

## Faculty pay

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ty concerns at the Feb. 18 meeting. "We're talking about building these peaks of excellence, but the only way that can happen is if you hire quality instructors," Richmond said. "It's terribly important that we can lure those teachers to our campuses, and we cannot do it with the current entry-level salaries."

### Statistics

Schools in the Oregon University System pay their faculty far less than the national average, according to information from the U.S. Department of Education and OUS.

University faculty overall are paid almost \$5,000 less than the national average faculty salary, according to the statistics, while at Western Oregon University, faculty overall earn up to \$18,000 less. Statistics also show that OUS schools rank well below the average salaries among their "peer universities" — schools of similar size from around the nation, such as Purdue University, the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Uni-

versity of Washington. The OUS uses information from the peer universities for comparison in areas such as student demographics, tuition rates or faculty salaries.

Schools throughout the OUS are beginning to show the consequences. Some are already having difficulty recruiting new professors because the starting salaries they offer are so low.

"When there are low salaries and high workloads, new instructors leave for higher-paying schools," said Dean Braa, a sociology professor and faculty union president at WOU, which has had difficulties recruiting candidates. "It's hard to stay competitive."

Faculty searches are time consuming and expensive, he said, and the school is sometimes having to settle for candidates who are not among their top choices.

"We're having a devil of a time getting candidates interested in our programs," he said. "And when we do find someone, we usually have two chances of signing them — slim and none."

### Students' opinions

The issue of faculty salaries af-

fects more than just the instructors — it has a direct effect on students' education, ASUO President Wylie Chen said.

"We're not spending ten grand a year to get mediocre professors," Chen said.

Robin Miller, a sophomore political science major, agreed that in order to recruit quality professors, the OUS needs to raise faculty salaries.

"In order to make Oregon a more enticing place, you have to have salaries that will attract those professors," Miller said. "I think the legislature has left professors' salaries at the wayside. They haven't done much to respond to the reality that professors in the Oregon University System aren't paid enough."

OUS spokesman Phillip Bransford said that students and faculty have to remember that salaries are just one of many different competing needs within the OUS.

"Balancing needs is part of the challenge," he said.

Lorraine Davis, vice provost for academic affairs, said that the University is actually more competitive salary-wise at the associate professor level than at senior professor levels.

"When we try to recruit at the senior level, it's far more difficult," she said. "That's when salary becomes a bigger issue, and we're talking more dollars to do that."

Until the state legislature increases the amount of money going to higher education, the situation is unlikely to change, she said.

"Certainly, more state support would be more than welcome to solve some of our problems," Davis said. But for the amount of money the University is able to pay their faculty, the school and the OUS are "getting a lot of bang for their buck," she said.

### Closing the funding gap

Bransford, said the chancellor and members of the board "remain committed to closing the gap" between the average OUS faculty salary and the national average.

"Faculty compensation has been increasing, but not to the extent that we'd like," he said. "But we recognize the importance of staying competitive. That point is undisputed."

Wykoff, agreed that keeping salaries competitive is important, and said that "while there's al-

ways a cadre of people who are looking to climb up the economic ladder," higher salaries could persuade many faculty who are entertaining offers from other colleges to stay at the University.

"When faculty are looking at low salaries and a state that hasn't shown a commitment to increase funding for education, they go elsewhere," Wykoff said.

Money from the state doesn't go as far as it did in the past, mostly because of inflation, he said, which translates to a cut in the buying power when schools are looking at faculty salaries.

The OSA is researching ways the legislature could help reverse the trend, Wykoff said, such as offering free college tuition to the dependents of faculty who attend that university. The group will present its findings to the legislature during its next session.

Miller is also planning to lobby the legislature, a step she said is the most effective way to get more funding for faculty salaries.

"It's the biggest thing we can do as students," she said. Members of the legislature "need to put their money where their mouth is."

## Web site

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social services and resources. Although the service is available to anyone, it is targeted toward people with low or no income. The site's address is [www.thelane.net](http://www.thelane.net).

TheLane is a combined effort from local organizations to provide users with information about health care, income security, individual and family life, local organizations and community services.

"The site is intended to empower people to be self-sufficient," project coordinator Lise Stuart said. "TheLane provides step-by-step instructions for individuals and families that need information about local resources to help get them through hard times and promote their well-being."

