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Senate left inexperienced due to resignations

Only two experienced senators remain after three resign from the Student Senate in two weeks, totaling five resignations this year

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Three student senators have stepped down from their elected positions this month, leaving the Student Senate with vacant positions and only two senators with prior Senate experience.

In the most recent of five resignations this year, Senators Colin Andries, Rodrigo Moreno-Villamar and Sol Hart left the student government within the last two weeks. Their departure leaves the 18-member body with just two members who served last year.

Political science major Moreno-Villamar, who held Academic Social Science Seat 14, left

at the beginning of the term, while graduate student Hart resigned effective Jan. 15. Both senators cited time constraints as their primary reason for departing, although they also expressed concerns with aspects of the Senate.

Law student Andries, who held Programs Finance Committee Seat 3, resigned as of the third week of the term. He did not immediately return the Emerald's calls.

The three senators are only the most recent to resign. Graduate Student Seat 18, held by J.L. Stiggins, has been vacant since early November. Senator Kevin Curtin left Academic Social Science Seat 15 early fall term and was

later replaced by current Senator Nick Hudson.

The ASUO Executive is currently interviewing applicants for Seat 18, Senate President James George said.

ASUO Public Relations Director Nathan Strauss said Senate vacancies are expected.

"This isn't unusual," he said. "Every year there are a number of resignations."

Strauss said the Executive is working to fill the vacant positions as quickly as possible. The deadline for applications is Jan. 26, he said.

George said there was minimal turnover last year compared with this year. He said the time demands for senators are high, causing them to make difficult choices about how they allocate their time.

George said vacant seats have not severely impeded the Senate.

"It hasn't hindered us to the point we're not able to hold actual meetings, but we have come close," he said.

Former Senator Hart, who served in the student government at the University of California, Davis, said although concerns with the Senate would never have caused him to quit, he had objections to the way the Senate operated.

Hart said one example occurred when the Spencer View Tenants' Council submitted a request for surplus funds. Even though the group submitted its request in advance, senators did not adequately prepare to address the issue.

"When they did come before the Senate, essentially nobody had reviewed their budget," he said.

Hart said senators then tried to do "ad hoc"

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Taking action

A community group will travel to Asia in March to spend one month helping tsunami victims

BY AMANDA BOLSINGER
& MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
NEWS REPORTERS

A growing group of University students and community members is preparing to leave behind school, work, sports teams and everything else to travel to the areas in southern Asia most devastated by the tsunami.

They don't know exactly where they're going or exactly what they're going to do — they just know they're going to help.

Junior Matt Short, a basketball player on scholarship, freshman wrestler Jeremy McLaughlin, undergraduate Ethan Holub and University volunteer wrestling coach Tony Overstake will be in Asia from March 20 until April 20 along with at least eight members of their church to offer assistance and support to the victims of one of the largest natural disasters in history.

"We're just pumped to bring some tents and just hang out with the kids if nothing else," Holub said.

The men said they had been talking about the tsunami survivors and praying for them, and they felt led by God to put their words into action by going to the area and helping in whatever ways needed.

"It just weighed on our hearts," McLaughlin said. "Everyone wants to change the world, but we don't see a lot of attempts to do it."

Short and McLaughlin said the month-long trip will not affect their status as student athletes at the University because they will still be enrolled as students while in Asia and will complete the credits required to stay eligible.

"The scholarship will still keep on going," Short said. "There's a way for me to do it without leaving the team and that's the best thing for me."

Overstake, who graduated from the University in 2002, said he recommends that the students going on the trip talk with their professors about making arrangements for the missed weeks of classes and prepare to work hard when they return to make up for the missed time.

Short said he is in the process of arranging to take 12 independent study credits while he is gone to continue his political science degree work and maintain his athletic eligibility.



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Left to right: University undergraduate Ethan Holub, volunteer wrestling coach Tony Overstake, junior basketball player Matt Short and freshman wrestler Jeremy McLaughlin are leaving for Thailand to help with tsunami relief efforts.

All four men attend Calvary Fellowship in Eugene. They said members are spreading the word about the trip and helping bring in donations and additional support, although the church isn't organizing the event.

The group is encouraging anyone else interested to contact them directly or through Calvary Fellowship.

"We're people with hearts to go love other people, serve and show faith through action," Holub said.

The men said they have contacted various organizations about assisting in the relief efforts but have not been able to make any permanent commitments because most groups are only looking for trained medical professionals.

"We're looking for organizations who need people to serve," Short said. "We just want to work hard."

"I know how to put on a Band-Aid," Overstake added. "We just want to do grunt work, feed the kids and play with them."

They don't have specific plans or an itinerary, but the men say they will travel from Bangkok, Thailand, down to the coastal areas most affected by the tsunami and hope to end up in Indonesia.

"Everyone else is afraid to go there and worried about themselves and not many have gone," Holub said.

Indonesia is very difficult to get into, Overstake said, but group members are hoping to take a boat over and spend time wherever they can, helping anyone who will accept it.

"We want to go over there and help people who want help," McLaughlin said.

In order to blend in, the men say they will spend the next month researching the

cultures and studying the languages of the regions they will visit.

"We don't want to be looked at as tourists," Holub said. "We want to get in with the locals."

Holub said he has traveled to more than 35 countries and has found the best way to experience the different lifestyles is to embrace the regional culture.

The men said they will try to be as close as possible to the tsunami victims by staying with the survivors in refugee camps and not escaping at night to one of the newly rebuilt hotels that they worry have taken priority in the rebuilding efforts.

Members of the church have expressed interest in starting a long-term program, such as an orphanage somewhere in the region, and are hoping to raise \$50,000 for the cause, Holub said.

"We want to start an orphanage," Holub said. "It's something we can send college kids over to serve."

All four of the men agreed there is much to do before their departure, such as obtaining passports and getting the required medical shots — Short alone needs eight — but said their trip is well worth whatever cost they pay.

The men said they have received a huge amount of support from their families and members of the community and are looking forward to using that support to help them really make a difference.

"We're not there just to say it and walk away," Holub said.

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\$2 million given to UO music school for remodel

The school needs \$7.6 million in total donations to get state bonds to renovate its facilities

BY KARA HANSEN
NEWS REPORTER

The University received a \$2 million boost in funding to rebuild and expand the music school, propelling the project closer to the \$7.6 million in private donations needed to launch the \$15.2 million project, University President Dave Frohnmayer announced Thursday.

The music school was built in 1921 with space for 300 students, which is not enough space for the school's current enrollment, School of Music Dean Brad Foley said.

"The bottom line is that this school facility was designed to house about half as many students as have classes there," Foley said.

The renovation will increase the building's space by 50 percent to accommodate the 500 music majors and 4,000 non-music majors attending classes there, according to a University press release.

"With the new building, we'll have a facility that will be commensurate with the talent of our students and our faculty," said music school Director of Development DeNel Stoltz, noting the school hasn't been able to compete as well because of a "lack of facilities."

Stoltz said the project is also important because of the impact the music school has on the state.

"About one-fourth of music teachers in this state are our alumni," she said.

The project will also add a new entrance on East 18th Avenue, nearly double the number of student practice rooms, provide new acoustically isolated teaching studios and add space for offices, rehearsals and instrument storage.

The recent \$2 million donation came from Business Wire CEO Lorry Lokey, who grew up in Portland. Lokey donates money to support higher education because "it's the best investment one can make to improve the lives of individuals and society," according to the University press release.

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