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Questions about ASG transparency raised again

by Emily Bashaw
and John Hurlburt
The Clackamas Print

Student Sam Krause just wanted to start the Clackamas Rag — a student-run publication dedicated to uncensored political commentary and local entertainment. While going through Clackamas' student government approval process, Krause encountered several problems of his own that later led to a conflict between students' and ASG's interpretation of Oregon Public Meeting Laws. The conflict on Wednesday, Oct. 29, was at a meeting between ASG members and Krause's members. The purpose of the summit was to clarify Krause's constitution and allow the creation of The Clackamas Rag. According to Krause, a former Clackamas member, his difficulties began with ASG. It kept asking him to make changes to his constitution that he felt were unnecessary and had already been addressed.



Public Relations Senator Emily Smith speaks at the microphone to contest a claim made by student Jayc Izso.

At the last meeting between hopeful members of The Clackamas Rag and ASG, Krause and the rest of the students were asked to leave so the committee could make their decision in regards to the passing of the constitution. Krause and fellow student Jayc Izso refused to leave, citing Oregon Public Meeting Laws.

"We went and spoke to Mindy Brown about the public meetings laws. We were told that ASG's lawyer had advised them that they did not (have to) follow Oregon Public Meeting Laws," said Krause. "We decided not to agree with that decision and we just decided to walk into the committee meeting and no one stopped us ... we left for their discussion and came back for the vote and they approved it."

Izso and Krause were both shocked at the need to leave a meeting that was about a club constitution.

"I'm not sure what they were scared of or what they didn't want us to hear," said Krause.

Student Government's claim to be exempt from state law was brought up the next day at a free speech event held by ASG in the Bill Brod Community Center. According to Speech Instructor Kerrie Hughes, the Political Soapbox was an opportunity for students to express their feelings in regards to current political affairs.

With ten minutes left, at the persuasion of fellow students, Izso took the microphone to address students' concerns about ASG's belief that the organization is exempt from state law.

Izso is no stranger to conflict with ASG. Last year he was removed from student government and made ineligible to run for office a week prior to the student government presidential election. He was excluded from meetings regarding his disciplinary process; appeals to ASG went nowhere. The public meetings issue was never resolved between Izso, the student body and ASG.

After he finished his comments at the soapbox in late October, ASG Public Affairs Senator Emily Smith refuted his opinion, claiming that ASG was "doing nothing wrong."

Izso decided to debate the point as other students had done during the soapbox with different issues. Hughes, who was overseeing the event with ASG, stopped the conversation five minutes before time was up, claiming that an ASG adviser had to be present.

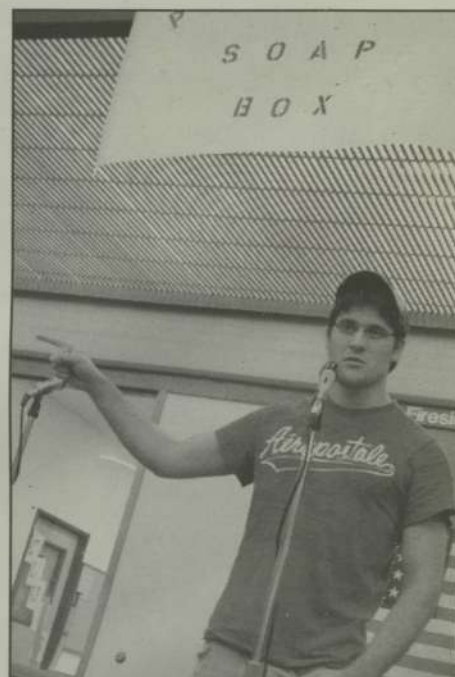
When the event was over, members of The Print questioned ASG on their claim of exemption from state law. When speaking to ASG member Quyen Thoi about the concerns around the public meeting laws, Student Government Adviser Mindy Brown said that they could not speak on the issue until they spoke to their attorney. When asked for comment, Public Relations Senator Smith referred calls to Public Relations spokesperson Bailey Sanders, who did not return calls prior to press time.

In a letter addressed to Dean of Student Services Bill Zuelke, Karen M. Vickers of Mersereau & Shannon, LLP, wrote that Clackamas' student government does not need to hold open meetings because they do not hold make recommendations to any committee or board at Clackamas.

