

Senate wage issue dominates first term meeting

The student senators voted down a resolution to censure those involved in last year's election packet process

Moriah Balingit
Freelance Reporter

A typo in last year's election packets that resulted in \$5,400 in lost wages for ASUO student senators continues to haunt the senate. The issue dominated its first meeting of winter term Wednesday.

The election packet provided for last year's senate candidates stated senators would receive \$175 per month, when the actual figure was \$125 per month.

The most recent debate centered around a resolution created last December that would formally censure, among others, ASUO Accounting Coordinator Jennifer

Creighton-Neiwert. Creighton-Neiwert was hired in July 1999 as the ASUO accounting coordinator and the ASUO coordinator.

Creighton-Neiwert was personally unclear on why her name was included in the resolution, as she had no official role in the production of the election packets. Her culpability for the error in the election packets was the issue of contention during much of Wednesday's meeting, however.

Some senators said they felt including Creighton-Neiwert in the resolution was too harsh.

"It was just a simple typo," said Sen. Bethany Larson. "Maybe we should just drop it."

Sen. Colin Andries disagreed.

"Part of moving forward is acknowledging that something was wrong ... (Creighton-Neiwert)

should be held liable for what she takes on," he said.

Andries explained why he felt Creighton-Neiwert should be censured: "She overlooks a lot of things, whether they're in her job description or not. She was definitely asked about the elections process."

Andries went on to say Creighton-Neiwert serves as a "point of continuity" between ASUO Senate Administrations because of the permanence of her position. Thus, he said, many go to her for advising because of her extensive experience with the ASUO.

The senate was mostly divided on the issue, creating an impasse, and some likened the dead-end conversation to "beating a dead horse."

"We're just throwing blame around," Senate Ombudsman Mike Sherman said.

After nearly an hour of debate, Andries successfully moved to remove Creighton-Neiwert's name from the resolution in an attempt to get the resolution passed. Without Creighton-Neiwert, the resolution would still have censured the 2002-2003 ASUO Executive, the 2002-2003 Elections Board and the 2002-2003 ASUO Constitution Court.

"There was a pervading feeling in the room that it wasn't going to get passed with her name in there," he said.

In spite of Andries' last-minute amendment, the resolution did not pass, with 11 of the 17 present senators voting against it. Many senators still said they felt the amended resolution was too harsh and unnecessary.

"I think it's clear how the senate feels, and I don't feel that we needed to express it any more formally,"

Senate President Ben Strawn said.

Senators were generally in favor of a procedural amendment that would make sure such an error would not occur again.

Whether or not the issue was put to rest is largely unclear, as some senators still want to pursue it with solutions ranging from censuring ASUO Election Board members to simply amending the process. However, some progress seems to have been made toward resolving the issue.

The Senate also approved the transfer of \$288 for the Jewish Student Union to buy food for the Jewish Cultural Night. The vote was nearly unanimous, with Sen. Rodrigo Moreno saying "I'm all for diversity."

Moriah Balingit is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

TUITION

continued from page A1

week, they'll get a 50 percent refund. In the fourth week they'll get a 25 percent refund, and after the fourth week there is no refund.

Although these tuition increases might seem difficult to bear, Senior Vice President and Provost John Moseley said they are insignificant compared with the increases the University might have to implement in the near future.

Continuing threats of lowered state-funding are forcing the University to rely more heavily on the funding it receives from tuition, Moseley said. He added that the administration is sympathetic with students' complaints about increasing tuition, but it is the only way the University can continue to avoid cutting classes in the face of shrinking state support of higher education.

"Our priority has been don't cut back on classes and programs because our students need to graduate on time," Moseley said. "Raising tuition is a bad choice, but it's the best of the bad choices we have."

And it's a choice the administration might have to make again.

The Oregon Legislature passed a bill requiring the Oregon University System to return \$14 million in student tuition to the general fund by January 2005, and the University will lose approximately \$4.7 million as a result.

In addition, Moseley said that if Measure 30 fails next month and the income tax surcharge is rejected, another \$2.5 million hole will get punched into the University's budget — a hole that must be filled by increasing tuition for the 2004-05 school year.

"We have cut everywhere else we can really cut," he said. "At that point we're going to have to start cutting classes."

Moseley said that if Measure 30 fails, the University would have to cut approximately 250 courses to offset the funding loss. But since that is the last thing the administration wants to do, Moseley said they would pick the lesser of the two evils and opt to raise tuition once again.

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Annual tuition & fee rates for full-time students



Tanya Johnson Senior Graphic Designer

MAD COW

continued from page A1

brought worldwide attention to the several precautions taken after the shipment.

After a brief beef recall and an extended investigation into the age and origin of the cow, the scare has died down to a point where some wonder what all the fuss was about. Nevertheless, beef exports are being rejected in countries like Japan.

Oregon Beef Council Executive Director Dianne Byrne Johnston attributes the scare-factor to sensationalized media, which influenced other countries to cancel their orders. However, considering exports only account for 10 percent of beef business nationwide, Johnston said carnivorous Americans should help to cover the industry's losses.

"I think the people's confidence in beef has been restored," she said.

During the past two years, Johnston said the stability of the multi-billion dollar beef industry has been reinforced by several factors, including popular protein-based diets and new convenience products like precooked or pretrimmed beef cuts.

Although she remains confident in the industry, Johnston said it may be too soon to tell if mad cow will significantly affect the industry.

"It's going to be a few weeks before we know the true impact of the scare," Johnston said.

Johnston said her confidence also stems from recent results from a nationwide food safety issues study checking consumer awareness and loyalty to beef. In September, the study showed that 61 percent of Americans knew of mad cow. In a follow-up study performed last week, 96 percent of Americans knew of the disease, a dramatic increase that resulted from a huge,

predominantly negative amount of press attention.

However, 88 percent of Americans said they were confident in the safety of beef in September and 89 percent said the same last week.

"Confidence has stayed very high," Johnston said.

Vic Hastings, owner of Custom Meat Co., a local beef retailer and custom meat producer, said he thinks beef is making a comeback after unfounded connections to cholesterol caused some to switch to white meat.

"People are starting to swing more towards the meat that they shied from before," he said.

After receiving some concerned calls from supermarket customers about mad cow, Hastings said he predicts more people will start to buy beef from small markets and farms owned by friends and neighbors.

"The custom business will proba-

bly pick up a bit," he said.

Although the beef industry has been slow to create new national advertisements since the "Beef. It's what's for dinner" and "Where's the beef?" commercials, Johnston said new pro-beef ads are coming soon.

"There will be a new campaign, and we will roll it out a bit earlier than planned, by a couple weeks," Johnston said.

Considering both American and Canadian beef producers haven't fed their cattle with cow brains or spinal cord remains — the main causes of mad cow — for about five years, Johnston said mad cow disease will be history soon.

"In time, we just won't see any more cases," she said.

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