

## Programs Finance Committee

# Committee examines its viewpoint neutrality

Six groups budgets were approved; the Spencer View Tenants' council received funding after a year without it

BY MORIAH BALINGIT  
NEWS REPORTER

"I think I can hear crickets," ASUO President Adam Petkun said during one of the lengthy pauses during last Thursday's Programs Finance Committee hearings.

It was relatively quiet for the PFC, to say the least, as the budgets of six groups were approved.

The meeting, however quiet, held an air of tension as the committee wrangled over the ASUO Executive's six-figure budget for nearly an hour.

PFC Vice Chair Mason Quiroz criticized the budget for allotting more money for travel than for Weaving New Beginnings, an event meant to orientate racial minority students to the University.

"As you know, we have a problem with diversity," Quiroz said. "You

spend more on travel than you do on a multicultural event."

But PFC Chair Persis Pohowalla quickly countered that Quiroz's assessment was not viewpoint-neutral.

"That's not viewpoint-neutral," Pohowalla said. "You're judging content."

ASUO Controller Mike Martell added that the executive actually "spends quite a bit of money on multicultural events."

The committee encountered another snag regarding two stipend positions for the International Career Network Committee. Sherman said the committee should be more judicious in allotting stipends, especially given the PFC's dire financial situation.

"There really is no longer volunteerism in student government," PFC member Mike Sherman said. "I don't see why this committee can't func-

tion without stipends."

In the end, however, most members agreed that the amount of work the two positions entail warranted the stipends. The \$305,250 budget was passed with Sherman as the lone dissenter, for a .14 percent decrease. The budget included \$102,075 for the Oregon Student Association, a statewide lobbying group for students.

PFC member Jael Anker-Lagos commended the executive for tightening its budget in light of the dire financial straits the PFC is experiencing.

"I think the executive was very responsible for decreasing their budget," she said.

The PFC also allotted \$28,389 for the University Crisis Center for an impressive 15.76 percent. Student volunteers run the center and answer phone calls for students dealing with crises.

The Native American Student Union had its budget of \$17,377

approved a 2.08 percent increase. The PFC was unable to come to a decision during NASU's last hearing due to injunctions placed on three members.

The Young Women's Christian Association received \$7,178, a 2.03 percent increase. The increase includes additional money for the Race Against Racism, an event hosted by the group to raise consciousness about racism in the community.

Quiroz, who serves as the group's racial justice coordinator, said he hopes the event will grow to the size of Eugene's premier running events.

"It's the only program that addresses racism directly," he said. "This is an event that encapsulates the University."

The Chinese Student Association had a stipend position reinstated for a budget of \$9,029, a 16.73 percent increase, which also included additional funds for more programming.

The Spencer View Tenants' Council, which lost its funding last year, received \$248. The group has been

hampered by a dearth of leadership, and the current group chair, Kristi Durant, is not a University student.

But Durant said the group maintains a lot of programming in spite of not having a budget.

"The programming is a way to get all the residents involved," she said. "It really builds community."

Sherman appeared apologetic for the group's financial situation.

"Unfortunately, if we based the funding on how much you care, the cost would be exponential," he said.

At the final hearing, for the Students of the Indian Subcontinent, the group received the executive recommendation of \$7,062, a slight increase.

"Well if you're happy, I'm happy," PFC member Khanh Le said before initiating the vote.

The East Campus Tenants Council, which failed to submit a budget, received no money.

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## OSPIRG: Part of Willamette River is a Superfund project

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Lane County Commissioner Peter Sorenson, a University alumnus, recalled an excursion from his student days when groups from the geography departments at the University and Oregon State University made a joint raft trip from Eugene to Corvallis.

"That was pretty memorable, to be able to raft down a river that was considered toxic only 10 years earlier," Sorenson said.

However, the river has become polluted again. Lawrence said the river is currently designated as a federal Superfund project for a five-mile stretch in Portland.

Lawrence said while there is a system in place requiring polluters to apply for waste discharge permits, the system is inadequate because the fees the polluters pay don't even cover the cost of issuing the permits.

Also, he said there is a backlog of expired permits, some expired for as long as five years.

"In a real sense, our taxpayer dollars are subsidizing their privilege to discharge waste into the river," Lawrence said.

Sorenson said that since McCall left office, Oregon governors have continually filled pollution regulation committees with representatives of the industries the committees are supposed

to be regulating.

"That has to stop if we're going to be serious about cleaning up the Willamette River," Sorenson said. "That kind of conflict of interest has to stop."

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, said river pollution is visible to the naked eye at mixing zones and areas where chemicals run from a pipe into the river and mix with the river water.

He mentioned a mixing zone on the south side of the pedestrian bridge connecting to Valley River Center as particularly egregious.

"You can see the actual discoloration in the river, ... and sometimes

the odor is overwhelming," Prozanski said.

Prozanski said the Senate is working on a bill, Senate Bill 555, that will require toxic substances discharged at mixing zones.

"Individuals will know exactly firsthand what is being discharged into the river," Prozanski said.

Sorenson said industries claim the Senate Democrats' attempts to phase out mixing zones will lead to financial disaster.

"That, to me, is an excuse," Sorenson said. "It's not the time for wait and see, it's the time for action."

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## IN BRIEF

### Anti-Syrian protesters make presence known

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Several thousand anti-Syrian protesters took to Beirut's streets late Sunday in defiance of a government ban, while a visiting U.S. official kept up Washington's pressure on Syria by calling on it to withdraw its 15,000 troops from Lebanon following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri earlier this month.

The protest came ahead of Monday's scheduled vote of confidence in the pro-Damascus government of Prime Minister Omar Karami, which is under intense pressure to find Hariri's killers.

— The Associated Press



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