

NEWS BRIEFS

EMU raises food prices to offset increased costs, higher minimum wage

Prices are rising, whether it's for tuition or textbooks, and this fall students can also expect to pay an extra 3 percent for certain food items offered by the EMU Food Service.

The food service operates Greatful Bread, The Buzz Coffeehouse and Erb Essentials in the EMU, as well as three other satellite coffee shops around campus.

Director of EMU Food Services John Costello said two factors fueling the increase are the anticipation of an increased minimum wage in January 2004 and an increase in the price the EMU pays for products.

"We try to keep our prices pretty much in line with just those factors," he said.

Minimum wage will rise from \$6.90 to \$7.05 next year, which means the food service will increase the wages of all 90 employees, most of who are students, Costello said.

He added that he thinks the logic of increasing wages is ironic because while students will be making more money, prices tend to increase at the same time.

Although the cost of ingredients for food items such as sandwiches is rising, coffee prices will remain the same due to better contracts with distributors that offer lower prices.

Senior Yousef Al-Rahmani, an employee at The Buzz, said he doesn't expect the higher prices to hurt business.

"We expect an increase because we have new management and new coffee," he said.

- Chelsea Duncan

Blackboard upgrade provokes interest

The launch of Blackboard 6, the latest version of the online course facilitator, is causing quite a buzz around campus.

Coordinator of Academic Education J.Q. Johnson said he received around 20 extra telephone calls a day last week from students and faculty who had questions or com-

ments about the new features and services it offers.

Blackboard 6 provides faculty with improved services such as a more efficient grade book that makes keeping track of grades easier, Johnson said. The main difference for students is the new login process. Students will now use the same passwords as their University e-mail accounts for their Blackboard accounts.

The upgrade began this fall and will continue this fall. Johnson said the service is now available for all courses to use, which was one of the main goals of the upgrade.

Besides one student who called to complain that his class wasn't using Blackboard, Johnson said most of the calls have been questions on usage and expressions of interest.

"So far we haven't seen any difficulty adjusting to the upgrade," he said.

More information on new features and usage can be found at <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>.

- Chelsea Duncan



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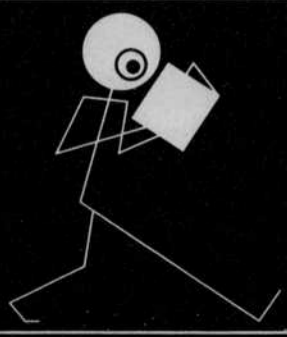
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