

Motion to extend add-drop deadline will be presented

The Student Senate feels the current add-drop schedule is too short

By Teri Meeuwse
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Student Senate will present two motions that may affect all students to the University Senate today at 3 p.m. in 100 Willamette.

The first motion would give students 10 academic days to add and eight academic days to drop classes starting next term, if passed. Currently, students have eight days to add classes and six days to drop classes at the beginning of every term.

Last year, the University Senate voted not to extend the add-drop deadline to the proposed 15 academic days to add and 13 academic days to drop classes.

The Office for Academic Affairs wrote a report outlining what would have been the financial impact of last year's motion. If, during the 1997 fall term, 187 resident undergraduates had dropped one three-credit course without adding an equal-credit course, the University would have lost \$1.2 million.

The price of adding and dropping classes doesn't compare with the cost to the

student, Olsen said. Students who drop classes after the deadline receive a Withdrawal, or "W," on their transcripts.

"What does a 'W' cost a student?" he said. "While it costs the University a small amount, it may potentially cost a student a job."

The cost of time lost during a class that a student struggles through also carries a hefty price, Olsen said.

"Students are more than just students, with a job or two in some cases," he said. "Students don't have the time to struggle through a class. They should be able to drop it when they want. For classes that meet once a week or twice a week, students don't have a good feel for the class yet."

However, theater professor Jack Watson said, dropping a class isn't as much an issue as adding a class.

"It's almost impossible to catch a student up," he said. "By that time, in my class, they would have already missed an exam and the team assignments."

Also at the University Senate meeting, the Student Senate will present a motion that would have the University Senate give support to the rights of students and the ASUO to fund their own programs and protect the creation of future groups

that engage in advocacy, lobbying and debate.

"It's most likely that the faculty and the administration is supportive of this motion," said Shaun Sieren, organizing director for the Oregon Student Association. "Many of the faculty at the UO campus have already signed a letter of support, and I think they will get behind this as a University Senate."

The Student Senate already backs the proposal and wants to maintain student control of the incidental fee, a fee students pay to fund student activities and groups.

"So next in line is University Senate," Olsen said. "We've had prominent political leaders sign off on this. It's foolish not to get all of your ducks in a row."

According to the motion: "students translate academic lessons into hands-on experience through internship programs, leadership positions and volunteer opportunities within groups they create and support with student fees. The entire

campus community benefits from the cultural events, guest speakers and public policy debates in which students participate."

However, Jonathan Collegio, state coordinator for the College Republicans, said he thinks the process of collecting the incidental fee from all students for campus events isn't benefiting everyone.

When the ASUO holds elections to determine what the incidental fee is used for, not everyone participates, he said. In last year's spring elections, 15.25 percent of the student body turned out to vote.

They are just redistributing the \$500 from each inactive student to the active students, Collegio said.

"Every fear that a legislator ever had about students taxing themselves is manifesting itself right now in this special election," he said.

The incidental fee process was created by the Oregon Legislature and is managed with the oversight of the Oregon University System. To qualify for funding, groups must first demonstrate to the campus, administration and OUS that they provide for the cultural or physical development of students.



Tenure

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Pederson, who said the bill was modeled after one that denied tenure to K-12 teachers, said it would bring professors "back to normality."

Pederson's crusade against tenure began with a class at Portland State University.

"The class that I had was an example of what happens when tenure is unchecked," Pederson said. "This particular class [had] a teacher that just talked about personal reminiscences."

When Pederson went to his office to complain, the professor became angry.

"He stood up and walked up to me and said, 'Don't you ever talk to an instructor that way. You're only a student, and get out of my office, and get out of my class,'" she said. "I talked to a counselor, and she told me I'd never get anywhere criticizing that professor."

Pederson couldn't drop the class because her student loan required her to take it.

"The head of the history department told me to just go home and forget about it," she said.

Pederson said she talked again to the counselor, who then denied telling her it was useless.

After she graduated from PSU in June of 1998, Pederson took the issue to representative Strobeck.

"I think I'm unique in that I went all the way up the system," Pederson said. "Most people just get discouraged at some point."

For more than two hours on Feb. 3, Pederson testified before Oregon's House Education committee, which comprises six Republicans, three Democrats and one independent.

"I don't think that bill is going to go any farther," said Rep. Bill Morrisette (D-Springfield), vice chairman of the House Education Committee. "The longer [Carol Pederson] stayed, the more it became obvious that [the bill] wasn't going anywhere. So far as I saw, there was no support for anything she was saying."

Rep. Bob Jensen (I-Pendleton) seconded Morrisette.

"Clearly, I'm just one person on [the education committee], but I think Bill's answer on that is right," he said.

Grattan Kerans, Oregon University System director of governmental relations, said banning tenure went too far.

"I think this is a meat-ax approach to what is essentially one student's particular problem. I think [the hearing] was just a courtesy to the house member who brought the constituent."

Minding the gap

Professors at the University feel the academic community could do more to educate the public about tenure.

Jim Schombert, assistant professor of physics, said his work at NASA showed him there was a gap between community perception of tenure as just a lifetime guarantee of work and the faculty perception of tenure as academic freedom.

Mike Russo, associate profes-

sor of management, laid some blame on the academic community.

"We have not done a good job of communicating to our outside stakeholders," he said.

Schombert also said the academic community needed to communicate more to the outside world.

He said tenure doesn't encourage professors to be lazy or protect them when they are doing a bad job.

There is a lot of peer pressure involved to do better.

"It's [peer pressure], not snide," he said. "It's not like people standing around the water cooler that talk bad about you behind your back. It's not like the corporate world."

Tenure is only a conditional lifetime guarantee of a job. Tenured professors can lose their jobs for a number of reasons: the possession or use of firearms, illegal use of drugs and other felony convictions.

Professors at the University

also receive performance reviews every five years. If it's found that a certain professor is not up to snuff in teaching or research, that professor can be forced into early retirement or another career.

In a letter to the chairman of the House Education Committee, John Moseley, provost and vice president of academic affairs, said there were many checks on bad performance, including performance reviews throughout the professor's career and mandatory student evaluations.

That may not be enough to satisfy members of the public who feel like Pederson.

"I think [House Bill 2072] will be back in another year," Jensen said. "That's the thing about a democracy — bills come back."

Jensen said because tenure was eliminated in the lower educational system, it was likely when House Bill 2072 did come back, it would pass.

"Well, yeah, not now, but somewhere down the line I think it'll go through."

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