

Leadership, activism not mutually exclusive



(From left to right) Randy Newnham of the Survival Center, former ASUO Vice President Mitra Anoushiravani, and ASUO President Jay Breslow lock arms and show their solidarity in support of WRC membership last spring.

■ Student leaders adamantly encourage participation and hope for a large voter turnout at upcoming November election

By **Jeremy Lang**
Oregon Daily Emerald

ASUO President Jay Breslow doesn't see a difference between his roles as a student leader and as a student activist.

"Student leaders are student activists, and those who don't believe it shouldn't be student leaders," he said.

Despite Breslow's personal convictions, this year's Executive staff is being forced to decide where the distinction must be made, with both its ideology and monetary funds. Only days after classes have begun, staff members are defining exactly what the ASUO is and how it will fit on campus this year.

A handful of this year's student leaders spent last year fighting for causes through the Survival Center, an umbrella group based out of the EMU that includes the Human Rights Alliance and the OSPIRG offices.

Others, including Breslow and ASUO Vice President Holly Magnier, were involved in last spring's student protest for University membership in the Worker Rights Consortium.

Now elected, some activists say they won't need to draw a line between the two. Others plan, in the meantime, to quell how much their opinions enter the office duties. But all agree their new positions this year will not dampen their spirit of activism as a whole.

University Affairs Coordinator Chad Sullivan was heavily involved with the WRC issue last year. He said he was constantly frustrated by the number of people who didn't have all the information about the organizations working to improve labor conditions.

He believes that, for now, the best thing he can do with his ASUO position is to be an educator on the issue.

"When people become aware of the issue, the choice is obvious," he said.

The Executive has already encountered one major distinction during its voter registration campaign. Despite directly affecting higher education and funding, it can't take a specific stance on any political issues, including the Oregon ballot measures.

But Breslow said it isn't hard to figure out what he and his staff think about the issues, even when they speak simply to encourage

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Jay Breslow
ASUO President

students to vote.

"People elected us to these positions because we have opinions," he said.

As the Executive continues to stress how the ballot measures can affect students, the underlying message, including staff members' opinions on the negative affects of the measures, is hard to avoid.

"We'll do it within the rules of the administration and the ASUO," Breslow said of the voter education and registration campaign. "But we won't shy away from confrontation."

As she stood on the corner urging passing students to register for the November election, Legislative Coordinator Melissa Unger said she, like Breslow, sees a direct connection between student government and student activism.

Unger, who worked for OSPIRG last year, said she thinks her ASUO position is the perfect vehicle for student activism because of the clout that comes with her title, especially with the administration.

"We have to be listened to," she said. "We can get a lot done."

Breslow said he thinks the primary job of the ASUO is to educate students and to advocate for them. But, eventually, advocating has to involve taking a position on what will benefit students the most and deciding the best way to take action.

"While I deal with politics, I don't consider myself a politician. It's a really sticky situation," he said.

Unger agreed and said she even considers the ASUO an activist group advocating for students based on their voice in the ASUO elections. She acknowledged that turnout for ballot measures concerning the WRC, Designated Driver Shuttle and other groups is low, but thinks the Executive is doing what the campus population wants it to do.

"The elections are all we have to gauge the student voice," Unger said.

Breslow agreed that those who remained silent last year need to vote in their campus, local and national elections if they want their voice to be heard.

Or better yet, Breslow suggested, run for office.

"I didn't get elected because I'm middle of the road," Breslow said.

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Joe Sperm swims through Eugene

■ Planned Parenthood began a daring new campaign at the Eugene Celebration parade in an attempt to raise eyebrows and awareness about its free testing program

By **Lindsay Buchele**
For the Emerald

Joe Sperm made his public debut alongside a giant egg and condoms during the Eugene Celebration parade held on Saturday, Sept. 16. His purpose is not only to make Eugene residents laugh, but also to launch the new "Joe Sperm" campaign, said Diane Duke, Planned Parenthood's associate executive director.

Planned Parenthood hopes to use Joe Sperm in order to increase awareness about its Family Planning Expansion Project (FPEP), which will enable Eugene residents to receive free contraceptives and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing as long as they meet certain criteria.

"Joe is there for two things," Duke said. "The first is to get attention for Planned Parenthood and the second is because of a five-year grant we received because of a Medicaid waiver."

The waiver has enabled Planned Parenthood to start FPEP, which provides free contraceptives and STI testing for those who make less than \$1,288 a month, Duke said.

The Eugene branch derived the idea to use Joe from another Planned Parenthood in Spokane, Washington. Spokane was using the sunglasses-clad mascot on billboards, and found it successfully

drew community members to the organization.

"They [Spokane Planned Parenthood] won an award for the ad campaign using Joe and were willing to share it with us," Duke said. "The parade was just the beginning."

Renee DeLaurentis decided Joe Sperm needed to be the focus of the Planned Parenthood float in this year's Celebration parade. Duke's son, Jason Thelen, played the giant sperm and was accompanied by a giant egg, condoms, pills, diaphragms and little sperm "swimming" behind the float.

"I felt Joe was 'uniquely Eugene,' and a good idea for the float. [Jason] was a perfect candidate to play Joe. He was enthusiastic, dramatic, even theatrical," DeLaurentis said.

As for fear of the crowd's response to such a sexually-oriented float, DeLaurentis wasn't worried. In fact, the float received a great response.

"We received applause and a standing ovation," DeLaurentis said. In fact, the overall response to the Joe Sperm campaign has been positive, Duke said. Since the parade, Joe has appeared in advertisements featured in the Oregon Daily Emerald, The Register-Guard and on the sides of Lane Transit District buses.

The few who object to the cam-

aign argue that Joe is inappropriate for children to see, but Duke disagrees.

"We believe Joe opens up the line of communication between children and parents about sex," she said. Although this is not the point of the campaign, Duke sees it as an added bonus. Planned Parenthood also provides books and newsletters geared toward helping parents talk to their children about sex.

Response to FPEP, thanks to Joe, has also been encouraging. According to Dr. Daralyn DeHaven-Murdoch, a doctor at the Student Health Center, as of July 3 there have been over 575 applications filed by students wanting to use FPEP. In order for a student to be eligible for FPEP, he or she must meet criteria that includes being a legal Oregon resident, being able to use the health center and having a gross monthly income of less than \$1,288. Those who do qualify can receive a free pelvic exam, STI testing and contraceptives but cannot receive treatment or medications related to STIs found.

Joe has gotten the word out to Eugene residents that reproductive health care is available, Duke said.

"This campaign is geared toward anyone who is sexually active, including students," Duke said. "We just want to help with the reduction of unwanted pregnancy and STIs." For more information, contact Duke at 342-6042 or visit Planned Parenthood at 1670 High St. "Joe Sperm" T-shirts are also available.