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State employees rally to support senate bills

The union represents nearly 20,000 Oregon workers and is promoting five bills regarding health care-related issues

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

University classified employees and service workers from around Eugene gathered in the rain Tuesday evening on the corner of Franklin Boulevard and Agate Street to gain support for their contract negotiations with the state and the Oregon University System and to rally for senate bills addressing health care coverage.

Negotiations for the next contract between the Service Employees International Union Local 503 and OUS began Feb. 4, and union representatives said they will do whatever it takes to ensure they maintain the fully paid health insurance the state is threatening to take away.

Union representatives said they are also fighting a larger battle: the battle for affordable health care for all Oregonians.

The state is proposing a contract that involves payment from employees to maintain health care coverage. Union members said this will counter the wage increases offered by reducing the amount of money employees will end up taking home.

"We are feeling stuck, real frustrated, real angry," University employee and union bargain-

ing team member Star Holmberg said. "This is a testimony to our feelings," she said, a reference to the number of rally-goers, approximately 50, being pummeled by wind and rain.

The state department of administrative services is handling the negotiations regarding what OUS director of labor relations Rick Hampton said were the three biggest issues in the contract: pension, retirement and across-the-board wage increases. Hampton said he is under the impression the governor wants consistency in those three areas for all state contracted employees.

Holmberg said negotiations with the state began in December.

Hampton said the union and OUS agreed to let the state handle negotiations on those issues while OUS bargained on other issues like work rule changes and other minor matters.

At the bargaining table the union represents nearly 20,000 workers across Oregon, with about 1,200 employed at the University. The union represents classified employees at the University, including groundskeepers, custodians and office clerks.

Hampton said there is discussion regarding

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TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

University Graduate Coordinator Star Holmberg and other members of the Services Employees International Union Local 503 rally Wednesday at the corner of Franklin Boulevard and Agate Street for health care coverage.

Facebook allegiances prove weak in election

Numerous groups popped up on Thefacebook.com promoting and disparaging ASUO candidates

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Colorful campaign T-shirts and bulletin boards plastered with political posters are commonplace during ASUO election season. But this year, some candidates have also turned to a new online social network for college students to spread the word about their platforms and enlist volunteers.

Web-savvy candidates and their supporters have used Thefacebook.com, a directory of student profiles frequented by many at the University, to create virtual groups centered on voting for or against certain candidates. About 1,600 students have joined groups for six of the seven Executive candidates who ran in the primaries. Yet after the results of last week's primary elections, some candidates doubt the usefulness of Thefacebook groups for getting out the vote.

Any student with a University e-mail address can create a profile on the service, initiate groups and join other groups, such as those for the candidates. Once a student joins a group, they can send and receive group announcements. Some groups also allow members to post messages.

Although Thefacebook started Feb. 4, 2004, this is the first year it has been used for ASUO elections, Election Board Coordinator Kelly Cheeseman said.

She said the board, which created a profile on Feb. 17, was one of the first groups to take the election to cyberspace.

Actual voter turnout numbers show that Thefacebook supporters don't necessarily translate

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Students gather for Day of Silence march

Members of the LGBTQA and other organizations walked to raise discrimination awareness

BY AMANDA BOLSINGER
NEWS REPORTER

More than 30 students gathered in the EMU amphitheater Wednesday afternoon to march to South Eugene High School for the Day of Silence rally. Many of the students were members of the University's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Alliance.

The students stood quietly, many with red tape Xs over their mouths, others with duct tape across their lips. Many wore small signs stating that they were participating in the Day of Silence. They held up signs reading "Silence = Death" and "What will you do?" as they lined up in pairs to march to the high school.

The rally was for local high school students and drew participants from six different schools. Some University students who attended the rally hope to formulate a coalition between the organizations involved.

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LAUREN WILMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

LGBTQA members Pira Kelly, left and Stacy Borke, right, gather in the EMU amphitheater to march to South Eugene High School for the Day of Silence rally.

Feminist explains what it takes to be a patriot

The distinguished author covered a wide array of topics, including empire-building, democracy, militarization and immigration

BY EMILY SMITH
NEWS REPORTER

Renowned feminist, author and educator Dr. M. Jacqui Alexander said "Mark this moment, not as a moment of democracy, but a moment of empire-building and militarization," during a speech to a diverse audience in the EMU Ballroom Wednesday evening.

Center for the Study of Women in Society Director Sandra Morgen introduced Alexander as "a scholar who has been enormously influential in shaping feminist scholarship."

Alexander's talk, entitled "Not Just Anybody Can Be a Patriot: The Militarized State of

the Empire," covered an array of subjects having to do with what she calls the "privatization, militarization and imperialization" of the United States during this historical moment of crisis.

Alexander points to The PATRIOT Act of 2001 and 2002, and the national security act as examples of how the U.S. government is "building a new empire" based on a sort of neo-imperialism in which ordinary citizens are being drawn into surveillance of each other and an "army of cops" maintains a constant, known presence.

The purpose of the lecture, Alexander said,

was to reveal the link between immigration, militarization of the U.S.'s police forces, homeland security, the threat of weapons of mass destruction, "heterosexism" and the "empire of imperialism that is happening in our geographic boundaries."

Cuts in public assistance led many desperate men and women into the armed forces, said Alexander, thus perpetuating militarization even further. She also said there are programs that encourage welfare moms to get married in an attempt to get them off public assistance in a heterosexism fashion.

Alexander said in order for the United States to feed its war-based economy and build its imperialistic empire, it manufactured enemies both inside and outside of itself. She went on

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