

News brief

Unity Dinner and Dance celebrates MLK Jr.

The Vietnamese Student Association and the Black Student Union are joining forces to sponsor the Unity Dinner and Dance 6 p.m. tonight. The evening wraps up a series of events sponsored by University groups this month in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Martin Luther King Jr.

The festivities begin with a multicultural dinner at 6 p.m. in the Collier House. VSA President Phuc Nguyen is slated as the main chef. The dance follows from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. in the EMU Fir Room. Admission is free.

Organizers are sponsoring the dinner and dance to celebrate King's work and the impact he had on unifying races, BSU co-director Haben Woldu said.

"We took Martin Luther King Jr.'s concept of joining everyone as one nation," she said. "We want to show how well the Vietnamese Student Association and Black Student Union can work together."

For more information about the Unity Dinner and Dance, contact University Assistant Dean of Diversity Programs Mark Tracy at 346-1139.

— Robin Weber

ASUO lobbies to oppose budget cuts

■ Gov. Kitzhaber's proposed budget would cut many grants for student parents and low income students

By Danielle Gillespie
Oregon Daily Emerald

With financial assistance from the Childcare Block Grant, single mother Stefanie Simpson is able to attend the University full time and care for her 5-year-old son, Jacob.

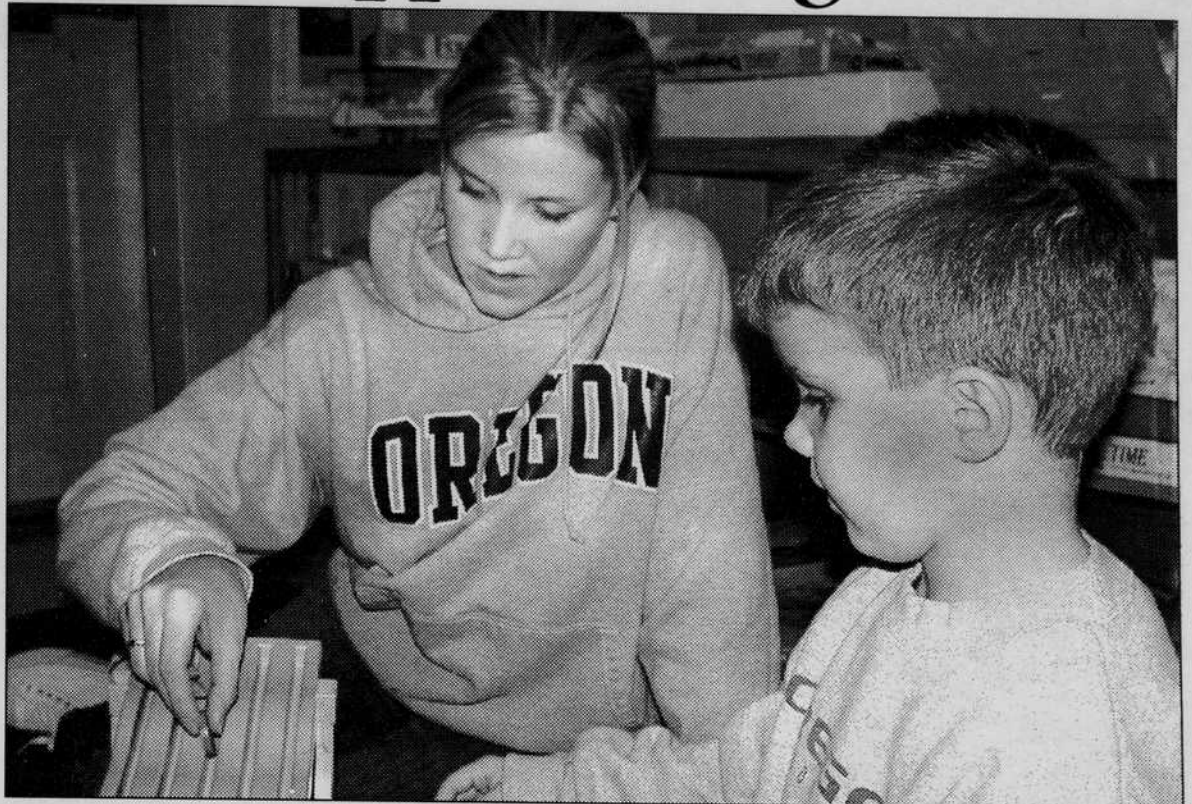
But if Gov. John Kitzhaber's proposed budget cut in student-parent funding is approved, Simpson may not be able to afford to attend the University next year.

On Wednesday, Kitzhaber proposed a new budget with a 5.5 percent cut — \$44.5 million — for the Oregon University System. One of the proposed budget cuts would eliminate the Childcare Block Grant. The grant, which is distributed by Oregon's Adult and Family Services pays up to 90 percent of childcare expenses for student parents who receive it.

"I feel, especially now, with Oregon's unemployment rate so high that it doesn't make sense to cut funding to programs that would allow Oregonians to have better access to higher education and could potentially improve our economy," Simpson said. "For me personally, going to school is the easy part; being able to finance it is the difficult part."

ASUO is working on a lobbying campaign opposing cuts to the Childcare Block Grant and other programs, including the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

Kitzhaber's proposed budget includes a \$1,300 reduction in the Oregon Opportunity Grant, which



Adam Jones Emerald

University student Stefanie Simpson and son Jacob play at the Woodleaf Community Center. Proposed state budget cuts threaten her ability to attend school next year. The budget cut would also affect low-income students who receive financial assistance.

is distributed to low-income students based on their level of need. Criteria for the grant are determined by the average Oregon household's income and varies each year.

Theresa Maurer is a single mother at the University who receives the Oregon Opportunity Grant as part of her financial aid.

"Losing money from my grant will have an impact," she said. "The government is making it hard for us."

ASUO representatives plan to speak with legislatures in Salem during special session hearings tentatively scheduled for Feb. 8. ASUO is working on the lobbying campaign with Lane Community College and the Oregon Student Association, which represents state-funded schools in Oregon.

ASUO's goal is to send 40 letters, 1,000 postcards and make 75 phone calls to two senators and three house representatives. They also plan to contact Oregon

House Speaker Mark Simmons and Kitzhaber before the special session hearing, ASUO President Nilda Brooklyn said.

"We are very confident that we will meet this goal, and we invite any student to walk into the office and participate," she said.

For more information on how to become involved with the ASUO lobby campaign, contact the ASUO office at 346-3724.

E-mail reporter Danielle Gillespie at daniellegillespie@dailyemerald.com

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