

Domestic partners to receive same benefits as spouses

One same-sex couple from the University fought to receive the same benefits as other minorities and won

By Tricia Schwennesen
Oregon Daily Emerald

Gay and lesbian couples who are faculty and staff at the University can now get the same benefits as their heterosexual counterparts.

The precedent setting case, *Tanner v. Oregon Health Sciences University*, helped to decide a lawsuit filed by Kelly and Glen Matchett-Morris against the University, the Oregon State System of Higher Education and the State of Oregon.

In early December, an Oregon Court of Appeals ruled that the government and some private organizations must provide the same benefits to same-sex couples that married couples receive. The decision makes Oregon the first state to acknowledge domestic partnerships.

Kelly Matchett-Morris, associ-

ate director of resident life, said the benefits being offered to domestic partners were "minimal compared to what married couples got."

The Matchett-Morris filed their case after they were denied the benefit of spousal in-state tuition for Glen, Kelly's partner.

The University had already granted Glen Matchett-Morris the lower tuition for one year but the following year had requested documentation of the marriage's legality. Kelly Matchett-Morris believes the University assumed he was a woman and that's why their "marriage" was never questioned in the first year.

The couple modeled their case after the *Tanner v. OHSU* case. In that case three couples argued that current policies violated the state constitution and anti-discrimination statutes of Oregon employment law. They won their case in a circuit court decision, but it was appealed.

Matchett-Morris said he and his partner, Glen, were not seeking damages or claiming emotional distress in the lawsuit. They were

just doing what they felt was right.

"The Tanner case is clear that benefits will have to be equivalent, if not identical," said David Fidanque, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon.

Although the University extended health care benefits to domestic partners as of June 1, 1998, it is now constitutionally required to recognize that workplace discrimination against gay and lesbian people is illegal.

"Basically, for the University, it reiterates the non-discrimination clause we already have on the books," said Stephanie Carnahan, the director of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender education and support services. "The University has been doing the right thing for some time and now the State recognizes that too."

Kelly Matchett-Morris said gay couples have finally been given what the Supreme Court said they should be given.

"It's that whole conundrum about 'we don't want to give gays any special rights,' but we don't want special rights. We want the

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same rights as everyone else," he said.

Carnahan said the decision places sexual orientation in the same category with race, disability and veteran status.

"I think the direction nationwide is heading in this direction," Matchett-Morris said.

The state law said that only legally married, opposite sex partners of state employees are eligible for certain benefits, including medical insurance and in-state tuition.

Matchett-Morris said the catch in obtaining benefits was that gay couples cannot be married legally and only heterosexual married couples qualify for benefits.

"One of the key things about the Tanner decision — it reached its

decision based on the fact that gay and lesbian couples can't get married," Fidanque said. "It's a very important decision in terms of civil rights in Oregon."

Matchett-Morris said the problem is not an isolated case but one of discrimination across the United States. He said it's a problem on the same scale as the President Clinton/Monica Lewinsky scandal.

"For so long, politicians have said 'I vote my constituency,'" Matchett-Morris said. "But then why," he asked, "if the majority of the public say leave Clinton alone, do elected representatives continue to push impeachment proceedings?"

Matchett-Morris believes the answer to the Clinton question is the same answer to the question of gay rights. Politicians behave as though the gay community consists of a small number of people and therefore politicians ignore the needs of this minority.

But it's really because "they're doing their moral obligation and they're going to [continue] ignore their constituency," Matchett-Morris said.

Summer session fee may be reviewed

ASUO urges more discussion of how summer incidental fees are calculated

By Teri Meeuwesen
Oregon Daily Emerald

A proposed ballot measure sponsored by the ASUO for the Feb. 18 special election may allow more research and discussion about the calculation of the summer session incidental fee.

The measure, proposed by ASUO President Geneva Wortman and Vice President Morgan Cowling, would have the ASUO president and vice president meet with the provost 30 days before summer fees were decided to give them more research time, and would require the attendance of the ASUO Executive at the summer session fee meeting.

At the meeting the Executive gives the committee the summer incidental fee budget and recommendations for increasing or decreasing the fee.

If the ballot measure passes, the wording of the Clark Document, the set guidelines discussing how incidental fees are dealt with and where they are distributed, would be revised to make the process longer but better, said Gregg Lobisser, associate dean of students and a liaison between the ASUO Executive and the administration.

"It will be a little more cumbersome, but very democratic," he said. "It speaks highly of the estimated processes for the future ASUO and the University of Oregon student body. They're not focusing on the issue of the day, but they're focusing on the future."

