

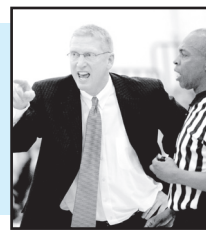
ENTERTAINMENT

Art students spin bowls to fight hunger
page 8



SPORTS

Raiders fall short to OIT for 17th straight meeting
page 10



INSIDE

Week@School 4
Campus Beats 4
Comics 6
Horoscope 6

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The Siskiyou

southern oregon university

Southern Oregon sends out an 'SOS'

By Emily Higham
The Siskiyou

A group of students, mostly those effected by Southern Oregon University's provisional plan to cure its \$4 million deficit, have combined to create the group "SOS: Save Our School," in an effort to raise endowment funding to provide salaries for faculty who will be laid off.

The group met last Friday with

the intention to better understand the provisional plan and to brainstorm ideas on how to find ways to counteract the proposed downsizing of faculty from certain departments.

At the beginning of the meeting, students asked questions to Vice President of Student Affairs Jonathan Eldridge, who broke down many of the provisional plan's concepts.

Eldridge explained the criteria detailed in the provisional plan,

citing that they strived to affect the least amount of students.

"Would cuts in other areas make the bottom line?" Eldridge asked hypothetically. "If not this, then it would have to be something else with the same equivalent."

Student Dustin Rotbart made the observation that out of the 24 faculty time equivalencies, or FTEs, being cut, 13 of them came out of the School of Science.

"The dis-equity stood out to me," Rotbart said. "What did the

School of Sciences do to piss the administration off?"

However, spreading out the faculty cuts would not improve the university either.

"We want strong programs, not a bunch of weak programs," Eldridge said.

Students also cited SOU's appeal to scholars interested in a career in geology.

"Half of the geology students came here specifically for it," Grace Weil, a geology major, said.

As an example, Weil stated students have come to SOU due to professors like Charles Lane and his expertise in hydrogeology.

With the provisional plan's proposed School of Arts and Sciences, aspects of the geology department could still be available.

"My hope is that geology, geography and others become synergies created in the science program," Eldridge said. "How that

See "SOS" Page 2

International studies coordinator looks back on SOU career

By Jake Williky
The Siskiyou

For one Southern Oregon University instructor, letting go of the past will be the toughest part of her future.

Magdalena Staniek, the International Studies coordinator, has been carving her international experiences into the minds of students over the past five years.

After first hearing about budget issues within the university from faculty members and administration, Staniek felt that the department was in great danger, as were all others.

As President Mary Cullinan announced the provisional plan last month, Staniek realized that the downsizing of the International Studies staff was imminent in the restructuring of the university.

tors to show their commitment to higher education," said Staniek.

As the department restructures itself without her, she hopes International Studies will last in the future and the mission of the program will never cease helping student's passion for the discipline.

The state of Oregon is ranked 48th in higher education funding. Staniek believes that ranking needs to progress upwards, otherwise SOU's enrollment and funding will continue to decrease.

Staniek said a greater communication of the university's fiscal problems was needed in past, but as for now, Cullinan has done a great job of communicating and dealing with this bitter reality.

Staniek started her career 10 years ago as an adjunct professor in political science and colloquium. After professor Don



Scarlett Hart/The Siskiyou

Southern Oregon University's new OSPIRG campus director Sarah Lee sits in a meeting discussing upcoming events with Heidi Spero and Emily Dorney.

OSPIRG welcomes new organizer

By Thomas Seymat
The Siskiyou

The Southern Oregon University office of the Oregon Students Public Interest Research Group has a new full-time campus organizer with projects lined up for the upcoming months.

Sarah Lee, a 22-year-old native of San Francisco graduated with a degree in African-American studies from University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Lee worked for MASPIRG, Massachusetts' branch of the PIRG organization. She transferred to SOU when former organizer Daniel Lawton resigned, and she is now a full-time employee for OSPIRG.

"The students I help are either receiving internship credits or are simple volunteers," said Lee. "I'm here to help to coordinate their campaigns."

Lee said OSPIRG is neither a club nor a union, but a student funded organization. A small amount of student fees is allocated to Associated Students of South-

ern Oregon University which is then dispersed to different campus clubs including OSPIRG. These fees fund Lee's salary as a full-time employee, but also pay for advocates who deal directly with the State legislature in Salem promoting OSPIRG's campaigns.

Lee hopes SOU's current financial situation will not affect her work and OSPIRG's goals on campus. One of her fears is AS-SOU is going to be told to fund other programs with their allo-

"My job is to help build student leaders," Lee said. "I'm teaching students how to organize around different public interests campaigns."