The student government president is an ex-officio member of the Board of Education and holds a spot on the President's Council, as well as several other committees. Yet, Vickers states in the letter that ASG is a liaison between students and the committees and not responsible for making recommendations.

"The Attorney General issued the opinion ... that student governments with the power to make these recommendations are subject to public meeting laws," stated Vickers' letter. "By contrast, the ASGCCC does not make such recommendations and therefore we do not believe it is subject to Oregon's Public Meeting Law."

Of the 17 community colleges in Oregon, Clackamas' ASG is the only one that does not follow Oregon Public Meeting Laws. Students are concerned with their reasoning behind not



All Photos by John Shufelt Clackamas Print
Pointing in the direction of the student government office, Jayc Izso calls attention to ASG's interpretation of state law.

following the law.

"We have a transparent government system for a reason," said second year student Alan Paige. "Why would a small community college student government want to hide from the students they represent?"

Students hope that ASG will listen to their recommendations and change their policy. Some students with the support of clubs are creating a petition to ASG for constitutional changes regarding their transparency as a government entity.

When asked what he would say to student government, Izso said, "Be ethical. One of the problems we have is that this is not an ethical government and ... the purpose of government is to benefit the people that are under it. These are supposed to be representatives, these are supposed to be public servants, and as far as I'm concerned that's exactly what government should be ... I would tell ASG you need to be ethical. You need to start doing things by the law."

Cancelled classes create speedbumps for students

by John Hurlburt
Clackamas News Editor

When the word is a sight for sore eyes on tired nights after long days, to many students and staff the word holds nothing but frustration. Every term many classes are cancelled entirely, due to a lack of students signing up, forcing many to either pick a new class or wait. "I hate to see cancelled classes," Enrollment Services Specialist Jennifer Pedersen said. "We hate to see them much as the students." Pedersen is one of the unforgotten students on campus who has dealt with finding out his class is cancelled. "I was pretty pissed," Pedersen said. "I got a refund though, and to rearrange a few morning classes. It all worked out in the end, so no complaints there." Although cancelled classes may be

a scourge on campus, often they are no more than an annoyance. But according to Jenkerson, sometimes problems can arise with financial aid.

What creates the problem is students getting a class that does not start until late in the term, but find out that it has been cancelled. Since financial aid requires that you maintain a certain amount of credits for the term, when the class is dropped the credits are lost.

Although students will not lose their financial aid due to cancelled classes, it does mean that they need to find a way to make up the credits before their money arrives.

For this, late starting classes become a savior.

A list of all of the college's late starting courses is available through a link on the main page of Clackamas' Web site.

Cancelled classes can also be a drag for the teachers who put out the effort to organize the classes in the first place.

English Instructor Ryan Davis understands firsthand how it feels to

put work into creating a class before finding out it was cancelled due to low enrollment.

"It's incredibly disappointing," Davis said. "For one, we choose the classes we teach because we love them. Two, we spend a lot of time getting those classes ready, and for whatever reason if no one signs up, we can't share our passion for our subject."

The time invested in creating a class is no chump's sum. Davis estimates it takes about five hours to create a syllabus for a class — and that is the easy part.

Researching materials to teach in a class is an ongoing effort, and it takes about an hour a night every night for two months to be able to read through and choose material suitable for teaching with. To Davis, this is a quick timeframe.

In the future, Davis hopes to avoid the disappointment of having more classes cancelled and in an effort to fight back, he is currently conducting a survey to see what literature classes students would like to see on campus. To submit an idea, send an e-mail to

Ryand@clackamas.edu.

There is no golden number when it comes to how many students a class needs before it gets cancelled; instead, it depends on what the department chair thinks and how necessary the class is. This means that a one credit PE class is more likely to get cancelled than a four credit lab class.

Jim Jackson, director of health, PE and athletics, is no stranger when it comes to giving classes the axe.

Out of 13 PE classes that were offered for the fall term in his department, four classes were cancelled.

"Only having to cancel four classes in the fall term is great for us," Jackson said. "That's really low for our department."

Jackson's criteria is that a class has to have at least 12 to 15 people in order for it not to get cancelled. Some exceptions to this rule may be made for three-credit health classes, but generally speaking, there is no mercy.

"I have no problem cancelling a one credit PE class, it's easy to find another," Jackson said.

According to Davis, Jackson's



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number for how many students a class requires to keep going isn't far off from the average, which he says is anywhere from five to 15.