

OSPIRG issues estimated budget

The organization seeks to improve its image after being defunded last spring

By Kristina Rudinskas
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Committee to Re-establish OSPIRG wants students to know it's still on campus after the University chapter of OSPIRG lost student funding last spring.

"We need to improve our image to make people want us back," said Jerome Grzybowski, a member of the committee.

OSPIRG, the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group, is a statewide student-run organization that works to protect the environment, consumers and student interests. There are chapters at Portland State University, Lewis and Clark College and Lane Community College.

OSPIRG was founded 27 years ago by University students to get students organized around issues important to them. Today there are 16 states with at least one student PIRG chapter, 70 college campuses with chapters and 46 states with either a citizen or student PIRG.

During ASUO elections last spring, a ballot measure renewing OSPIRG's funding at \$147,390 a year, approximately \$2.88 per student a term, failed to receive enough student votes.

"It made a huge dent in what we can do this year," said Merriah Fairchild, committee member. "Not that students made the wrong decision; they made the best decision with the information they had."

The committee was estab-

OSPIRG's estimated 1997 expenses

Each student pays \$2.88 per term. It is broken up approximately as follows.

- 49 cents for the Toxics and Clean Water Program
 - 3 cents for fundraising
 - 20 cents for administration
 - 43 cents for recycling
 - 40 cents for the democracy program, which includes voter registration and watchdog government and elections
 - 37 cents for consumer watchdog
 - 35 cents for higher education campaigns like saving student aid and control of the incidental fee
 - 32 cents for service projects like Streamwalk and the Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness
 - 29 cents for saving endangered species
- SOURCE: OSPIRG

lished after about 200 student leaders and faculty members signed a letter of support to get an OSPIRG chapter back on campus. The EMU Board voted to continue to allow the committee to retain office space in Suite 1 in the EMU.

"I don't think we did the best job communicating," Fairchild said. "I bet money that the majority of students agree with the work OSPIRG does."

Money was part of the controversy surrounding OSPIRG. Student groups that receive funding through ballot measure lump-sums are not required to submit a line-item budget outlining how ballot measure money is spent.

OSPIRG does submit a budget to the Programs Finance Committee, but the Honesty Campaign requested that OSPIRG explain where all student money was being spent.

"They were really extraordinarily unaccountable," said Jonathan Collegio, who spearheaded the Honesty Campaign last spring.

The campaign demanded that OSPIRG release a line-item budget detailing how much money stays on campus.

"All other student organizations had a line-item budget. That was really their death knoll," Collegio said.

Fairchild said the Committee to Re-Establish OSPIRG is trying to focus on changing its image, educating students about its campaigns and building student coalitions and support.

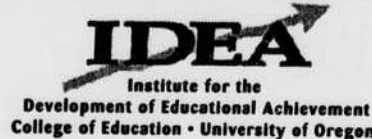
"Doing all these things is what it takes to get re-established," Fairchild said.

Today the committee receives money from the state OSPIRG board, so it can continue to operate on campus.

"It's a stretch, but this is the birthplace, and this is a priority," Fairchild said.

The committee will be handing out fliers with the approximate estimate of OSPIRG's 1997 fiscal year expenses along with information on OSPIRG campaigns.

The committee wants to generate enough student support to pass another ballot measure in ASUO elections this spring to renew funding. We wouldn't want to do it any other way," Fairchild said.



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Oct. 10 WOW Hall
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