Elvis has entered Pulse | 5

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Examining ASUO

ASUO leaders might not repay funds from trip

ASUO members decide to focus on more beneficial goals as self-punishment for conduct code violations

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Student government leaders who violated the Student Conduct Code during an October Sunriver retreat will probably not pay back the approximately $3,200 in incidental fees used to pay for the annual trip. ASUO officials told the Emerald in an Oct. 28 interview that retreat participants would refund the money used on the fall finance retreat through fundraisers or garnishing wages.

The ASUO admitted multiple retreat attendees smoked marijuana and drank alcohol on the Oct. 10-12 trip but has refused to disclose their names or how many students were involved.

ASUO Public Relations Director Nathan Strauss said Wednesday that some members of the ASUO do not support repayment of the money used to pay for the trip, and that while repayment is still a possibility, it may not be feasible to raise the funds.

"Some of us feel it sends the message that the purpose of this retreat was not fulfilled," Strauss said.

Senate President James George said ASUO members wanted to focus on goals that would benefit multiple groups, such as the creation of a retreat committee and a "dos and don'ts" video.

"We didn't want our focus to be fundraising to erase the fact that the retreat did happen," he said.

ASUO officials said in a Nov. 22 interview that they previously proposed cleaning McArthur Court to raise money to pay back the student fees used for the retreat, but had discovered that the sign-up deadline had already passed.

In a letter delivered to Student Judicial Affairs Director Chris Loschiavo on Nov. 19, retreat attendees proposed paying back all of the incidental fee funds used on the trip, the forming of a retreat committee, the creation of the video for future retreats, community service and additional office hours for student leaders as punishments.

Loschiavo approved of the committee, video and community service. Repayment was not included in the final agreement because it would not be feasible to raise the money or to even determine how much money would be appropriate since most of the activities on the retreat were productive.

Details about where and when the student leaders will perform community service remain unclear. Potential opportunities may include working in the West University neighborhood and participating in University Day, an annual campus beautification project held in the spring, Loschiavo said.

ASUO, page 3

Tech Thursday

Upgrade to Webmail's server slows user access

Problems such as long waits and errors will likely last a few more days for Darkwing users

BY ANTHONY LUCERO
NEWS REPORTER

With the advent of e-mail came the introduction of the phrase "snail mail" to describe the speed of regular postal service mail. But a new competitor is vying for the title: the University's graduate student and faculty e-mail server, Darkwing, which boasts a slow-as-molasses fifteen minute or more wait for those who receive their e-mail through the University's Webmail.

The Webmail slowdown, expected to last at least a couple more days, according to University's Microcomputer Services Network Specialist Dan Albrich, has caused several problems that range from not being able to field students' questions to missing discussion courses. Albrich said the sluggish performance is due to upgrading the old server that hosts Darkwing.

Graduate student Danny Landers is one Darkwing user plagued with long waits and an error-ridden inbox. Landers said from the time of logging in to his Darkwing account until reading the first e-mail he selects, his average wait is a quarter-hour.

Sitting in the library on Wednesday, Landers read other Web sites while waiting for his inbox to load. When he switched back to the e-mail window after about 10 minutes, the title bar along the top had loaded but neither the menu nor the inbox frames had. Then came an error message along the left-hand menu, which meant he'd have to reload if he wanted to click the options to compose a new e-mail or log out — another 15 minutes.

It has been like this since the beginning of the week, Landers said.

A graduate teaching fellow for the political science course Mafia & Corruption in Russia, Landers said his inability to get access to new e-mails has caused him