Although most libraries and public schools offer free access to the Internet, educating people about how to navigate the Web is of central concern to the backers of

the new Web site. Stuart said she was concerned about the level of access her target audience has to computers and the Internet.

"If you've never used a computer before and have had limited access to the Internet, when you sit down to use a computer for the first time, it can be really hard to navigate," Stuart said. "As more and more kids come out of the schools with prior experience navigating the Web, educating our audience won't be as much of a concern."

The cost of running the site is \$80,000 to \$85,000 a year. Stuart said the site is funded by social service organizations and private organizations interested in empowering the community to use Internet services.

In addition to the new Web site, the Eugene Public Library and Eugene Free Network are offering free Internet instruction to low-income residents of Lane County.

"You can't give someone a tool without teaching them how to use it," EFN general manager Ruth Ann Howden said. "People who

can afford to pay for classes, we ask them to pay. For those who can't pay, we raise money for the classes through OPN [Oregon Public Broadcasting]."

Although the Web may sometimes be difficult for beginners, Rebecca Teasdale, a reference librarian for the Eugene Public Library, said TheLane is a great resource for finding just about anything in one location. Teasdale contributed her database on Literacy and English as a second language to TheLane.

"TheLane is useful for a broad range of resources," Teasdale said. "The site brings together a lot of social service resources in one database."

Teasdale said she thinks the site may aide underprivileged people in Lane County to become more knowledgeable about the Internet and computers.

"The site is very easy to navigate," she said. "There are several search options, and you don't need advanced computer skills in order to use it."

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## Renters' rights

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living space, while organizing methods to effectively deal with those issues.

Originally, the intent of the campaign was to develop a West University area housing code, which currently does not exist. However, enacting such a large change in city policy would require much more information than the campaign has gathered so far. While developing a housing code remains the ultimate goal, its status has been relegated to the long term.

In the meantime, the focus is on a more achievable goal: implementing a renters' rights hotline. The hotline would be a referral service for students that would let them know what their options are and/or point them in the direction of legal specialists.

"We're kind of setting ourselves up for the bigger fight for the housing code while providing a service for the students," said Matthew Lieuallen, ASUO housing advocate.

The ASUO and OSPIRG hope to have the hotline in place by the end of the school year. The immediate obstacle is finding a permanent location, which could possibly be a cubicle outside the ASUO office. Beyond that, implementation is simply a matter of logistics.

"Really what we need is a

phone, a filing cabinet and some people who are trained," Lieuallen said.

Although it was initiated last fall, the campaign didn't really kick in until this term. Through "days of action," which included information tables around campus and walking door-to-door around the community, a number of surveys were distributed to University students. The surveys asked respondents to detail what problems they have had while renting and what the responses of the landlords were if they were reported.

So far, the response from students has shown that there is a definite need to address the issue of renters' rights.

"We've gotten a lot of really good feedback," Marian Fowler, ASUO community outreach director, said.

At this point in time, the campaign has gathered around 200 surveys and is currently in the process of compiling the results to see what the main problems are. Many of the issues that have appeared seem to deal with "a lack of response for immediate concerns," Fowler said, such as heating complications during winter months or backed-up plumbing.

Owing to the fact that Eugene does not have a housing code, this movement has become an important one for students.

"Students do not know how, for

the most part, to go about getting things fixed," said junior political science major Brian Tanner, who has been helping with the campaign since the beginning of this term. "We're a financially handicapped segment of the population, and for us to go through these legal means is a headache."

Once the ASUO and OSPIRG have gathered sufficient information, they plan to compile the results with a legal assistant and present their findings to the city.

"We'd work with city officials to develop a housing code," Fowler said. "It's possible if there's a lot of support."

OSPIRG addressed the issue of renters' rights a few years ago, when it distributed a renters' rights pamphlet. Though the campaign fizzled out, OSPIRG still receives calls in response to the pamphlet, which prompted OSPIRG member Greg Bae to join up with ASUO when the idea was brought up again.

"If we're getting five to 10 calls a week out of these outdated numbers, then we know this program is really needed," said Bae, who is acting as the renter's rights campaign coordinator for OSPIRG.

Meanwhile, the campaign will continue, with members planning to engage in another door-to-door night when they will distribute surveys to other areas of Eugene.