

ASUO Executives start work during summer transition

Filling staff positions and beginning initial talks about rollover meal points have been priorities

BY TYLER GRAF
FREELANCE REPORTER

The summer months have presented little respite for new ASUO Executives Adam Walsh and Kyla Coy, and the future will surely present more of the same. From hiring staff members to contract group disputes and ASUO office reorganization to maintaining platform promises, the transition from Adam Petkun and Mena Ravassipour's administration to Walsh and Coy's has been a whirlwind education in learn-as-you-go student politics.

Relative newcomers to the ASUO, Walsh believes that he and Coy have hit the ground running and haven't lost sight of their overall goals, despite the masses of paperwork littering their desks.

Walsh and Coy say they intend to stay true to their campaign promise to reform and restructure the University.

But some reforms are born of necessity.

With the loss of Accounting Coordinator Jen Creighton, who moved to Physical Activity and Recreation Services, a revamped and simplified accountant position has opened up. The new accounting position will have a narrower focus than the Accounting Coordinator position, restricted to overseeing and training the controllers.

Another familiar face will also be leaving Suite 4 in the near future: Brandy Ota.

Ota will remain the ASUO's Administrative Assistant until fall term, when she will transfer to the Women's Center to take over for Lori Brown, the current Office Coordinator for the

Women's Center. The Administrative Assistant position will change, in title and structure, after Ota leaves. In a reversal of roles, the new office administrator will oversee the accountant. The restructuring will also increase the position's salary; the position will change from a classified position to an administrative position.

Walsh and Coy have already hired a number of staff members, including Cassandra Day as campus outreach coordinator and Ty Schwoeferman as multicultural advocate, but they still have positions to fill. Elections Coordinator, a nine-month stipend position in charge of overseeing student government elections, remains open, and Walsh and Coy are actively seeking applicants.

One of the most recent hires is Brett Rowlett, who will take over as Campus Organizer — through a contract with OSA — in August once current Campus Organizer Courtney Height steps down. Rowlett is not a student at the University of Oregon, but he has had experience in student government, serving as the Campus Organizer for Lane Community College.

Aside from hiring new staff members, Walsh and Coy have been working on revamping the University's meal plan, which was a large portion of their campaign platform. Under Walsh and Coy's plan, unused meal points could rollover and be used in the future instead of going to waste.

"We haven't forgotten about it," said Walsh.

Walsh said that initial talks with Todd Mann, president of the

Residence Hall Association, have gone well.

"It's something that is feasible," said Walsh. "It may not come out exactly the way we picture it, but it is feasible."

Walsh cautioned that a revised meal point program is a long-term plan, and the earliest institution of such a program would not happen until fall 2006. Walsh and Coy still have to discuss the plan with the Office of Student Housing.

Complicating the transition of power has been contract disputes between the ASUO and Sexual Assault Support Services, a non-profit agency dedicated to ending sexual violence and oppression. The dispute is a hold-over from the Petkun-Ravassipour administration and centers on "double paying for services," as there are a number of other student groups that already offer the same services as SASS.

According to Walsh, the budget process is a top priority.

Walsh said he plans to work on executive recommendations for student group funding soon in order to have them ready by November.

"In the past, executive recommendations have come pursuant to the PFC (Programs Finance Committee)," said Walsh. "In reality, it should be the executives' own idea, their own recommendation."

In the past, executive recommendations have coincided with budget work done by the PFC. Separating the two processes will maintain checks and balances within the ASUO, according to Walsh.

"The executive recommendation should be a starting point for the process," said Walsh.

Nitrogen: Discovery is a step closer, but not the solution

Continued from page 1

While Tyler said they are not expecting any commercial uses from this discovery for 5-10 years or more, it is a significant step that can be used by other researchers in the future.

"We're building on advances achieved during the last 20 years. A lot of hard thought went into this, not only by me and my students, but by other researchers who came before us," Tyler said in a press release.

Greg Bolt of the Register Guard quoted Tyler as saying, "in the eyes of chemists, the conversion of nitrogen to ammonia in water ... is the 'holy grail' of nitrogen fixation" (RG July 6.) Tyler says that in reality he said that the "holy grail" is the problem of finding a reliable and efficient way of producing ammonia,

while the conversion of nitrogen is a step in the right direction.

Graduate student John Gilbertson said that this process is "only one turn of the cycle."

"What we did scientifically was very difficult, but we really haven't solved the problem yet," Tyler said, "we still have some kinks to work out."

The National Science Foundation provided the funding for this research in a five-year grant. It created research positions in Materials Science through the IGERT (Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship) program.

An article with the details of the discovery will be published in the Journal of the American Chemical Society on July 27, and can currently be found at: pubs.acs.org.

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