

Students take part in ASUO as interns, elected officials

Student government is one way for students to create change at the University and hold leadership roles

By Cory Eldridge
Freelance Reporter

For ASUO senator Jesse Harding, involvement in student government is a simple idea.

"Half of being involved is showing up," said Harding, who is Senate seat number eight and a senior journalism major. "Student power is in our numbers."

For the members of the student government, being active in student government can be as simple as getting involved with events, or as engaging as interning for ASUO.

Junior Gabe Kjos committed to an internship with ASUO.

"I saw tuition was increasing way too much, and students were paying more for less," Kjos said. "I figured (by interning) I would have a legitimate way to affect students."

That was last January. Now Kjos is a legislative associate for ASUO. He works with other students to lobby for and against bills being submitted to the state Legislature.

Interns work in one of eight areas of ASUO, from the legislative and international departments to the marketing and public relation departments. A one-hour class takes place once a week, and students spend time at the ASUO office depending on how many credits their internship is worth.

Affecting what happens to students' wallets, supplementing a major and learning more about the University are all reasons students have become

involved with ASUO.

Ben Strawn, a junior and seat number 10, ran for a seat on the Student Senate for many reasons, including learning about how student fees are used.

As a senator, Strawn approves the budget for student groups and is on a committee that decides how to award the surplus to student groups that request it.

Both Strawn and Harding cite the school's many committees as avenues students can use to greatly affect what happens at the University.

"The student government works its ass off to keep what students have. It's great when we get something new, but with the state budget, that doesn't happen often."

Jesse Harding
ASUO senator

To cater to different majors, nine of the 18 senators are representatives for various majors and are heads of committees.

These committees consist of students trying to better the University for other students.

"ASUO does for students what the administration can't," he said. "The ASUO is students so it is more affected by decisions."

The student government attempts to consider every student's needs but admits it can improve.

"Our goal is to reach out to all U of

O students and we weren't reaching international students," Kjos said.

To remedy that, ASUO President Maddy Melton hired senior psychology major Takenori Momiyama to help involve international students in student government.

One of Momiyama's goals is to create new committees to address the specific needs of international students, especially the need to improve financial assistance.

"Tuition has increased for all students, but international students have few scholarships and no financial aid," Momiyama said. "A project we are working on is a scholarship for international students."

The scholarship would be based on students donating small change around campus, but could possibly move to other forms of fund raising.

"Students helping students is what I want to focus on for this scholarship," Momiyama said.

On Oct. 14, ASUO is running a program called "Weaving New Beginnings," which is aimed at allowing students of color to meet school faculty and administration.

"It's pretty simple, but people think that someone else is doing it," Harding said of various events sponsored by student government. "The student government works its ass off to keep what students have. It's great when we get something new, but with the state budget, that doesn't happen often."

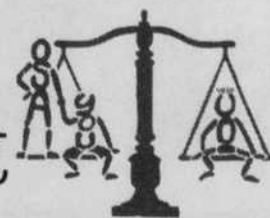
To Harding, involvement is as simple as this: Show up.

"Find the things that interest you the most; show up to committees that affect your major or your daily life," he said.

Cory Eldridge is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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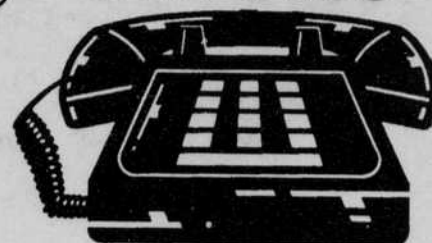
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