The way incidental fees and other school fees are determined for the academic year are decided through an extensive process of checks and balances, Wortman said.

Each year, the incidental fee budget request is approved by the Student Senate, the ASUO Executive, the University president and finally by the Chancellor of the Oregon University System.

Summer session fees are determined another way, but the

process is not clearly outlined in the Clark Document.

"It's clear for the school year, but there's not a clear road map for the summer session," Lobisser said.

During the summer session fee meeting, administrators representing the different programs ask for a fee increase, decrease or no change, said Lorraine Davis, vice provost for academic affairs and meeting facilitator.

However, Davis said summer fees are only allowed to be raised as high as the incidental fee was raised during the academic year, Davis said.

However, Wortman said she wasn't pleased with the 1999 summer session fee meeting on Oct. 13. "This process is incomplete and rushed," she said. "I was shocked and dismayed how this was happening," she said. "People were just chanting 'we want more money' and we were not informed beforehand that we needed to know about setting this budget. It felt like a smoke-filled back room of the University. We weren't prepared and we had to make the decision then and there, without any extra time to do some more research. So we decided not to raise the [summer] incidental fee. There was nothing else we can do."

The tension Wortman felt from the meeting is understandable, Davis said.

"They [the committee] always want more money for their programs, so I can see how it can get a little tense in there," Davis said.

The ASUO Executive didn't feel time to prepare for the meeting.

Davis said the timing of the meeting was moved up three weeks because of the budget model change in the Oregon University System and other factors. The proposed numbers were due to the provost within the next couple of days.

"Geneva and Morgan were probably more blind sided than the rest because everyone at that meeting knew that a meeting was coming up about this except them," Davis said.



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Term Pass Required \$45.00

Spinning

Saturday, Jan 30-Feb 20 11:00am-1:30pm
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Arashi Shibori

Sunday, Feb 21-Mar 7 12:30-4:30pm
\$31.00 w/term pass \$35.00 w/out pass

Felt Making

Saturday, Feb 20-Mar 6 2:00-5:00pm
\$36.00 w/term pass \$40.00 w/out pass

Fleece Hats

Monday, Jan 25-Feb 8 6:30-9:00pm
\$25.00 w/term pass \$29.00 w/outpass

Egg Baskets

Sunday, Jan 31-Feb 7 1:00-4:00pm
\$28.00 w/term pass \$32.00 w/out pass

Photography

Printing and Handcoloring

Sunday, Feb 7-28 1:30-4:30pm
\$26.00 w/term pass \$30.00 w/out pass

Jewelry & Metals

Beginning Jewelry Techniques

Tuesday, Jan 12-Mar 2 3:00-6:00pm
Term Pass Required \$50.00

Stone Setting

Sat. & Sun. Feb 6 & 7 12:30-4:30pm
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Enameling

Sunday, Jan 31-Feb 14 5:00-8:00pm
Term Pass Required \$32.00

Beadwork

Wednesday, Feb 3-24 6:30-9:00pm
\$23.00 w/ term pass \$36.00 w/out pass

Fimo Clay Jewelry

Thursday, Feb 4-18 6:30-9:30pm
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Paints, Pens, & Papers

Photo Collage

Sunday, Feb 7-Mar 7 1:00-4:00pm
\$30.00 w/term pass \$34.00 w/out pass

Oil Pastels

Monday, Jan 25-Mar 1 6:30-9:00pm
\$45.00 w/term pass \$49.00 w/out pass

Papermaking 2

Saturday, Feb 20-Mar 6 10:30am-12:30pm
\$22.00 w/term pass \$26.00 w/out pass

Bike Repair

Whole Bike Health

2. Wednesday, Jan 20-Feb 24 6:30-9:00pm
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Woodworking

Wood Sculpture

Wednesday, Jan 20-Feb 24 6:00-9:00pm
Term Pass Required \$45.00

Winter Specials

Card Weaving

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\$18.00 w/term pass \$22.00 w/out pass

Ceramic Clockfaces

Sunday, Feb 21 & 28 1:00-4:00pm
\$25.00 w/term pass \$29.00 w/out pass

Porcelain Valentines

Sunday, Jan 31 1:00-4:00pm
\$18.00 w/term pass \$22.00 w/out pass

Kumihimo Cord Braiding

Saturday, Feb 27 1:00-4:00pm
\$26.00 w/term pass \$30.00 w/out pass

Mary Barringer - Ceramics

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Workshop: Friday, Jan 22 & Saturday, Jan 23
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