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Student Senate violates state law

Appropriate notice not given for Wednesday's executive sessions discussing officer nominations

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
NEWS REPORTER

The ASUO Student Senate violated Oregon Public Meetings Law by holding Executive sessions at its Wednesday meeting without notifying the public or the media at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

The three sessions were held to give the Senate opportunities to discuss the nominations for president, vice president and ombudsman in privacy before voting. Senior James George was voted president, law student Colin Andries vice president and junior Stephanie Erickson ombudsman.

According to the Attorney General's Public Records and Meetings Manual, at least 24 hours public notice must be given for all meetings of a governing body, including executive sessions — meetings which the public is barred from attending. Members of the media can stay for an executive session but may not take notes or report on any business conducted during the session.

"Notices for meetings that will include both an executive session and a non-executive session should give notice of both and state the statutory authority for the executive session," the manual reads.

The Emerald was notified of the meeting but no mention was made of the executive sessions or reasons why executive sessions would be necessary.

Senator Toby Hill-Meyer was unaware that the executive sessions were a violation of the law, the senator said. Because they were held to discuss hiring practices, Hill-Meyer was under the impression that the executive sessions were "implicit," the senator said.

Public meetings law permits most of the hiring process to be conducted in an executive session but only "if specific statutory prerequisites have been met," such as the 24-hour notice to the general public and to interested news media.

Andries, the newly elected Senate Vice President, would not comment on the situation but said he would review the law as soon as he returned from the Senate's weekend retreat to Sunriver and handle the situation from there.

The Emerald was unable to contact any other Senators before their Friday afternoon departure to the popular Central Oregon resort. ASUO Accounting Coordinator Jennifer Creighton-Neiwert, who presided over the meeting, was also at Sunriver and unavailable for comment.

Once the officials had been elected, the Senate heard special requests and spending authorization requests from a number of campus organizations.

The Senate approved 15-1 a \$959 spending authorization for the International Law Student Association and unanimously approved a request from Campus Recycling to transfer \$5,591 from the incidental fee surplus to cover payroll expenses.

Also unanimously approved was a \$16,362 surplus request from the Co-op

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★ AMERICA VOTES 2004 ★

Green Party comes to town

The candidate attempts to draw support for a write-in campaign and criticizes Kerry and Bush

GABE BRADLEY
NEWS FREELANCE EDITOR

Almost 400 people gave write-in presidential candidate Ralph Nader a standing ovation as he began a campaign stop at the McDonald Theatre Sunday.

The address came just a week and a half after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Nader's appeal of an Oregon Supreme Court decision that cast him off the ballot in this state.

"When are we going to realize we've lost our government," Nader said. The candidate spent the first part of his speech blasting Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury for declaring about 3,000 signatures on Nader's nominating petition invalid.

"It's with regret that we have to confront the politically exclusionary bigotry of Bill Bradbury — your secretary of state," Nader said.

Nader accused Bradbury of committing a "constitutional crime" by invalidating the signatures.

"Instead of confronting with us, competing with us and debating with us, what do they do? They kick us off the ballot," he said.

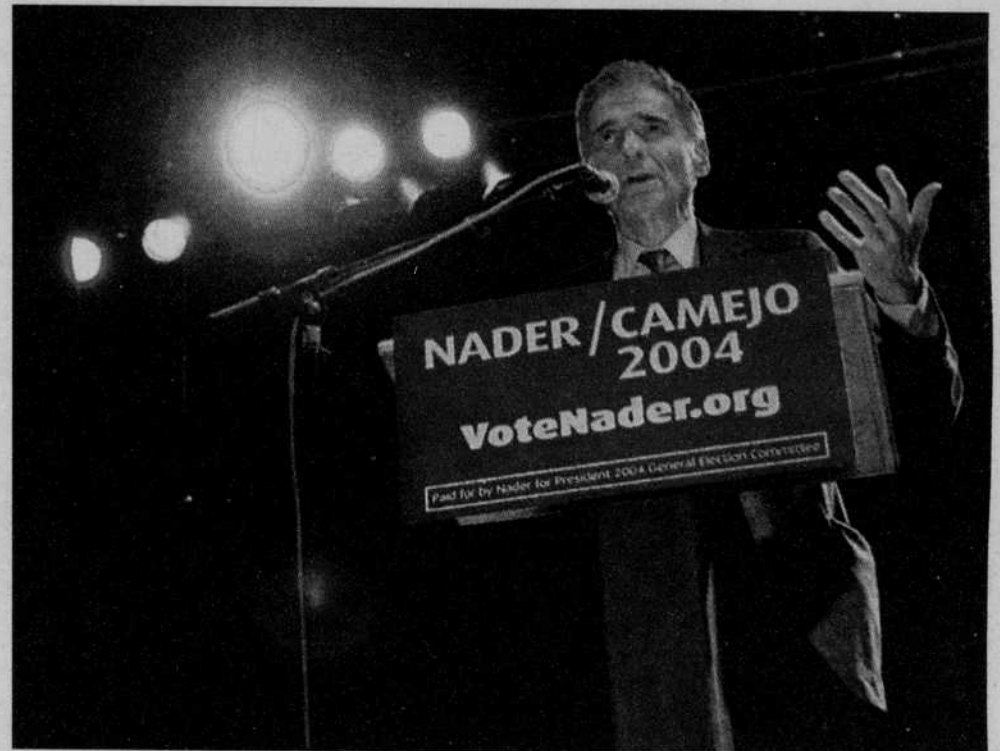
In addition to his claims that signatures were invalidated because of "unwritten rules," Nader said that at least 30 of his signature gatherers were intimidated by persons "directly traceable to the Democratic Party here in Oregon."