Three of these campaigns are planned for winter and spring term 2007.

First on the list is the campus climate change campaign driven by the partnership with Ecology Center of the Siskiyou. They are promoting a green tag event in

"I have met so many people over my years that my time at the university will never be forgotten."

—Magdalena Staniek

She was among the 24 faculty members announced in the budget reductions to lose their job.

"I have met so many great people over my years that my time at the university will never be forgotten," Staniek said. "It will be very difficult to leave a place where I had such a rewarding experience."

She said there was not a graceful way out of the situation and the university had to think of the bigger picture.

"The budget issues don't just involve us, the entire state needs rethinking and help from legisla-

Rhoades retired in 2002, Staniek took over as coordinator of the International Studies program.

As she transitioned into the role of coordinator five years ago, she became the head of the International Studies Faculty Advisor Committee, a policy board maintaining the structure of the entire program. Running the committee also included the role of leading hundreds of students in their paths of international studies.

"I have seen so many students progress with what I have taught

See "STANIEK" Page 3

"I'm teaching students how to organize around different public interests campaigns."

—Sarah Lee

cated budget, reducing OSPIRG's share.

The PIRG was started by students more than 30 years ago, and since then the group has been raising awareness on public interest subjects and participating in political actions.

an effort to transition SOU into a "greener" university. OSPIRG's plan is to make the campus environmentally neutral and reduce its impact on wildlife and global warming.

OSPIRG is also continuing its

See "OSPIRG" Page 2

Non-trad students aim to break stereotype

By Philip Shilts
For The Siskiyou

According to the Non-Traditional and Commuter Student Center, more than a quarter of students at Southern Oregon University qualify as non-traditional students.

A non-traditional student is defined as anyone who is a parent or guardian, divorced or married, over the age of 24, or financially independent. Many of these students are in school for the second or third time, according to the NTC.

Pam Ogren, the NTC coordinator, said some students prefer not to be labeled as "non-traditional." In fact, according to Ogren, the NTC is considering changing the center's name.

"It has a bit of a stigma attached to it. Students don't identify with it in general. They seem to think that means old," she said.

The stigma of being labeled "non-traditional" does not bother all older students.

Francene Bernest graduated from Marygrove College about 50 years ago and is now auditing French classes at SOU.

"It's been really nice. I'm pleased to see such a high grade of young people that are ambitious and respectful," said Bernest.

Bernest is a community member returning to school for the enjoyment of learning, and she is

not alone. SOU offers a program specifically for retirees and taught by volunteers, who are often retired as well. Southern Oregon Learning in Retirement (SOLIR) offers hundreds of courses to its enrollment of nearly 600 retirees.

Other non-traditional students have different motives for returning to education later in life.

"Some of the students return because the economic landscape in our country is changing. It is much harder to make a good wage without a degree," Ogren said.

For returning student Hans Davis, a two-time alumnus from SOU, this is the case. He is currently working on earning a master's degree in education.

"I had good opportunities to go to the school again. That pulled me back in," said Davis.

Despite having many opportunities when returning to the university, some non-traditional students face difficult challenges, such as adapting to new technology systems and learning to balance family life with school.

"Many returning students struggle with some of the systems on campus being designed for younger students," said Ogren.

For Davis, this challenge has become a routine balancing act between raising a family and taking courses at SOU.

"It gets really tough because my wife is in school as well. It takes a lot of juggling and work-



Philip Shilts/for The Siskiyou

Southern Oregon University student Gregg McNamara works in the NTC computer lab last week.

ing together," Davis said.

The NTC offers many programs to help parents like Davis.

"We do deal with student parents," Ogren said.

Non-traditional students have access to a family room with children's toys, a quiet study room, a safe napping room for commuting students, and technology tutorials for those students who do not feel confident with certain

programs used on campus.

Along with these services, non-traditional students also have some other advantages over students going to college straight out of high school.

"Returning students often have to sacrifice in the first place to come back to school. They tend to be more focused and successful," Ogren said.

For Bernest, the main differ-

ence between previous educational experiences and now is the style.

"That is the major thing, the way people dress is much different. They show a lot more skin than they used to," said Bernest.

For more information on the NTC and SOLIR, visit their Web sites at <http://www.sou.edu/su/ntc/> and <http://www.sou.edu/solir/>, respectively.

'SOS' ...

Continued from Page 1

plays out depends on the faculty's creativity."

Some of the students in attendance expressed concern for the vanishing honors and women's studies programs. Eldridge then reiterated the synergy idea, emphasizing that students should share their ideas.

"My personal opinion is we need some sort of honors program," Eldridge said. "Can we administer the program differently and consolidate programs under one umbrella? These ideas are coming in during the comment period."

