



Jonathan House Emerald

ASUO Executive 'outsider' candidates Sean Ritchie and Jason Babkes say although they have never held positions within the University's student government, they are qualified because of outside leadership positions they've each held in the past.

## Ritchie

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ASUO president. "And I feel that would carry on to any leadership position we take on, especially as vice president and president of the student body."

This year's ASUO "outsiders," juniors Ritchie and Babkes have never worked in University student government, but have held other leadership positions. Ritchie was the student body president for South Eugene High School and Babkes was the managing editor of the school newspaper.

Babkes is currently coaching three youth soccer teams, and Ritchie coached a junior varsity high school basketball team last year.

What they lack in ASUO experience, they make up for in leadership, Babkes said.

"Our opponents have a ton of experience in the ASUO, I'm not going to deny that," he said. "But ... being an executive takes leadership. Not necessarily knowing where every period goes and every semi-colon goes, (but) being able to lead a government and being able to work with people, and having the personality for that."

Senior Ben Matson said he plans to vote Ritchie and Babkes for ASUO Executive because he believes in their motives and their

ideas for improving the University. "They're running for the right reasons," he said. "They're not just running to win."

Ritchie and Babkes' campaign platform includes new solutions to recurring campus issues such as ticket allocation, housing codes and safety.

They want athletic event tickets available to students at times that don't conflict with classes so students don't have to skip.

They also want to work on both off-campus and on-campus housing codes. One goal they have is to change University housing contracts so that students living in residence halls have more leasing options available.

"We recognize that the administration is in a bind, and at the beginning of spring term no one wants to live there anymore, but we want it to be fair," Babkes said.

They also plan to improve campus safety by designating safe routes through campus patrolled by Department of Public Safety officers or starting a bicycle escort service where students could call for an escort who would ride to where they are and walk with them to where they needed to go.

"Safety's a big one for me," Babkes said. "If people don't feel safe here, that's terrible. People should feel safer on campus than

anywhere else."

When they're not campaigning, school and friends are top priorities to Ritchie and Babkes. Ritchie, a business and sociology major, is in the business school honors program. Babkes, a philosophy and business major, is a member of the University philosophy club.

They relax by spending time with the close-knit group of friends they have known since high school. "When we do something, we have so much fun," Babkes said. "Like when we go out to dinner as a group, it's so fun, you come away hurting, you're laughing so hard."

As executives, Ritchie and Babkes said they would use their fun-loving natures to make ASUO a more open and welcoming place where students would feel comfortable coming to them with any concerns they might have.

"A lot of times in leadership positions different groups of people or different individuals are compromised (because) they're not taken as seriously, or their group isn't taken as seriously," Ritchie said. "That's not us at all."

Babkes said the University needs a new perspective in student government. "We're going to bring personality to (the ASUO)," he said.

E-mail student activities editor Kara Cogswell at karacogswell@dailymerald.com.

## Student unions targeted in recent thefts

■ DPS plans to increase patrol around the EMU

By Danielle Gillespie  
Oregon Daily Emerald

For eight weeks, student unions in the EMU have been experiencing thefts. On Friday, someone broke into the MEChA office and tipped over a shelf, and two members of the Oregon Students of Color Coalition had their cars egged.

"I really hope that it is not targeted against students of color, and we don't want to think that it is a color issue, but you can't help thinking that," Oregon Students of Color Coalition board member Oscar Arana said.

In a meeting among student union groups held in the Multicultural Center on Tuesday, associate director of the Department of Public Safety Tom Hicks said no connection can be made between the vandalism and the thefts at this

point and DPS has not gathered enough information to determine any suspects.

Since January, DPS has received five reported incidents of theft from student unions. Three backpacks and two purses have been stolen from the Multicultural Center, Jewish Student Union, Native American Student Union and the MEChA office. Each of the incidents have occurred Monday through Friday ranging from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Typically, contents from stolen purses and bags have been found near 14th Avenue between Kincaid and Ferry streets, Hicks said.

MEChA member Candice Coats had a pair of New Balance tennis shoes and Nike shorts stolen from her bag two weeks ago, but did not report the incident to DPS.

DPS has plans to increase patrol in the EMU student unions and work with the Eugene Police Department for additional information

and leads to prevent future theft, Hicks said.

"I would encourage student unions to start locking their doors," Hicks said. "Basically, if people are more aware of a problem, it makes it less attractive of an area for theft; I also suggest students report stolen items or suspicious people, which will make it more likely stolen property will be returned."

For some student union members, locking the doors is not a viable option.

"Locking the door defeats the purpose of having unions," Black Student Union member Haben Woldu said. "It should be an open-door policy so students feel like they can stop in and chat."

Hicks also suggested students use day lockers in the EMU to protect bags and cables and padlocks to secure electronic equipment.

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

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