

Panel covers transgender identity issues

Transgender activists spoke about their experiences and difficulties with daily living

Roman Gokhman
Campus/City Culture Reporter

What does it mean to be a man or a woman?

That was the subject of Thursday night's "Trans Rights: National, Local and Personal Perspectives" forum.

The forum was moderated by Lori Buckwalter, executive director of It's Time, Oregon!, a Portland-based state organization that works to accomplish gender identity rights for all Oregonians.

The panel included transgender activists Sheila Coats, Octavian Starr, Reid Vanderburgh and Salli B. Goode.

"I never found out who I really was until I was 45 years old," Coats said.

Coats has been transitioning from biological male to biological female for the past two years, which she said has been a tough period.

Goode, who has not had any

physical medical procedures, said it is not fair to be classified into any one category.

"Some of us do not fit into any rigid role," she said. "We are really comfortable being both things."

Members of the panel discussed the risks faced by transgender people, including hate crimes and discrimination in all aspects of the society.

"It's unacceptable to me — it should be unacceptable to you," Coats said.

All of the panelists said they have been harassed and treated unfairly.

Starr, who grew up in Colorado and is transitioning from a biological female to a biological male, said he felt like an outsider in his home state.

"I thought I was an alien until I moved to Portland," he said.

Members of the panel agreed that transgender people face the same problems as the rest of society — problems with health care, employment and public safety — only more of them.

"We're just people like you,"

Coats said.

Vanderburgh, who transitioned from biological female to biological male, said he is concerned for transgender people who are having problems receiving health care because physicians refuse to see them.

About 70 people attended the forum, including Ward 3 City Councilor David Kelly, who represents the University area.

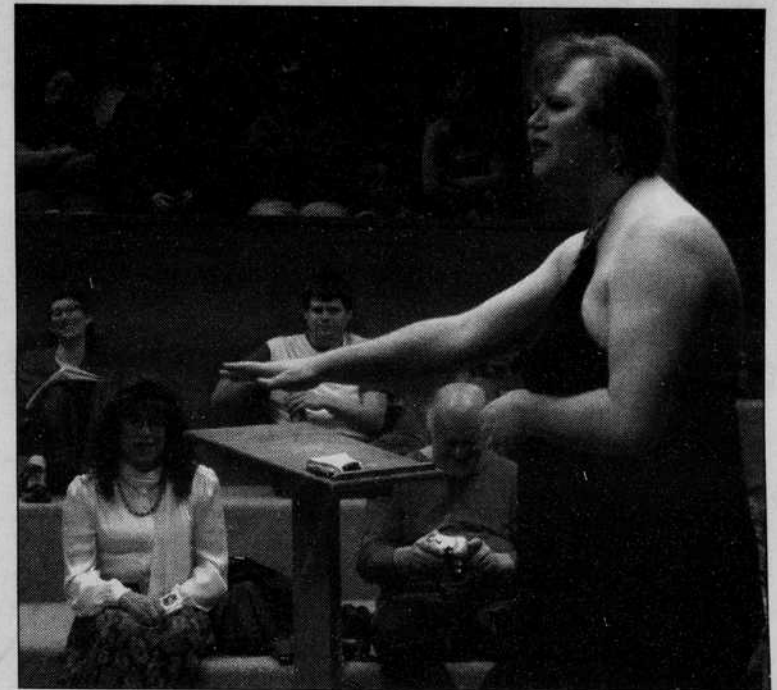
Kelly said the council dismissed a possible resolution protecting gender identity because Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey told them he would veto it.

"We need to use the (Eugene) Human Rights Commission as a means to break the myths, misconceptions and fears ... (and to) convince the mayor to change his mind," Kelly said.

Buckwalter said a few other U.S. cities, such as New York, have gender identity resolutions.

"It's not like Eugene is on the verge (of the movement)," she said.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Salli B. Goode spoke about gender identity at the "Trans Rights: National, Local and Personal Perspectives" forum in the Ben Linder Room Thursday night.

Cell tower

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not adequate grounds to deny cell tower construction.

"There are a lot of feelings and emotions about cell towers," Kullby said.

Doctoral student Phillip Ojo opposes any new cell tower on campus.

"This is supposed to be an educational center, not a business center," Ojo said. "This company should find somewhere else to build."

Barta said the University isn't enthusiastic about placing cell towers on campus, but by establishing guidelines and accommodating industry, the University has increased its ability to decide where cell towers should go.

"We haven't cut any corners," Barta said. "We're trying our best to be the good guys on this."

Under a long-term lease, Barta said Sprint would pay the university about \$950 per month for the site, plus a percentage of what Sprint charges other cell phone carriers that decide to use the tower.

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Measure 28

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and the tuition surcharge, we think we can manage through the remainder of this year," Vice President of Administration Dan Williams said. "Of course, there will be further issues next year, but we feel we could manage through this year." The proposed cuts to the administration would affect the ability of the University to fill open positions in administrative offices; the ability to hire for new positions would also be hampered. However, according to Moseley, no firings would occur on campus.

"We have made it a top priority to protect classes and education," Moseley said. "For this year, there are not going to be any classes cut."

Moseley said he is confident if Measure 28 passes, it would prevent further cuts to University programs and the need for the tuition surcharge.

"If 28 passes, you can also bet there will be smaller tuition increases next year," he added.

The University has already made more than \$7 million dollars in cuts to its operating budget this year. The cuts were made during the first four special sessions of the Oregon Legislative Assembly. Measure 28 was created during the fifth special ses-

sion as a means to prevent a further \$313 million in statewide cuts.

University administrators have attempted to focus proposed cuts away from student programs and academic services.

"Our driving objective is to not reduce student access to the academic curriculum and to the faculty," Vice President for Student Affairs Anne Leavitt said.

Measure 28 would create a temporary tax increase, effective for the next three years. The average taxpayer would pay an additional \$114 in yearly income taxes if the measure passes.

Contact the reporter at aimeerudin@dailymerald.com.

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