

NEWS BRIEF

University reworks student privacy code

University officials have completed their final version of the revamped student privacy code, which includes updates aimed at bringing the school in line with federal regulations that allow the government to secretly obtain student information.

The code, like earlier versions, allows the publishing of e-mail addresses in the student directory and deems that student requests to block their information from publication

will become "effective as soon as is reasonably practicable."

The only noticeable change in the final version is the controversial section allowing University officials to yield to federal requests and silently hand over student information. In the language, the sentence allowing the compliance does not take effect until Dec. 10, while the rest of the code went into effect last week.

That delay was created to allow the Faculty Senate time to debate the language before it goes into effect, said Randy Geller, director of policy

and legal affairs. Late last school year, representatives from ASUO and biology Professor Frank Stahl complained about the lack of input they were allowed in the formation of the updated privacy code.

There may not be much to debate, however. Since the legislation took effect in the mid-1990s, University officials have been obligated to comply with requests allowed by the law, regardless of school code. The University, however, has never been asked to hand over information without notifying the student.

— Jared Paben

RETIREMENT

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"Most of them have to do with changes in PERS," Davis said.

According to the PERS Web site, the Oregon Legislature passed nine bills calling for various alterations to the retirement system during the last session, and some bills amended previous bills already passed in the session. Human Resources Benefits Administrator Helen Stoop said employees were uncertain how the alterations might affect them.

"Employees who were close to retirement found their benefits might not be greater in the future and in fact they may be less," Stoop said.

Some of the changes were to take effect on July 1, 2003, which prompted some professors to retire before that date in order to receive the benefits the program currently guarantees, Stoop said. She said it is still not completely clear how changes to PERS will affect state workers since PERS still has to develop administrative rules to determine how alterations will be implemented.

Some of the bills are currently being challenged in court proceedings.

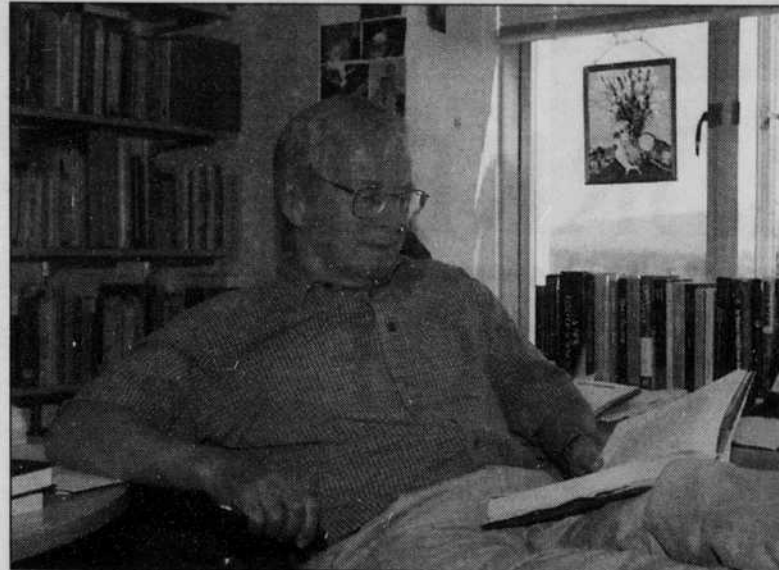
"It's difficult enough making a decision about retirement, especially if you don't have the answers and things keep changing," Stoop said.

As various bills were passed, professors like Moore said they had to weigh their options carefully.

"It's because I'll make more money retired than I will teaching," Moore said of his final decision. "(Under the changes), I'd have to work six more years to build my pension back to what it is now."

Political Science professor John Orbell, who has taught at the University since 1967, said PERS changes nudged him into retirement, too.

"Financially, it seemed like a sensi-



Jessica Waters Photo Editor

Political Science Professor John Orbell has been at the University since 1967. He plans to continue his teaching and research, despite his official retirement at the end of last year.

ble thing to do," he said. When the Legislature was in session, he said, nobody was certain what the final decisions might be.

"It seemed like there were some really risky prospects," Orbell said. "It seemed like it was the right time to get out, given the uncertainties."

Orbell added that the passage of time also factored into his decision.

"I recognized at some time I'd need to retire," he said.

Davis said many of the professors will be returning to teach; retired professors can work a maximum of 1,039 hours per year. Davis said many would not be working that much, however.

"Many of these people will be continuing part time, so we'll still benefit from their services," Davis said. She added that the total number of faculty has not decreased, because the University had 46 new hires in

various departments.

Moore said he will continue teaching classes this school year because he has always loved his engagement with the department and his interactions with students.

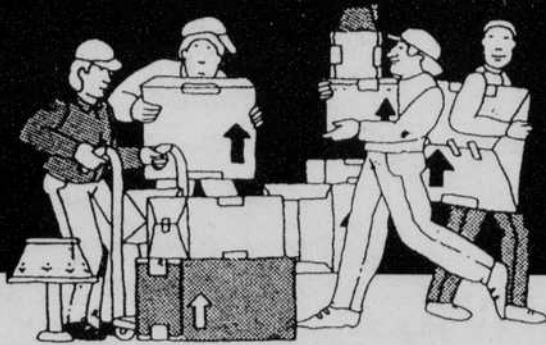
"I wasn't expecting to (retire) and I didn't want to let my department down," he said. He added that when he finally leaves, he still intends to volunteer as a teacher, as well as garden and spend more time outdoors.

Even in retirement, Orbell also plans to nurture his intellectual pursuits.

"What I realized is that retirement wouldn't change my life one bit," he said. For Orbell, research and teaching go hand in hand, giving him a constant supply of new ideas for the classroom.

"I have some strong research interests that will keep me going," he said.

Contact the news editor at ayishayahya@dailyemerald.com.



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