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Rankin removed as ASG President

Controversy
swirls
around the
removal of
Jennifer
Rankin,
who was elected ASG
president in May



PHOTOS BY SARAH WELCH / Clackamas Print



JOHN THORBURN
KARL KATZKE

Jennifer Rankin was removed from her position as Associated Student Government president last Friday for "consuming alcohol at a CCOSAC meeting, failing to notify the ASG advisor of officer selections and misusing student application files."

The allegations were stated in a certified letter from Dian Connett, dean of student services, sent to Rankin's home Oct. 1.

"As of Oct. 1, Jennifer is no longer ASG president, and James [Gould] is ASG President. He will serve out her term," Connett told reporters from *The Clackamas Print*.

Rankin is fighting her removal from office. She replied to Connett with a letter stating, "In accordance to the policies outlined in the student handbook, I officially request a public hearing and do not accept the recommended discipline. Furthermore, I shall exercise my right to be represented by counsel."

On Friday evening, Rankin spoke with *The Print*.

"In a court of law, you're supposed to be innocent until proven guilty," she said. "I guess that doesn't apply to this institution."

Rankin's problems as ASG president began last May when she attended a CCOSAC [student gov-

ernment] retreat at Silver Creek Falls. After the retreat, a party was held where alcohol was served. Several days later, it was reported that Rankin was seen consuming alcohol at the school-sponsored event. In a May 26 meeting between Rankin and Jan Godfrey, associate dean of student services, Rankin admitted drinking and was warned by Godfrey of the severity of the offense.

"Students came forward, and they were very concerned that our newly elected president had consumed alcohol," said Godfrey. "I brought up the possibility of Jennifer resigning back in May. Jennifer has a lot on her plate. She has a lot of activities in her life. She has a lot of commitments. I said to her back in May, certainly if she wanted to resign, and not go on probation with me, that would be understandable," said Godfrey.

In that May 26 meeting between Rankin and Godfrey, Rankin signed a probationary agreement as discipline. The terms, which Rankin agreed to, are as follows:

1. 10 community service hours coordinating our on-campus Alcohol Awareness Week
2. Must attend an alcohol diversion meeting
3. Ongoing counseling with Jean DeVenney [for the purpose of stress management]
4. Regular communication with

ASG faculty advisor [Norm Berney] focusing on activities of ASG

5. Must not attend any college-sponsored event in which alcohol is present or must leave a function if there is alcohol present

6. Any violations of the student code of conduct during this probationary period will result in removal of your ASG duties and could result in further disciplinary actions.

Memo outlines allegations

The allegations which led to Rankin's removal were outlined in a document sent to Rankin Sept. 23 by Godfrey and furnished to *The Clackamas Print* by Rankin. As explained in her memo, Godfrey was notified that Rankin conducted officer interviews on August 17 without notifying her advisor, Norm Berney, or any other student service administrator. Godfrey states in her memo that this action "is a violation of the ASG Bylaws, Section 5 and your probationary agreement."

Rankin believes Berney was aware of the interviews.

"He [Berney] told me, that day, 'Well, we're going to start doing interviews.' So I went ahead and started doing them," said Rankin.

On that same day, it was reported to Godfrey that five ASG officer applications had been removed from the student government office. Officer applications include confidential information such as names, addresses, grade-point averages, letters of recommendation and personal portfolios of the applying student.

"There are allegations that student grades have been shared with other students," Godfrey wrote in

her memo to Rankin. "Theft of or damage to property of the college and misuse of college records is grounds for discipline under Section B, Article IV of the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Code of Ethics."

Student complaints written

Brian Fuentes, ASG vice president last year, applied for the position of administrative assistant in August and later discovered that his application was one of the ones removed from the ASG office.

"I applied for that position, and then I found out from James [ASG Vice President James Gould] that they did not have my records any more... copies of my records were taken from the office. That, frankly, upset the hell out of me. It's not personal... I didn't even know who did it," said Brian. "Obviously they found out that Jennifer was one of the ones who took them. I wrote (in a complaint) that whoever did take them, serious action needed to be taken, because you can't have that distrust in this student government, or any place in this college."

Another person familiar with ASG procedures and regulations is Mike Caudle, former ASG president who went on from Clackamas to be president of the student body at Oregon State University. Caudle currently works for Clackamas in the counseling center, helping with student advising. He is also doing an internship with ASG.

"We're talking about violating campus policies, rules and regulations," Caudle said. "We're not talking about student government policies."

Elise Norman, close friend of Jennifer Rankin and Legislative Officer, feels that some of the allegations have been blown out of proportion.

"Jennifer was voted for by an overwhelming majority of students," Norman said. "The students like her because she listens to them. When the students find out what's going on, they're not going to care about the little details... like, yeah... so

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Chronology of events

- May 14: Rankin attends CCOSAC convention at Silver Creek Falls. It is later reported that she consumed alcohol at a party afterwards
- May 26: Rankin meets with Associate Dean Jan Godfrey and confirms the report—signing a probationary agreement
- September 23: Godfrey sends Rankin a memo outlining a series of other violations and complaints in regard to Rankin's presidency
- September 29: Dian Connett, Dean of Instructional Services, mails a certified letter to Rankin's home stating that she has been removed from office
- October 2: Rankin does not accept the decision and requests a public hearing

Why single me out? I care about the students. I think students are the true gems of the world.

Jennifer Rankin
Former ASG President