

Rewards may curtail vandalism

A rise in damages have led to an increase in the rewards being offered

By Amy Jennaro
Oregon Daily Emerald

An increase in fire alarm pulls, damaged furniture and small fires has led University Housing to take action to alleviate the problems.

Two weeks ago, Hamilton Complex and the University Inn started offering rewards for any student who provides information about the parties responsible for these acts of vandalism.

According to Michael Eyster, director of University Housing, the reward policy has been on the books for at least 10 years. But recent problems have upped the standard \$100 reward laid out in housing policy guidelines, to a \$300 reward at Hamilton and a \$500 reward at the University Inn.

"We apply the policy in cases where the safety of the community is threatened," Eyster said. He added that other complexes would be able to offer the reward if there was a justifiable reason for it.

DJ Morales, director of Residence Life, said the reward policy was necessary because the problems at Hamilton and the University Inn present strong safety hazards. An incident at the beginning of spring term at the University Inn involving a small fire outside a Resident As-

sistant's door was a serious problem, Morales said.

"The situation was dangerous because the fire could easily have spread," she said.

Tim Womack, resident director of the University Inn, is optimistic that the higher rewards offered will help curtail some of the problems.

But Womack added that although there has been some decrease in the amount of problems at the University Inn, it is still too early to tell how effective the policy will be.

Heather Bottorff, resident director of the Hamilton Complex, came up with the idea to raise the reward. She said the policy has already been a success and has inspired students to put an end to the vandalism in Hamilton.

Among those problems have been fire alarm pulls, which have happened as often as three weeks in a row.

"There was a sense of hopelessness on the part of students [to stop these incidences]," she said. "I wanted to give students a feeling of empowerment."

According to Bottorff, some students have already come forward with information about fire alarm pulls, but no rewards have been given because the committee is still reviewing the cases involved.

The policy will only be in effect until the end of the year or until the offenders are caught, Eyster said.

Womack said he hopes the policy will encourage students to take more responsibility to protect the safety of the residence halls.

"Students know what is going on and who's doing it," he said. "It's just a matter of students coming forward."

But getting students to turn in their fellow students may be difficult to achieve, Morales said.

"Students don't want to rat anyone else out," she said. "But if we can provide students with a financial incentive, we may be able to get some students to provide information."

However, there are some indications students are getting more frustrated over the problems in their buildings and are more likely to come forward, said Bottorff.

According to Bottorff, the main reason she offered the reward was because many students had complained about the excessive fire alarm pulls and wanted to stop the problem.

"Students have volunteered their time to help in this situation," she said.

Eyster said the best part of the policy is that it draws people together to deal with problematic situations.

"We focus on creating a respectful academic community of students," Eyster said. Any program that relies on this community is the most effective way to solve these problems, he said.

Legislature

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lion more than Gov. John Kitzhaber's original proposal, about \$17 million less than OUS's original pitch and \$1 million less than the Senate's proposed budget.

The budget will fund the new budget model, a new system that will help keep student money on campus, make the university system's seven universities more accountable and encourage program

and campus improvement. The budget model will also allow the university system to take a market-driven approach to educating students. This model allows Oregon's universities to strive to become world class by responding to the needs of the workplace and communities that they serve, Swanson said.

"The new budget model is truly a great step for Oregon's universities," ASUO President Geneva

Wortman said. "We have needed a catalyst for more funding and this new approach hopefully will do just that."

The budget also continues to hold the tuition freeze.

"The trend in rising tuition has got to stop and what this Legislature has done today should be applauded," Swanson said.

The budget is now headed to Senate sometime next week.

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