

Contract issues under fire

■ Students and faculty voice funding and contract concerns in light of Linda Dievendorf's dismissal

By Andrew Adams
Oregon Daily Emerald

Following the administration's decision not to renew Cultural Forum Director Linda Dievendorf's contract, student leaders have questioned the motives behind the decision and some question the very nature of Dievendorf's position as an officer of administration.

Like most of the 789 other officers of administration, Dievendorf's contract is up for renewal every year. Students close to Dievendorf said the announcement that her contract will not be renewed is an University attempt to exert more control over student money.

And Debby Martin, project coordinator for the Student Activities Resource Center, said it was Dievendorf's position as an officer of administration that gave University administrators the leverage to push her out of the position.

"There needs to be more than a one-year contract," Martin said. "Something to protect against termination ... to tell you the truth, I'd

rather be in a union."

Martin said it is the ambiguous nature of the officer of administration position that leaves them without much recourse. They cannot organize because they are management, she said, yet they do not have the full protection and authority of more influential administrators.

"It's a very uncomfortable position to be in at the University," she said. "Basically you have no rights. There's no recourse for not having your contract renewed."

Dan Williams, vice president of administration, said there is nothing unusual about one-year contracts and they are definitely not an attempt to keep officers of administration from being able to protect their employment.

"That's been pretty standard," he said. "It's been an industry standard in higher education throughout my experience."

Officers of administration can hold contracts longer than one year, Williams said, but two years is rare and three-year contracts must be approved by University President Dave Frohnmayer.

In November of 1996, Williams said, the state merged the positions of management service employees and officers of administration to

form the current classification with the title officer of administration. The title now means both service and instructional staff who are supervised by a University vice president. He said that at the time, there was not a real difference between the instructional and service employees, so the change was merely in name.

"This was simply a decision by the state," Williams said. "It had nothing to do with collective bargaining."

He said all dealings between the University and officers of administration are handled in strict observance under a set policy, and that policy was observed in the University's dealing with Dievendorf.

Magid Shirzadegan, associate director of the International Education and Exchange department, serves on the Officer of Administration Council that works to keep other officers of administration informed on campus events that relate to them. He said officers of administration are an integral part of the University, and it would not be in the administration's best interest to leave them in doubt about their contracts.

"I don't see how the University could afford to do that," he said. "That would shut down most of their services and offices."

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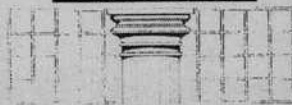
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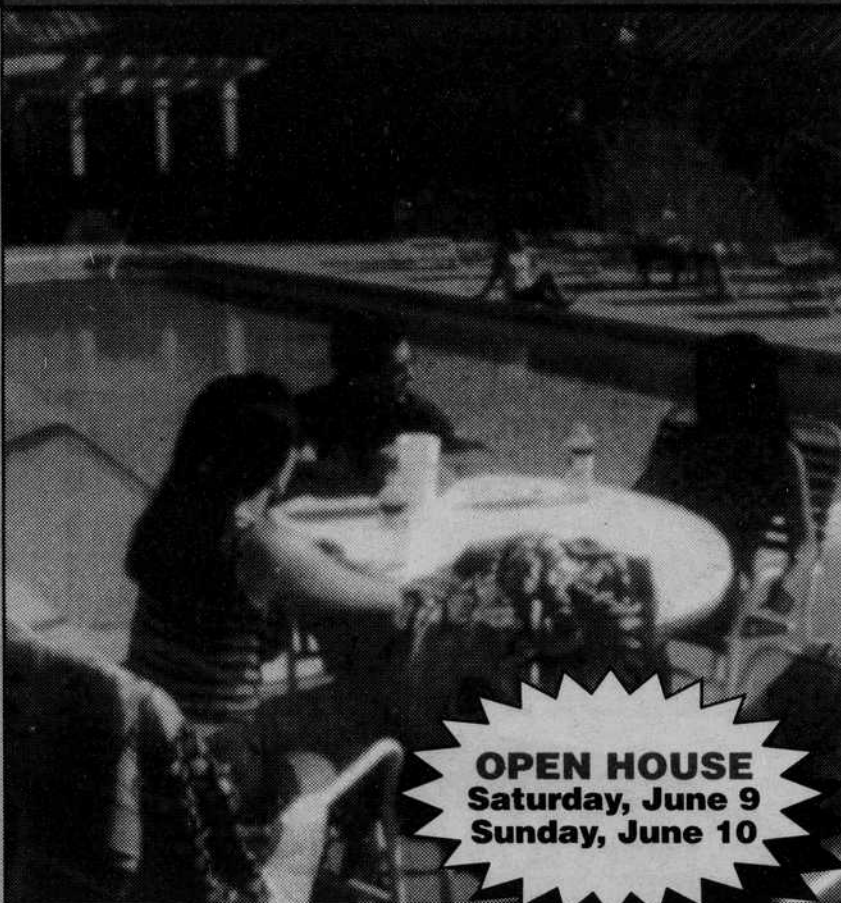
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