

Project gauges support for chair, desk improvements

Operation Goldilocks offers recommendations for comfortable seating

By Edward Yuen
Oregon Daily Emerald

Sitting in a classroom may sometimes be uncomfortable for students because the seats are too small or the writing surfaces are not horizontal.

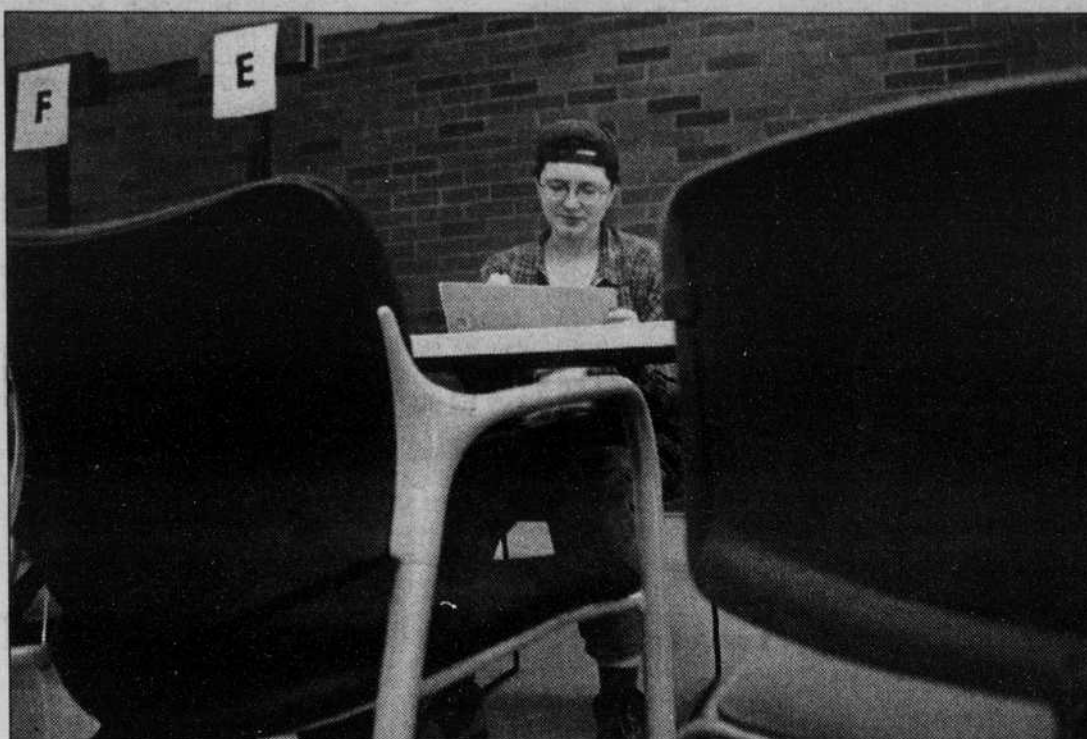
But Polly Welch was not going to sit on the problem. She incorporated an Office of University Planning chair survey into her architecture class to teach students how to build a better chair.

Welch, an associate professor from the architecture department, used the survey in her Human Context of Architecture class last winter.

The result was Operation Goldilocks, a program developed as part of a group project in the class. Students in the group worked on the design of classroom chairs, then sent questionnaires to faculty and interviewed students in large lecture halls about how well students can hear or see from the chairs.

"It is very useful," said Vicki Merkel, the graduate teaching fellow in charge of the program. "Students have a lot of opinions on an issue like that, but they don't often get an opportunity to give their opinions to the University and be taken seriously."

What is comfortable in the classroom will help students remain for the entire class, said Wendy Olson, a junior in sociology.



Sociology major Jey Strangfeld rates the comfort of the chairs provided by the Goldilocks Project in the EMU lobby Wednesday.

"Uncomfortable seats don't make me want to stay that long," she said.

Olson added that a comfortable table should have a writing surface — or "tablet," in furniture design terms — large enough for her to put her notebook on.

Merkel said the criteria for choosing chairs include cost, seating capacity, weight of the chair, durability, ease of cleaning and seat material.

A variety of chairs were used in the survey, including ones with upholstery, plastic and tra-

ditional wood.

One of the chairs in the survey comes from Room 206 of Lawrence Hall. The tablet of the chair is slanted and has a slippery surface, making it difficult to put things on.

Welch said faculty members who met in that room had experienced coffee spills because of the slanted surface.

Students seemed to enjoy participating in the survey.

"I am glad that somebody asked me," said J. Warden Minor, a senior journalism major.

"There's a lot of bad chairs on campus. I have a back pain, but the chairs here do not help."

About 60 students participated in the survey on Wednesday. Students can also take part in the survey today from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the EMU lobby near the Fishbowl. Comments collected in the survey will be sent to the University Planning Office for ongoing classroom improvements.

For more information or to make a comment, e-mail Welch at pwelch@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

News Brief

Students awarded for grades, leadership

The University Mothers' Club presented \$7,650 in scholarships and awards to nine undergraduate students during the annual Family Weekend All-University Awards Luncheon on May 15.

The scholarships and awards, for use during the 1999-2000 school year, include the \$1,200 Golda Parker Wickham Award, the \$1,000 Opal and Robert D. Clark Scholarship, the \$650 Theresa Kelly Janes Scholarship and six \$800 Mothers' Club Scholarships.

The Mothers' Club Scholarship program, established in 1934, provides funds to students recognized for their strong leadership qualities, high academic achievement, community involvement and financial need.

Elizabeth Mohr, an educational studies major, received the Wickham award. Named for the University dean of women from 1945-1969, the award recognizes outstanding involvement in civic activities as well as high academic achievement.

Jeffrey Stephens, an advertising major, received the Clark Scholarship. The award was established to recognize volunteer service, scholarship and need. It honors the University president emeritus and his late wife Opal for their outstanding service and volunteer support.

April Chisholm, a music performance and education major, received the Janes award. It honors a deceased University alumna who taught piano and strongly supported the Mothers' Club and the University.

The club presented scholarships to six other students across the state.

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- ➔ MUSIC: *Sunny Day Real Estate*

in Friday's ***Emerald***

