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Student government begins using new accounting system

The new system will make accounting more efficient for the ASUO

MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
NEWS REPORTER

The ASUO recently implemented a new accounting system that will improve the way student groups manage funds and will allow the Student Senate to oversee funding allocations more efficiently, according to ASUO Accounting Coordinator Jennifer Creighton-Neiwert.

The new system, which took effect July 1, will distinguish group finances into five different funds: Incidental fees, restricted event revenue, general funds, non-event revenue and non-restricted revenue.

Event and non-event revenue will no longer be grouped with incidental fee funds, making it easier to determine how groups are using allocated funds, Creighton-Neiwert said.

"Now (the) Senate has the ability to easily identify where the funds are going," Creighton-Neiwert said.

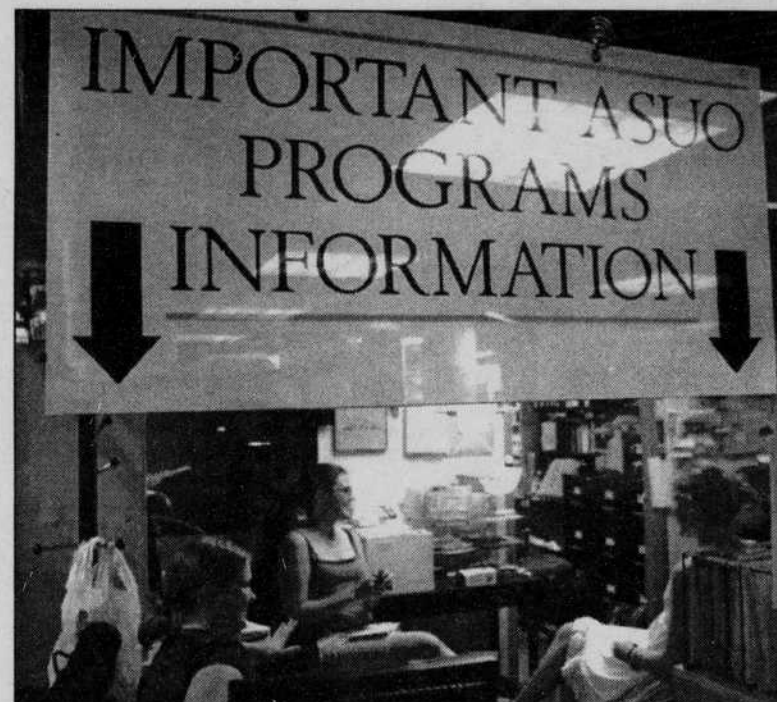
Because the majority of student-group funding comes from the incidental fees, Creighton-Neiwert said it is important to ensure that groups price event tickets and activities at appropriate rates for how much incidental-fee funding is used.

With budgets more finely parsed, it will now be possible to examine how much revenue an event generates versus how much a group spends on the event, Creighton-Neiwert said. "It's a better way of looking at an event and seeing what we should charge for tickets," Creighton-Neiwert said.

The Senate will no longer hear budget transfer requests, Creighton-Neiwert said. Rather, groups will request from the Senate a "release of funds" from one of the five areas of their budget to another or from Senate surplus.

The only problem officials have had with the new system has been explaining it to student groups, ASUO Controller Christina Diss said.

How the system operates has not



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior journalism and math major Christina Diss (bottom left), junior environmental science major Carrie Henderson (center) and junior planning, public policy and management major Rosie Sweetman staff the ASUO Controller's Office.

been put into writing, making the task of explaining the system to student groups difficult, Diss said.

"There isn't any language in the Senate rules about the new accounting system," Diss said.

Diss and fellow ASUO Controllers Carrie Henderson and Rosie Sweetman are responsible for ensuring student groups understand the new system and are following it.

This has been difficult without written documentation, but not impossible, Diss said.

"Hopefully [the Senate Rules Committee] will meet before their deadline in the fall and pass the new rules," she said.

Creighton-Neiwert said officials have anticipated these difficulties.

"Any time you make a change or go through a transition it's going to be difficult because there's a new system to learn," she said.

Because the system was only

recently instituted, Creighton-Neiwert said it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness, but she said is confident that student groups will be able to make the adjustment.

ASUO Women's Center Office Coordinator Lori Brown shared this confidence.

"I think [senators] are constantly asking themselves how they can ensure student groups are using student fees responsibly and in a way that is really meeting the students' needs," Brown said.

Though the new system may mean that groups have less freedom in how they spend certain funds, Brown said the fiscally responsible "spirit" behind it is commendable.

"It's definitely going to hold us to a higher level of accountability," she said.

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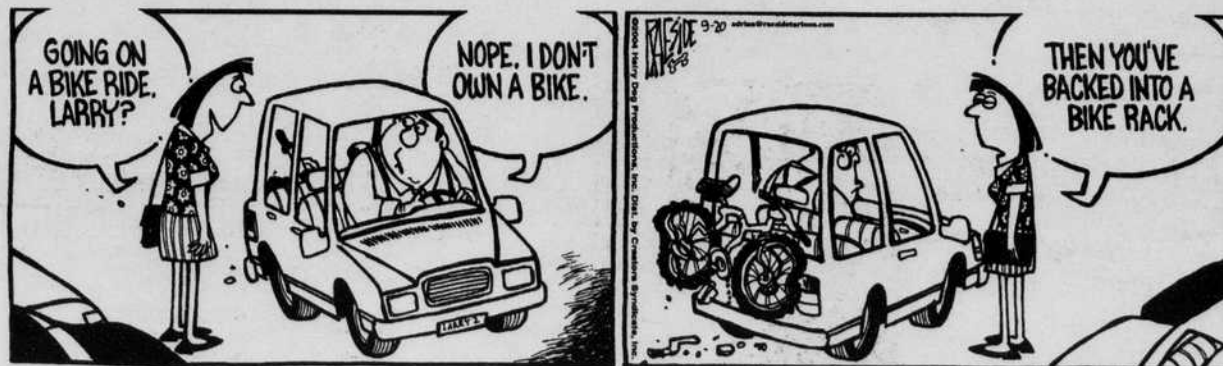
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The Other Coast

by Adrian Raeside



Oregon Daily Emerald

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