WEBMAIL, page 16

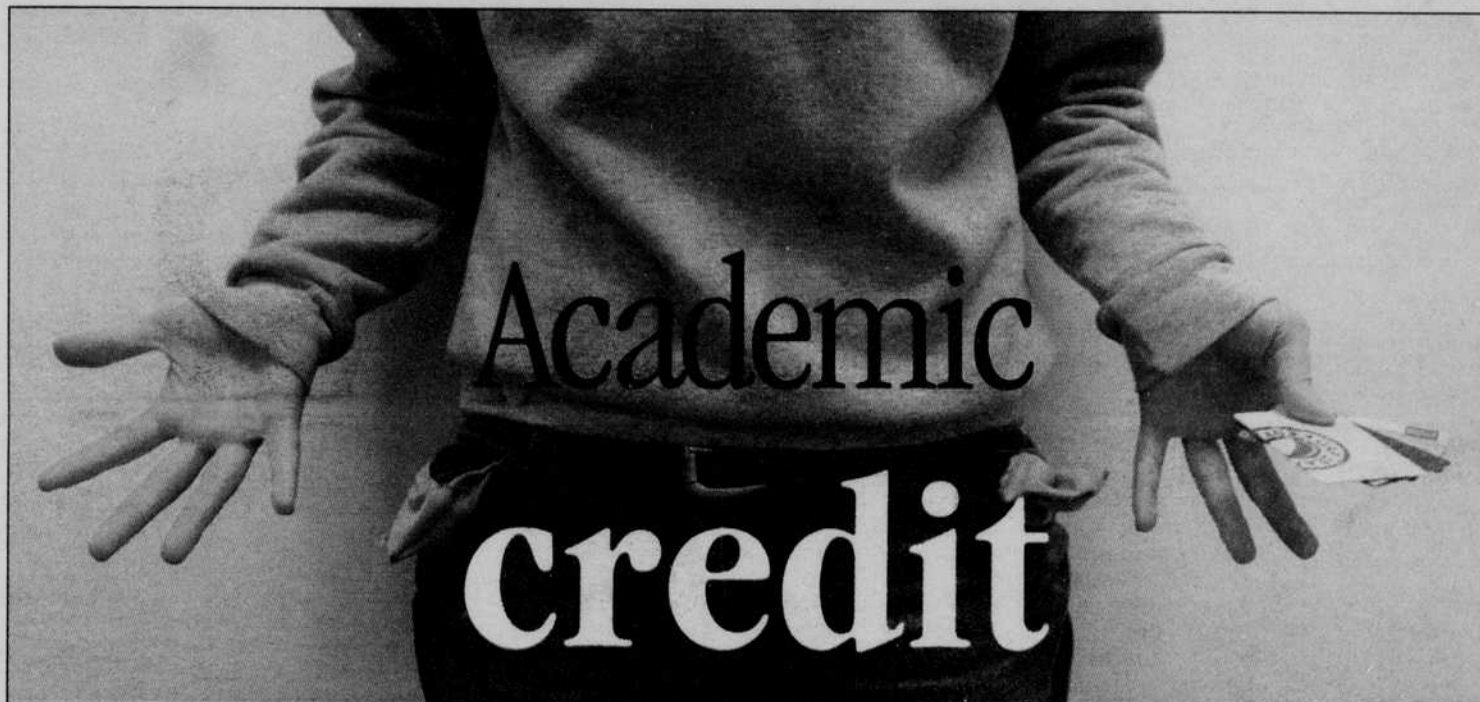

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Inexperienced students are often faced with finance problems when they overuse their too-convenient credit cards, especially after the holidays.

Annual credit reports are free and help students to manage and understand their credit history

BY KARA HANSEN
NEWS REPORTER

Some students learn about maintaining their credit the hard way.

That's because credit cards, which offer convenience and the ability to purchase large items, are too convenient for some people, said Jeanne Wagenknecht, a University finance instructor who teaches personal finance at the business school.

"They can make it possible for you to spend crazy, irrational, impulsive amounts of money," Wagenknecht said in a recent e-mail explaining student issues with credit.

A new tool available to Oregonians since December can help the more than 80 percent of students who carry credit cards understand and manage their credit history by providing access to free annual credit reports.

The free reports are part of a federal law, the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003, which requires national credit bureaus Experian, Equifax and TransUnion to offer free annual reports to consumers. Credit reports previously cost about $30 to obtain.

Students double their average credit card debt and triple the number of credit cards in their wallets between the time they arrive at college and graduation, according to a 2001 survey by student loan company Nellie Mae.

With a record number of students carrying credit cards — 83 percent of undergraduates carried a credit card in 2001, compared with 59 percent in 1998, according to Nellie Mae — it's important for them to be aware of their credit history, Wagenknecht said.

"If a student has a bad credit history and they find out about it, it will help them modify their own behavior and get on a better track," Wagenknecht said. "The sooner this happens the better."

Avoiding credit cards in general isn't necessarily a good thing. Establishing a credit history is essential for people who might want to rent an apartment or buy a car in the future, Wagenknecht said. She

CREDIT, page 16

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DO YOU USE A CREDIT CARD?

TIMOTHY NGAI | FRESHMAN

"I use a credit card when I'm out of cash in my wallet."

ERIN BOLLES | SENIOR

"I try to use it for things like making reservations or buying things online — things I can't pay for in another way."

JASEN LAWRENCE | SENIOR

"Usually I just use a credit card when I don't have money, but I realize I have to have money to pay it off."

ANGELA COMITINI | SENIOR

"If it's a big purchase, I'll use my credit card. If it's small petty cash, I'll use my cash."