

Minority middle-schoolers tour campus, attend classes

The annual event strives to prove college is a possibility for minority students

By Kelly Wolski
for the Emerald

Students, staff and administrators pitched in Saturday to give a group of minority young people a firsthand look at college life.

More than 300 middle school students from across the state toured campus and attended "mini-classes" as part of the 12th annual "Reach for Success" visitation day, designed to make college a viable choice for minorities, organizers said.

Parents and counselors were also invited to the campus-wide event, organized by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Office of Student Retention Programs and the Office of Admissions.

Patti Lopez, assistant director of admissions, said the event reaches students who sometimes get overlooked.

"It's a way to get the opportunity out to students who wouldn't have had the opportunity to come to a college campus," she said.

Student attendance for the event, normally limited to 150, was up to 300 this year, Lopez said.

Each student chose three classes to attend out of 14 different subjects, including art, business, law and the Internet. In the classes, taught by professors and graduate students, the students witnessed everything from the creation of a glowing purple substance in a chemistry session to computer animation in a journalism class.

The students left affected by the lessons.

Gladys Orozco, an eighth-grader at Talent Middle School in Medford, was happy about the opportunity to visit the University.

"I am interested in anything," said Gladys, who was attending a journalism session.

Leovan Lopez, an eighth-grader from Gervais, said he attended the visitation last

year and wanted to come again. His favorite part of the program was the campus tour, he said.

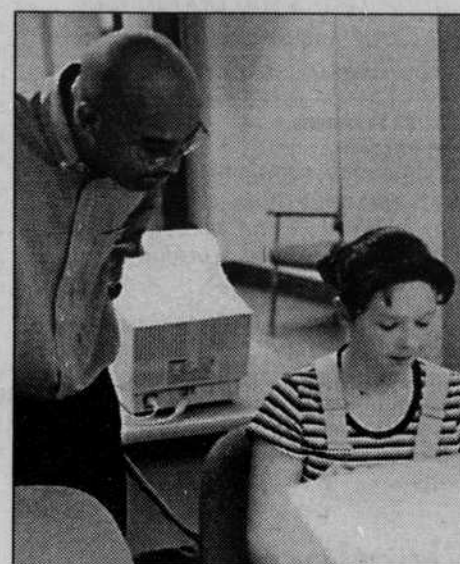
Parents and school counselors attended workshops on financial aid and student preparation for college, which were offered in both Spanish and English.

In the EMU Ballroom, University President Dave Frohnmayer opened the program by welcoming the students to the University, urging them to realize the importance of a college education.

"Your generation is going to be faced with the most exciting and scary world in the history of human civilization because things are changing so quickly," he said.

Jose Romero, the event's keynote speaker and director of special projects for the Woodburn School District, told the students they must always maintain what he calls the four C's: confidence, commitment, consistency and courage.

"Information and learning are powerful," he said. "And where there is a will, there is a way."



Jeff Stockton/Emerald
Jon Cawthorne, coordinator of Outreach Services for Knight Library, instructs Nikki Maxwell on Web browsing techniques.

Student testifies before committee on higher education budget

Her testimony moved lawmakers to carefully consider funding

By Teri Meeuwssen
Oregon Daily Emerald

Senior political science major Melissa Watson described how higher education changed her life from being a high school drop out to graduating in June.

"It's a very personal story that I don't tell very much, but for this I felt it was necessary," she said.

Watson testified in open hearings Monday morning for funding the higher education budget. The budget is on the table in front of the education subcommittee of the Ways and Means committee in Salem.

Watson, also an intern at the Oregon Student Association, said that while the committee listens and talks about numbers and the budget, they need to remember the people those numbers affect.

"[Higher education] completely changed my life," she said. "It

gave my life hope and direction. Some are called to church, I am called to public service. I want to give people the same opportunities I have and almost didn't."

Watson said her story touched some of the committee members. Representative Carl Wilson (R-Grants Pass) said she put a face on the facts the committee has been talking about the last week.

"Her testimony shows that higher education is a good investment to the state," he said. "She is living proof of how good our sys-

tem is and how it can be better."

Colby Marshall, Eastern Oregon University student body president, said her story definitely affected him during the testimony.

"Her story was awesome," he said. "Her climb from dropping out of high school to being a graduate was inspirational."

Open testimony is the next step towards higher education funding, OSA spokesman Ed Dennis said.

Higher education funding ad-

vocates were originally asking for \$116 million to fully fund the new budget model. The model will help keep student money on campus and make universities more responsible for their funding.

Senate President Brady Adams has proposed an even \$100 million instead.

"The \$100 million is looking pretty good," Dennis said. "That would mean a full tuition freeze and all sorts of good things for each campus."

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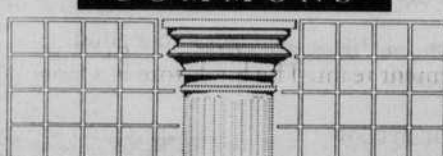
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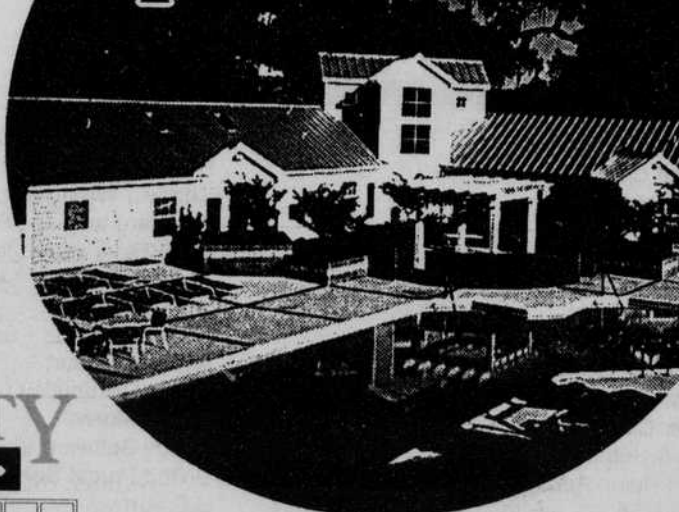
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