

Aid scams prey on students

Phony scholarships reportedly cost families millions each year

By Sara Lieberth
Oregon Daily Emerald

Added to the stresses of selecting, applying for and accepting admittance into a college or university is the financial burden often placed on families and prospective students.

A number of bogus scholarship offers in recent years have made the difficult process an even more costly one for unsuspecting applicants.

More than \$100 million is bilked out of families each year on scholarship scams, as many of the offers require up-front fees or up-front tax payments for phony scholarship "prizes," said Martha Pitts, director of admissions for the University.

"The time-tested warning rings true for academic scholarships: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," she said.

Pitts also said these scams are particularly unfortunate because they play on the existing fears families have regarding the costs of higher education and often present erroneous information about such costs.

Students or families who be-

lieve they might be victims of a scam should retain all information they received from the agency and contact the Better Business Bureau, the state's attorney general or bureau of consumer protection offices or the National Fraud Information Center.

Among the tips Pitts offers to avoid being scammed are:

■ Beware of any company asking you to pay for services or access to information.

■ Programs that boast extremely high rates of success for competitive scholarships are often false in their claims.

■ Be wary of programs that allege they have access to millions of dollars in "unclaimed" financial aid or scholarship money.

■ Consult with either a guidance counselor or financial-aid officer before applying for particular scholarships you're considering.

The University offers a number of scholarships including a newly fine-tuned Diversity Building Scholarship that recognizes the achievements of students who enhance the campus experience for all by sharing cultural experiences. Additionally, there are Presidential scholarships, General University, U-Lane-O and the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program, all of which may be ap-

plied for at the same time and on a single application.

One of the most important factors in applying for financial help is promptness, advise financial aid administrators. The University offers an early notification program with a November 1 deadline, which allows students to lock in their award money for the coming year.

For more information on scholarship scams, check out www.finaid.org/scholarships/common.phtml.

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Student Senate drafts support for OPEU

Senate resolution urges OUS to agree to OPEU demands to avoid strike

By Sara Lieberth
Oregon Daily Emerald

The ASUO Student Senate unanimously voted Monday night to pass a resolution in support of the Oregon Public Employees Union (OPEU) as it continues to bargain for fair wages and benefits with the Oregon University System.

■ Drafted by ADFC Student Sen. Jennifer Greenough, the four-point resolution includes language supporting classified workers as they "are critical to the function of all state universities," and acknowledging that a strike by these workers, which could take place as soon as September 11, "would disrupt several important services to students and staff."

The resolution states that the OUS' proposed six-year contract without guaranteed wage and benefit increases after the first biennium is an unprecedented move because it denies OPEU members "the same basic protections provided to nearly all other OUS workers."

After minor amendments to the precise wording of the text, the final Senate resolution read:

"Be it resolved, that the ASUO Student Senate urge the Oregon University System to agree to a two-year contract with the wages and benefits requested by the Oregon Public Employees Union in the hope that an agreement is reached before a strike is called that would

cripple state universities including the University of Oregon."

Greenough said after speaking with representatives on both sides of the bargaining table and reading all available information on the subject, she felt compelled to draft the resolution primarily because there were no guarantees for classified workers after two years.

"Our classified workers are very important," she said. "Without guarantees for cost of living and benefits increases, they have no security. This is one way we can show our support for them."



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