

# Groups seek progress in PFC fee procedures

The ASUO Programs Finance Committee worked to better its communication and professionalism this year

**Jennifer Bear**  
Campus/Federal Politics Reporter

Money-strapped students are familiar with the fine art of asking other people for cash, but student groups and programs that request funding from the ASUO Programs Finance Committee face a much more difficult process.

This year PFC distributed nearly \$5 million in student incidental fees to more than 100 programs affiliated with the University. Each group must still attend the mandatory Programs Council Meeting today at 4 p.m. in the EMU Ben Linder Room, however, to receive information that will affect all student fee-funded programs in 2003-04.

Representatives of various student groups said the current PFC is a cut above last year's committee, but some student groups still encountered difficulties with the fee allocation process this year.

Last year's PFC had to conduct a series of recalls because of an accounting error of more than \$500,000, and the committee was a campus favorite. Complaints about last year's committee included everything from personal bias among PFC members, to a lack of communication between the committee and student

groups, to PFC tags not meeting with programs to help them prepare their budget requests.

"There was a lot of frustration last year with the way programs were treated," said Jackie Ray, the presenter of last year's Panhellenic Council and Interfraternity Council's budget. "I felt a personal bias in my hearing in regards to the greek community."

PFC Chairwoman Kate Shull said this year's committee members were well aware of the problems student groups voiced at the Programs Council Meeting last year, and made serious efforts to be more professional and helpful to student groups. Shull said the committee tried to present a friendlier demeanor this year because PFC had been perceived as uncaring and rude in the past. She added the committee improved communication with student groups by making sure PFC tags met with program leaders prior to their budget hearings and explained how the student fee allocation process worked.

However, the PFC did not alter its bylaws to address the complaints student groups had last year. Shull said committee members simply tried to change the way PFC interacted with fee-funded programs.

John Branam, co-director of the Black Law Student Association, said committee members were much better this year at communicating with his group about the concerns PFC had with BLSA's budget request. He added that this made the process

run smoother, and helped his group be better prepared for its hearing.

Ray said she also felt PFC maintained closer contact with student groups this year, adding that tags were used more efficiently and she met multiple times with her tag to go over her group's budget request.

Still, many people feel PFC must continue to work on a number of problems to make the budget process fair. Ray said she felt the biggest problem this year was that student groups did not understand the reasoning behind the ASUO Executive Recommendations.

"I still don't feel that a lot of programs understand the budget process," Ray said.

Jeff Johnson, co-director of the Pacific Wine Law Society, said his group experienced some frustrations with the fee allocation process. Johnson said the group's tag made the effort to meet with Pacific Wine Law Society leaders and answer the questions they had about the budget process, but he said the tag gave them inaccurate information about what the group was allowed to purchase with its fee allocation. He added there could be a problem with PFC members not knowing their own rules, and the budget process could be improved by making sure tags are better acquainted with the rules.

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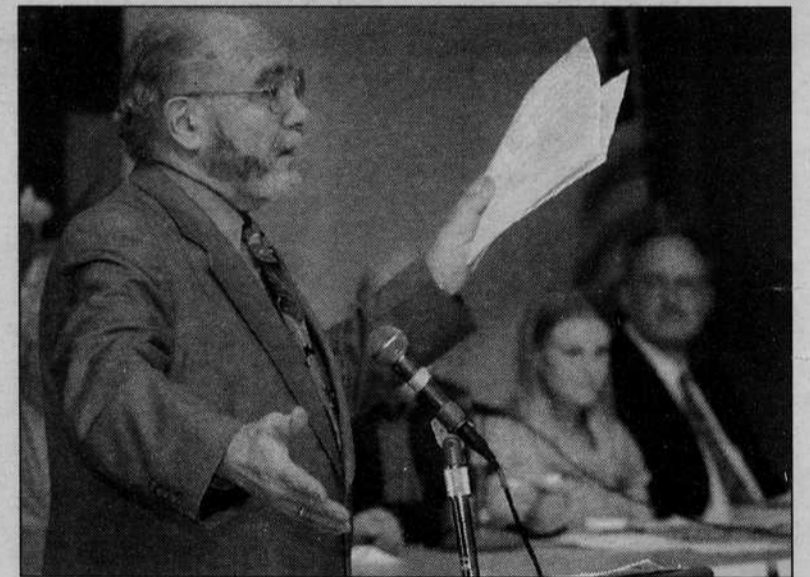
Health Plan and Medicaid, as well as the high costs of private insurance and prescription drugs, have left many without adequate health care coverage. Officials are looking for methods to raise revenues to establish new programs, such as a possible 1.5 percent payroll tax increase to employers for universal coverage for children.

One of the concerns associated with a payroll tax increase is the possibility employers will cut existing benefits to employees to meet the costs of the mandatory tax. Mark Shapiro, Lane County chairman of activist-group Health Care for All, added that the public's reliance on employers to provide health coverage is one reason that taxpayers are reluctant to lend their support to the system.

Speakers at the community forum explained that as the costs of coverage increase, more and more employers, especially small firms, are dropping coverage and leaving employees without adequate health care. Literature at the forum stated that in 2002 there was a 12.7 percent increase in insurance premiums for employer-sponsored health care.

Lynn Marie Crider, AFL-CIO Research and Education director, said two-thirds of uninsured families have a member working full time.

Shapiro said Measure 23's failure in the polls last November was a troublesome defeat for those



Adam Amato Emerald

Sen. Bill Morrisette, D-Springfield, speaks about issues in Oregon health care at the First Methodist Church on Wednesday night.

who support a universal health care system. An effort to bring the initiative back to the ballots, he said, would be costly and time consuming. Instead, Health Care for All members want to work with state legislature and health care professionals to establish other workable programs.

Jessica Bradley, a recent University graduate, spoke at the event about her experiences without health care coverage. Though she holds a college degree, Bradley said she was unable to find a job that provided her with

health care benefits.

Bradley's fear and frustration could be a reality for many college graduates who assume they will always be able to access the health care system. According to 2001 information from the Census Bureau, 41.2 million Americans are uninsured, an increase of 1.4 million from 2000.

"This is unconscionable — as wealthy a nation as we are," Morrisette said. "We are betraying ourselves."

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