

Alumni Association sends seniors off with party, prizes

By Abigail Handa
Freelance Reporter

The pulsating beat of familiar disco music reverberated off the walls in the EMU Ballroom May 29 as graduating seniors danced, drank and socialized at the annual Senior Send-off.

Despite the event's last-minute move into the EMU Ballroom due to pending weather conditions, the Student Alumni Association estimated that more than 500 seniors attended.

The two-hour party sponsored by the Student Alumni Association in conjunction with the Alumni Association "marked the first big celebration for every senior," said senior Jason Khoury, Student Alumni Association Senior Send-off chair.

The two groups worked closely together to plan this event with the purpose of recognizing the 1998 graduating class and giving the seniors a taste of what the Alumni Association is about.

"The Senior Send-off is our graduation gift for [seniors]," said Kathie Bedbury, associate executive director of the Alumni Association. "In addition, it gives the seniors a feel of what the Alumni Association is all about — bringing people together."

The event, which was co-sponsored by Kaplan, was open to all seniors over 21. Local disco band Satin Love Orchestra provided familiar '70s tunes which kept the dance floor full. "Grad packs" filled with a commemorative University of Oregon picture frame, a water bottle and gift certificates

were given to every senior attending the celebration. Those seniors who were not 21 were able to pick up grad packs at the door.

A number of door prizes which included CDs, gift certificates, a pair of season football tickets and a lifetime membership to the Alumni Association were raffled off throughout the evening.

The Senior Send-off is primarily coordinated by the Student Alumni Association. "Each Senior Send-off is unique to the group planning it," Bedbury said. According to Bedbury, the Senior Send-off has evolved to a more extensive celebration since its start five years ago.

One idea the Student Alumni Association had was to have the celebration on Friday evening instead of Thursday evening. "Having the Senior send-off on Friday would allow more people to show up," Khoury said. "The week is over and they could take a break from their homework."

In addition, Khoury said the Student Alumni Association wanted the Senior Send-off to be a big celebration to help kick off graduation. "We wanted this to be a big bash with the main idea of having fun with all your graduating friends," Khoury said. To accomplish this, the Student Alumni Association chose to feature a band that would play lively dance music.

Before long, all the prizes were given out, and Satin Love Orchestra played their last song. "Senior send-off was definitely a success. The seniors there had a good time



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and walked away happy," Khoury said.

For senior Anna Shaw, a visual design major, the event brought back memories of the last time she participated in a graduation. "It felt great to be able to live my high school senior all-night party again."

Aside from the party aspect, the Senior Send-off is a reminder for some that college life is coming to an end.

"For me, it was a big reality shock," Khoury said. "It's countdown time now. We are recognizing graduating seniors; our time as college students is almost over."



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Local disco band Satin Love Orchestra (above) plays '70s covers as seniors eat and dance (left) during the annual Senior Send-off party in the EMU Ballroom Friday, May 29.

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