to vote for their particular academic student senator, and prevent multiple ballots by a single student.

The margin of error from other universities using on-line voting has been higher than the manual method the University now uses, Wilson said.

"It's a fabulous idea, but we researched it too late — September is too late," Lorenzini explained. "It's a fun idea to play with."

Wages: Jobs provide 'experience'

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pends on daily evaluations.

"I use it as a lever, especially if I'm having behavior problems," he explained. "One kid I left alone sat down for a couple of hours, so I docked him a quarter. The next day he kept telling me how he wasn't going to stop working."

Haines said that the students enjoy perks such as a free lunch and a soda. At the end of the year, Haines will sometimes take

his crew to McDonald's. The EMU board budgeted enough to the program to allow hats for the workers next year.

Laura Krenk, who teaches a life-skills class for Lane ESD, said most parents are just glad their kids are getting experience. Krenk stressed that for developmentally disabled children, learning to act and behave appropriately is a skill that takes time to learn. She said the EMU was a good place for it because of the

number of friendly students there.

"For parents, the money is not an issue because they understand that it's not a job; it's just an experience," Krenk said.

But for Lee Thorne, who has been hauling trash and scrubbing pots at the EMU for years, it sure feels like a job.

"I wish I got more," he said. "Yeah, I could even buy more soda."

Coffee: Price will be a significant factor

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fairs reviewed the complaints for two weeks before issuing its decision Tuesday. It said parts of the EMU's process were unclear enough to require a new process.

"There were some areas in our selection criteria that could have been more explicitly stated," said Theresa Coleman-Kaiser, coordinator for EMU Food Service.

The EMU board had asked Food Services to do exactly that — to reconsider its criteria and its decision.

Budget Chair Jenna Wasson said the board was concerned that the selection committee wasn't giving preference to less expensive, more environmentally conscious, or local companies.

The board also wanted more students on the selection commit-

"We're the ones buying the coffee, drinking the coffee. I guess I see it as a pretty big decision."

Jenna Wasson
EMU Board Budget Chair

tee.

"We're the ones buying the coffee, drinking the coffee," Wasson said. "I guess I see it as a pretty big decision."

Tuesday's setback should not prevent the EMU from introducing the new coffee in a coffee house and espresso bar planned as part of the EMU renovations. Coleman-Kaiser did not know Tuesday whether the decision would scare off any companies.

Alberto Miranda, owner of Cafeto Custom Roasting Coffee Co., applauded the University's decision. He had protested that the taste test was flawed.

"I guess everything comes out in the wash," he said. "They were conscientious of the fact there were mistakes made, and we'll try it again."

The revised procedure might not include the public taste test and will probably assign points for prices differently, Coleman-Kaiser said. EMU Food Services will evaluate its entire process before it asks coffee companies to submit bids. It will then go through the selection procedure again before it makes another decision.

"We need to take some time right now to kind of ... percolate on it," Coleman-Kaiser said.

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