

# ASUO adds five new positions for academic year

■ The positions have been created to more evenly and specifically allocate existing responsibilities

By **Jeremy Lang**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Five new ASUO positions for the 1999-2000 academic year will offer services to student groups and the community on a range of issues including multicultural affairs and student housing rights.

As Community Outreach Director, Marian Fowler said she is working as a liaison between the students and the Eugene community. This being her first year in the ASUO, she said she hopes to im-

prove the rights of student renters in the community.

"There's a state housing code for student renters but not an enforced one for the city," Fowler said.

She said she also plans to improve relationships between the students and the Eugene Police Department.

UO Housing Advocate Matthew Lieuallen said he will work on a variety of housing issues, including helping Fowler with the housing code for student renters. He also plans to increase the ASUO's presence in the residence halls.

"I want to get ASUO information to housing students so they have a better idea of what we do and how to get involved," he said.

Lieuallen said one of his goals for the year is to make the buy-out clause in the housing contract more flexible for students who have a bad situation in the residence halls. Currently, students who want to break their housing contracts must pay \$9 for every day the contract is broken.

Greg Danielson is the new Programs Outreach Director, a position that stemmed out of the existing Programs Administrator spot, currently held by Sydney Abbate.

"Last year, the administrator job was too broad and covered too much, so my position was created to make sure programs are getting funding and resources from the ASUO and other sources," Daniel-

son said.

Jennifer Creighton is the new Accounting Coordinator, and she said it is really two jobs in one.



"I act as a budget counselor to both help the Projects Finance Committee and student programs," she said. She also checks to make sure purchase orders by programs are used correctly and tracks how the student incidental fee is spent.

Creighton is currently working on a transition manual, which would include important information on decisions made in the pre-

vious year so incoming student senators could quickly transition into their new roles on student government.

The final position, multicultural associate, has yet to be filled. ASUO President Wylie Chen said the position will work with the multicultural advocate but focus on areas such as students with disabilities.

"With multicultural issues such a high priority, we wanted more people working on the issue," Chen said.

He said they are currently interviewing applicants for the position.

For more information about these positions or the ASUO, call 346-3724.

# Killer of gay student avoids death penalty, sentenced to life

By **Robert W. Black**

The Associated Press

LARAMIE, Wyo. — Aaron McKinney, who beat gay college student Matthew Shepard and left him to die on the prairie, avoided the death penalty Thursday by agreeing to serve life in prison without parole and promising never to appeal his conviction.

Shepard's parents agreed to the deal. "I would like nothing better than to see you die, Mr. McKinney, but now is the time to begin the healing process," Shepard's father, Dennis, said in court.

"Every time you celebrate Christmas, a birthday, or the Fourth of July, remember Matthew isn't. Every time you wake up in that prison cell, remember you had the opportunity and the ability to stop your actions that night."

McKinney, 22, a high school dropout and drug dealer, is the second defendant in Shepard's slaying to get life in prison. Russell Henderson, 22, pleaded guilty to murder earlier this year.

McKinney was convicted Wednesday of murder, aggravated robbery and kidnapping for luring Shepard from a Laramie bar, robbing him of \$20, lashing him to a fence and cracking his skull with blows from a pistol. Investigators said robbery was the main motive but McKinney and Henderson singled out Shepard because he was gay.

The jury was to begin hearing arguments Thursday on whether McKinney should get the death penalty or life in prison. Instead, he accepted a deal that his lawyers had proposed to prosecutors Wednesday.

"I really don't know what to say other than that I'm truly sorry to the entire Shepard family," McKinney said in court. "Never will a day go by I won't be ashamed for what I have done."

Dennis Shepard said his family wanted the trial to show that "this was a hate crime, pure and simple, with the added ingredient of robbery." He also asked Congress to pass a stronger hate-crime law.

"You screwed up, Mr. McKinney," Shep-

ard said. "You made the world realize that a person's lifestyle is not a reason for discrimination, intolerance, persecution and violence."

He also said he supports the death penalty. Prosecutor Cal Rerucha said he didn't want the deal at first, but Shepard's family wanted to show tolerance because their son believed in it. Rerucha also noted the family won't have to endure years of appeals.

"There has to be an end to this," he said, calling the appeal process "almost inhumane."

As Shepard spoke, he paused at times to wipe away tears, his voice breaking. Several jurors wept, along with members of both legal teams, spectators, Shepard's mother, Judy, and friends of the Shepards.

McKinney's eyes welled up at times as he listened. McKinney's stepsister walked out crying, her head resting on McKinney's father's shoulder.

Shepard was a 21-year-old freshman studying political science at the University of Wyoming.

McKinney's attorneys argued that McKinney flew into a drug-influenced rage after Shepard grabbed his crotch while they rode in a pickup truck. The defense claimed the alleged advance triggered memories for McKinney of a childhood homosexual assault.

District Judge Barton Voigt barred the "gay panic" defense, ruling that it was similar to temporary insanity or a diminished-capacity defense — both prohibited under Wyoming law. Rerucha called McKinney's "gay panic" strategy "pathetic."

"That's a defense that is atrocious," the prosecutor said. "It should not be used in any court in these United States. It gives people an excuse to harm another person."

Rerucha also said he found it ironic that the defense proposed the deal and asked the Shepards to "give some relief, some type of pity to a person who had murdered their son."

"I will never get over Judy Shepard's capacity to forgive," he said.

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