

# Speakers ask for democracy

■ The HRA held a teach-in last weekend and advocated a realignment of University configuration

By Emily Gust  
Oregon Daily Emerald

In a culture that values democracy as a given, some students say the University is not holding itself to the same standards.

Kicking off a movement to bring democracy to the college campus, the Human Rights Alliance held a teach-in over the weekend that focused on student concerns surrounding workers' rights and discussion of the University's decision-making structure.

"We're trying to raise awareness about the lack of a democratic system on our campus," HRA member Jevon Cutler said.

It was not just one or two events that sparked HRA's actions, he said. Instead, the teach-in came as a result of many incidents adding up.

One face-off was when several students fought hard to institute Pride Hall, a theme hall for homosexual students, but the University administration denied the proposal.

Another duel, spearheaded by University students, was fought over whether the administration would support a boycott of Gardener, which it did not.

And the most recent battle has been fought over the Workers' Rights Consortium, which many

students want the University administration to sign.

"All these issues represent the lack of autonomy among faculty, staff and students," Cutler said. "There's no true democracy."

A meeting earlier this year in Klamath Falls joined the forces of the HRA and students from Southern Oregon, Willamette and Portland State universities. The students formed a student coalition, which they called Students Organizing for Labor and Democracy (SOLD), and the group aims to change the way in which decisions are made on university campuses. The teach-ins are a way for the students to organize and educate themselves on what they are up against.

"The focus of the teach-in was [the fact that] every single issue we work on campus is tied to student democracy," Survival Center worker Randy Newnham said.

Approximately 40 students showed up at the weekend teach-in to listen to various speakers in several different workshops and plan strategies for the upcoming movement toward demanding more democracy.

The first workshop discussed the University's place in workers' rights. Representatives from the Oregon Public Employees Union to the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation spoke to the students and described their personal struggles as workers.

A second workshop was more of an educational presentation, with ASUO President Wylie

Chen explaining the way that the University, as well as the larger community, functions when making decisions.

HRA member Sara Jacobson said that a big part of the structural discussion was focused on the Oregon University System. All public universities in Oregon are governed by an 11-member board, of which the members are appointed, not elected. That is an important point, she said, because the question arises whether people who are appointed to a position are really accountable to the people they are representing.

The final workshop was an attempt to organize for an anti-sweatshop campaign.

A large part of the discussion overall was determining where the students' strengths lay as part of the University community.

"Our strength is that we act as the moral conscience of universities," Jacobson said, "that we are not tied by other interests."

The workshop's culmination came Sunday when the students gathered to discuss plans for the future, specifically as to where the SOLD movement is heading.

University students and students from the other universities established lines of communication, Newnham said, which will ensure that students are supporting each other in their common movement.

"As members of this campus community," Newnham said, "we should have a voice in how it's run."

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## Calendar

Wednesday, April 5

The EMU Budget Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room.

The EMU House Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. in the Century D room in the EMU.

The Dr. Edwin Coleman benefit dinner for PCUN will be held at 5 p.m. in the EMU Fir Room. The suggested donation for the event is \$8. The program will be followed at 7 p.m. by a speaking engagement featuring Bobby Seale and Edward James Olmos in the EMU Ballroom.

## CRIME WATCH

(Reported from March 28 through April 4)

**March 30:** Criminal Mischief II, 800 block East 11th Avenue, building burglarized

**April 1:** Theft I (from vehicle), 1600 block East 15th Avenue, window smashed, stereo stolen

**April 2:** Disorderly Conduct; Resisting Arrest, 800 block East 13th Avenue, subject arrested

**April 2:** Burglary I, 1600 block East 15th, items stolen

**April 2:** Criminal Mischief II, 1300 block Agate Street, property damaged

Crime prevention tip of the week from OPS Officer Bob Guse:

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