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Campus complex to house single graduate students

■ If approved by the State Board of Higher Education, the apartments should be done by fall 2001

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

With construction expected to begin in December on a new campus apartment complex, graduate students who will benefit from the \$4.5 million project said they are thrilled to finally have their own quiet place to live near the University.

Law student Russa Kittredge said the new 70-unit complex — created exclusively for single graduate students — is ideal for older students who are serious about their studies, especially considering they don't have many reasonable options close to campus.

"It's a great idea. The University needs to do something to accommodate graduate students," Kittredge said. "I'm sure it will fill if the price is reasonable."

The apartments, scheduled to be completed by fall 2001, will be located just one block from the Knight Law Center between Moss

and Villard streets on East 15th Ave.

"This is really exciting," University Housing Director Mike Eyster said. "We need a better variety of products to offer single graduate students."

The Campus Planning Committee and University President Dave Frohnmayer recently approved the project, which, if approved by the State Board of Higher Education on June 18, will be the first campus housing project in four decades. The final approval must come from the Legislative Emergency Board, which allocates state dollars when the full legislature is not in session.

Eyster said he is confident the project will get the go-ahead and construction will begin on time.

Damon Martichuski, a junior international studies and political science major who will likely attend the University for graduate studies, said an on-campus apartment for graduate students is a great idea.

"It is good to create alternative housing other than just the dorms," he said. "So many students look for apartments [off campus] because they have no other options."

The apartments will offer one bedroom and studio units, all with kitchens, and have the same high speed Internet access students in residence halls enjoy. Additionally, the rooms will be quieter than most apartments because materials that restrict sound transfer will be used in construction, Eyster said.

If approved, the complex will be financed with state bonds, which would be repaid with revenues generated by rental fees. Preliminary estimates put the rental rates around \$600 to \$700 a month, but that price may be a little high, Eyster said. While the exact rental fees have yet to be determined, they will be below market rates, he added.

Eyster also said residents would not necessarily need a car if they lived in the new complex because of the location.

The addition of the new graduate complex may set the stage for several other new housing projects on campus, Eyster said.

"Clearly something needs to be done," he said. "We need to either replace or renovate the residence halls because frankly, the rooms are too small for two people."

Council

continued from page 1A

The protest in April that called for membership in the Worker Rights Consortium also stirred discussion about shared governance on campus and allowing students to have more power in voting on issues such as the WRC. Giving the Programs Council a say in the ASUO is one of the first steps toward this goal.

The Programs Council comprises more than 90 representatives from both recognized and registered student groups on campus. Recognized groups receive funding from the incidental fee and act as voting members within the council; registered groups do not receive funding and cannot vote.

At current operation — before the changes take effect — the council is only able to discuss issues and recommend things to the ASUO Executive. It does not have the authority to act upon any of its recommendations.

Human Rights Alliance member Randy Newnham said it is definitely a first step toward the goal of sharing power around the campus.

"It diffuses power from a few people to many, and I think that the Programs Council is a good place to start," he said. "Most people that are really, really concerned about student government, and how the University is run in general, are in programs."

Former ASUO Programs Administrator Sydney Abbate said the council was very excited about the prospect of more authority.

"There's always this issue of what is our purpose here," she

said. "Programs Council has the opportunity to be a very strong governing body on this campus."

With the three new options open to the Programs Council, they will be able to begin exerting more power on campus.

Next year, the Programs Council will be the newest method to place measures on the ballot. Currently there are three ways to propose initiatives. The measure may go through student senate or the executive office, or someone may petition by gathering student signatures. For the Programs Council to authorize an initiative, they must vote two-thirds in favor of doing so.

The second power granted to the Programs Council is that of assisting the Executive in making

“... it will really give students a whole other voice to kind of speak to the campus.”

Sydney Abbate
former ASUO programs administrator

appointments to various University committees. There are more than 50 committees around campus, Chen said, many needing students to participate. Before the job of placing those students rested solely on the Executive's back. It was a big job that sometimes the Executive could not complete.

"All of those student seats that need to be filled come through the ASUO," Chen said. "A lot of times, they don't all get filled."

Letting the Programs Council work hand in hand with the

ASUO University Affairs coordinator will lessen the workload for the Executive which will in turn make sure more seats get filled.

"It ensures that the ASUO and the Programs Council work together to make appointments," Chen said.

A third power is policy change. There are specific guidelines governing the ASUO as a whole that the Executive has jurisdiction to change. With the revisions of the Green Tape Notebook, the Programs Council will have the opportunity to change the same rules as the Executive.

However, Chen said, rules are ever rarely changed. Allowing the Programs Council to have the same access to changing policy as the Executive is not a huge push for power; rather it is more of a symbolic action.

"It's more of a respect given ... to a certain council, such as that one, in order to give them more power," Chen explained.

Although the Executive still has the opportunity to veto any policy changes, the Programs Council may override the veto if four-fifths of voting members vote to do so.

Ideas about changing the structure of the Programs Council began forming winter term, but they were not written until spring term. When the Green Tape Notebook comes out this summer, the rules will be in place and thus be effective.

"Once it actually becomes assimilated into the running of student government, I think it will be successful because it will really give students a whole other voice to kind of speak to the campus," Abbate said.

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