Nader also leveled attacks against Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry for supporting many Bush administration policies instead of working harder to reach out to progressive voters.

"If the Republicans are as bad as you say they are — and they're worse — why aren't the Democrats landsliding them?" Nader asked. "The only place where democracy comes before work is in the dictionary."

Nader went on to say that voters are unable to distinguish between the two candidates.

"John Kerry in the first debate out-hawked George Bush," he said.



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Ralph Nader sharply criticized Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury for de-certifying 3,000 signatures Nader's campaign collected to gain a space on the ballot at the MacDonald Theater Sunday night.

Much of the rest of Nader's speech was spent criticizing the role of corporate money in the political process.

"Kerry/Edwards are being pulled everyday by the corporate interests," he said. "What's pulling Kerry/Edwards in the liberal, progressive direction? Just Nader/Camejo, that's all."

The event, organized with four days notice according to Oregon Campaign Director Travis Driskin, was open to the public with a suggested donation of \$10 or \$5 for students.

Eugene resident Zachary Vishanoff arrived early and ended up volunteering with the event.

"I feel that the country really stopped being free when they started opting him out of the debates," Vishanoff said. "We're losing honesty

about the debate because they're so heavily scripted — they've got this big rule book — and they exclude people that aren't mainstream. Pretty soon it's no debate at all."

Vishanoff praised Nader's communication of the issues, saying he spoke clearly and with "no spin." He also condemned the role corporate money has played in the major political campaigns.

"When you have deep pockets and but you don't have ethics, it's a terrible problem," he said.

The opposition

About a dozen Kerry supporters were protesting Nader's appearance, including the so-called Billionaires for Bush.

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Bush and Kerry debate, town-hall style

Fewer students gathered to view debates on campus Friday than previous debates this year

BY PARKER HOWELL
& MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER & NEWS REPORTER

Despite dismal weather and the social allure of a Friday night, the second presidential debate between candidates George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry still drew interest on campus.

At Pizanos Pizzeria, a campus eatery frequented by students who live in the residence halls, the debate easily won out over a baseball game that was playing on the restaurant's big screen television.

"I want to watch them battle each other," freshman Evan Kleiman said as he switched the channel to the debate.

Kleiman said watching the debates has helped him understand what the candidates stand for.

"It's like the fate of the next four years of our country," he said. "I don't want to be an ignorant voter."

Kleiman said education and health care are student issues he would like to see the candidates debate. He added that he also views homeland security, Social Security and international relations with allies and Israel as important issues the candidates sometimes neglect.

However, freshman Cameron Kahn said scheduling the

debate for a Friday was not the best way to attract a large number of viewers, "especially for college students."

"They're trying to get a lot of 18 to 24-year-olds to vote, and Friday night isn't really the way to do it," he said.

Kahn watched about 60 minutes of the 90-minute debate at Pizanos, opting not to stay until the end because "they're just starting to be really repetitive," he said.

Freshman Michael Davidson said he did not expect the second debate to get as many viewers because most students have already chosen a candidate.

Davidson said his perception of the debates is colored by his political views, which he said holds true for many viewers.

"I think the Democratic Party nominating John Kerry was a reckless nomination," he said, adding that he supports Bush regardless of the debates.

Davidson said Bush's platform is not flawless but "he lies less and he's not swayed by popular opinion."

Sophomore Ryne Sell said he supports Kerry regardless of the debates.

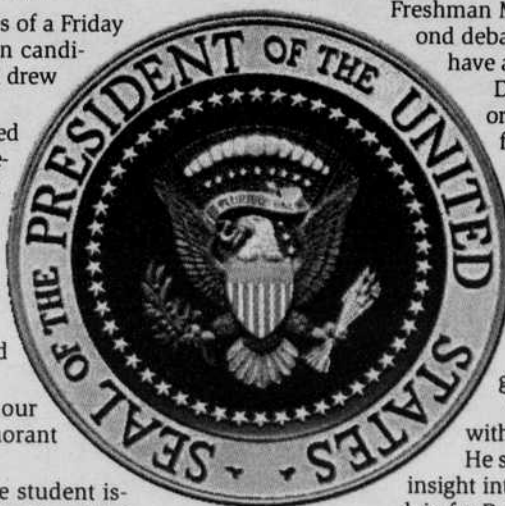
"There's so many issues that I'm already familiar with," he said.

He said Friday's debate did not give him any additional insight into either candidate and only strengthened his disdain for Bush.

"Bush was really just focusing on the flip-flopping," Sell said. "He doesn't have a lot of good points to go on."

Charlie Potts, Pizanos Pizzeria supervisor, said the first

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