

Kerry supporters exceed volunteer recruitment goal

The student-run campus campaign now turns its efforts on a voter drive at the University

BY GABE BRADLEY
NEWS FREELANCE EDITOR

Standing at the John Kerry for President table in the lobby of the EMU, economics major Mike Barnard does a last-minute check to make sure he brought all the flyers he'll need for the two-day volunteer registration drive that is about to kick off.

"Help is on the way," he says quietly, as he leaves to assume his post.

"Help is on the way!" responds Vote Blitzing team manager Matthew Strickland with a clap.

Oregon Students for Kerry, together with the College Democrats, registered 612 University students to volunteer with the Carry Oregon campaign during a drive on Thursday and Friday.

"That is unprecedented in campaign history at the U of O or any place," said Michelle Dixon, student outreach director for the Carry Oregon campaign, which is supported by the Democratic Party of Oregon.

With thousands of potential voters on campus, using student volunteers to mobilize the vote is a central

strategy for both campaigns.

"Oregon is a battleground state," said Tucker Bounds, Oregon communications director for the Bush/Cheney campaign. "Governor Bush lost to Vice President Gore in 2000 by just under 6,800 votes."

Both campaigns have speculated that a well-organized student campaign could sway the election.

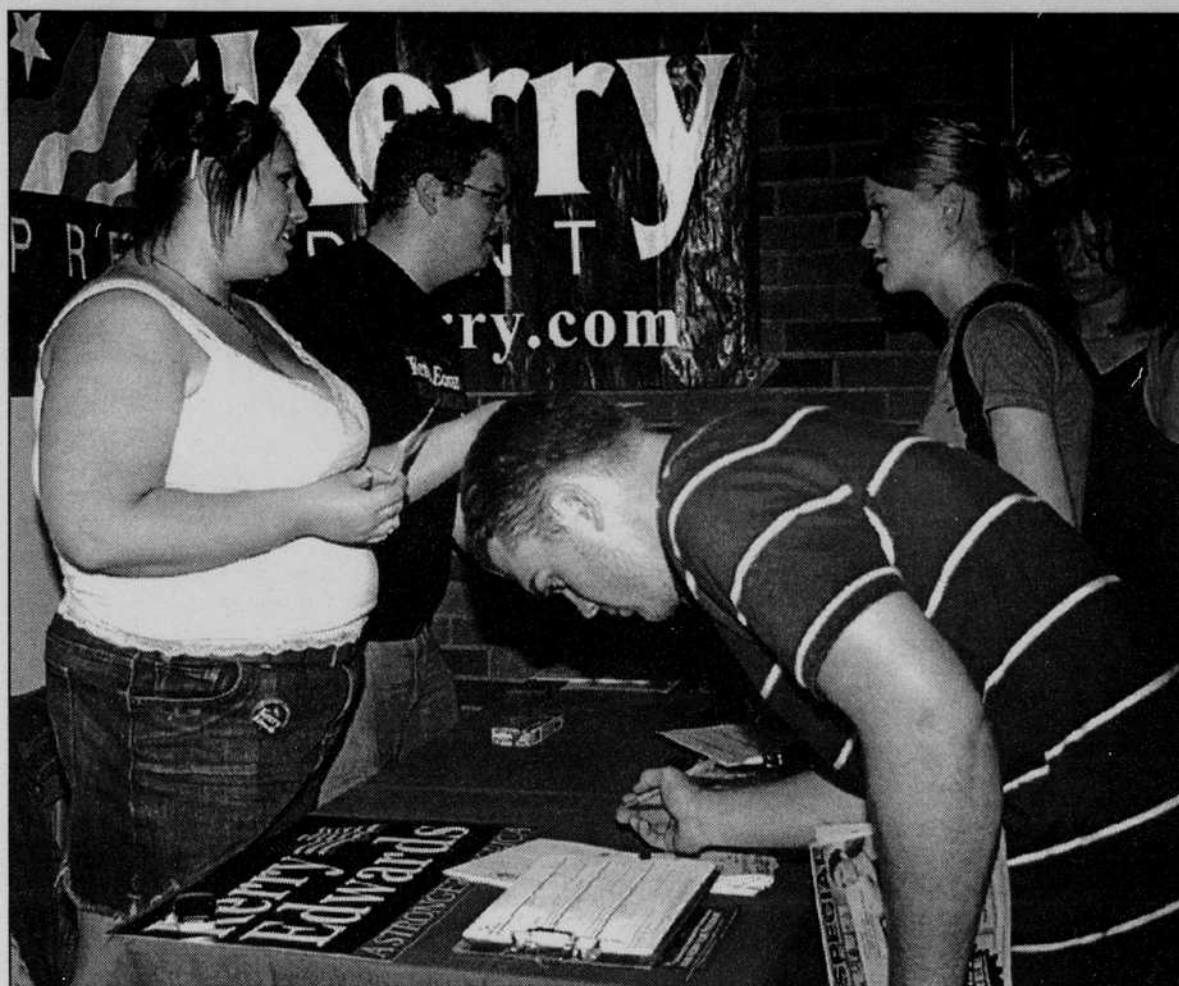
"Students can make the difference; students will make the difference," Strickland said. "If we get out and vote, politicians will listen to our issues."

Strickland, a political science major, said he has noticed increased student involvement in politics.

"I think you're going to see that young people are involved in this campaign," Strickland said just before the volunteer registration drive began. "I think you're going to see that young people want their voices heard."

The figures seem to validate his prediction. The number of volunteers recruited last week exceeded the goal of 500 by more than 20 percent.

"What we're looking for in an average volunteer is 10 to 20 hours a week for the next five weeks," Strickland said. "Five weeks to



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

John Kerry campaign volunteers Blythe Daniels and Matthew Strickland promote the Democratic Party to freshman Langston Kriel in the EMU on Thursday.

change the next four years."

Strickland said the volunteers have served with enthusiasm.

"They feel empowered — that they have a voice in our country," he said.

Besides traditional campaign methods such as holding signs and handing out flyers, Carry Oregon volunteers are encouraged to talk up John Kerry with friends and fellow students.

"Truly the student campaign is to get students to talk to their friends and talk to their peers about why this is so important and get them engaged," Dixon said. "The focus on student-to-student contact is really a priority."

This strategy makes campaign volunteerism accessible to a wide range of students, according to Dixon.

"There is no typical volunteer," Dixon said. "They are students from

all walks of life."

Though the Republican effort on campus has been more understated so far, 535 University students have registered to volunteer as Students for Bush on the Bush campaign's Web site. However, UO Students for Bush coordinator Jarrett White estimates that only 20 volunteers have been active

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Volunteers Wanted!

Duck Preview is a visitation day for high school seniors who are interested in the University of Oregon. Its success depends on volunteer support from you... current UO students!

DUCK PREVIEW 2004 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Volunteering at **Duck Preview** is a great way to:

- get involved on campus;
- meet other students;
- get better acquainted with the university;
- help prospective students;
- share your Duck experiences with visitors.

There will be two training sessions to choose from:

Tuesday, October 26
at 5:30pm in 360 Oregon Hall
OR

Wednesday, October 27
at 5:30pm in 360 Oregon Hall

Contact the **Ambassador Program** by phone at 346-1274 or by e-mail at ambass@darkwing.uoregon.edu