Student Greta Gardiner concurred with the administration's goal to integrate programs into a new, more efficient curriculum.

"They're not going to disappear," said Gardiner of the majors on the chopping block. "The departments in the sciences and women's studies are working on a plan."

When asked how many students the university plans on losing as a result of the budget cuts, Eldridge was not certain because he acknowledged that even though they will be able to earn their degree in their selected major, some students at junior standing or above may opt to transfer to another school.

Along the same line, Eldridge explained some new recruitment strategies, including new approaches to preview weekend and taking advantage of California's new eligibility with the Western

Undergraduate Exchange, therefore opening a new market to SOU. He also expressed that interested students could go back to their hometowns equipped with information about SOU to present to their high schools.

"We have to think about how we portray this as an institution," Eldridge said. "We have to put on a good face to students thinking about coming here."

Gardiner asked Eldridge if SOU administration would be willing to take a pay cut in order to save faculty.

"Actually, we're 15 percent below the average salary compared to institutions like ours," he answered. "There haven't been many [pay] increases. There's always an issue that comes up."

One of the discussion's hot topics was selling SOU-owned property to generate revenue. Junior Alex Golden asked Eldridge if there was a way SOU could sell some of its properties as a way to support professors' salaries, therefore endowing these professors with the earnings.

"It is an idea to take to the Executive Council," Eldridge replied. "It is something to put forward."

As the question period came to a close, the students came to a conclusion that getting funding

to endow professors would be the best way to keep their professors at SOU.

The Save Our School group credited a list of corporations that that can be solicited for donations.

"We should look locally because we're part of the Rogue Valley," said student Callie Smock.

The group, led by Golden and Smock, proposed businesses such as Harry and David and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as candidates from which to request donations. Weil suggested a possible idea that OSF may prefer to endow a theater professor, therefore possibly shifting the open FTE to another department.

With this in mind, the group split with different assignments, some of which were writing press releases about their mission and setting up a donation Web site.

"This shouldn't be a one-student effort," Golden said. "We've got to push."

The Save Our School group will meet again Friday, Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. in Stevenson Union room 319. They encourage students to come help with the cause.

"Everyone has ideas at meetings like these," Economics student Samuel Bledsoe said. "We can come up with solutions that benefit everyone."

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Ospirg ...

Continued from Page 1

Hunger and Homelessness campaign that started earlier this year.

After a sleep-out they organized last term to raise awareness about homelessness, Lee and student volunteers are planning the 23rd annual hunger clean-up.

"We are trying to find \$3,000 from our sponsor to help homeless in the community," Lee said.

The third project Lee and other students are taking part in is the cost of higher education. Lee said the campaign aims at reducing col-

lege textbook prices by trying to influence the marketing methods of the publishing industry. According to Lee, publishing companies often publish unnecessary new editions and add supplementary materials such as CD-ROMs,

which raise the price of textbooks.

She loves to see the results of the campaigns led by students she coordinated with and knows that students involved in

OSPIRG learn a lot through their activities.

"It is both a lot of work and a lot of fun," said Lee of her job. "It's very challenging but I like it."

“It is both a lot of work and a lot of fun. it's very challenging but I like it.”
—Sarah Lee

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SOU food services decide to go green

By Catalina Myers
The Siskiyou

Southern Oregon University's Food Services is going green and taking an environmental stand by switching from petroleum-based-disposable cutlery to versions that are eco-friendly and biodegradable.

Elmo's, Raider Aid, and Cascade Food Court have been making the switch over the past two weeks. Mike Brown, the director of retail sales for SOU Food Services, said the idea has been around for several years and just now being put into reality.

"We've been trying to operate in a green fashion," said Brown, explaining that Food Services tried to join an organization called the Green Restaurant four to five years ago, but it would have cost \$15,000 to become a member. He said the university has tried other options, such as using ceramic dishes, plastic cups and metal cutlery that can be washed and re-used to have a minimal impact on the environment. However, Brown said that became expensive because some students would either throw away or leave the kitchen objects in random places on campus.

Brown said SOU would ideally not have to use any product that needed to be thrown away. Using biodegradable products are the least impactful option on the environment at the moment.

Until now, it has been too expensive for the university to order certain products that were more environmentally friendly. It wasn't until Jane Almquist, manager of Raider Aid, Java



Kyle Delaney/The Siskiyou

Student manager of Raider Aid Briana Nelson and employee Gino Pilato showcase the new biodegradable cutlery.

Union and the Library Coffee Shop, stumbled upon an organization named World Centric that offered these products at an inexpensive price.

World Centric is a non-profit organization offering biodegradable cutlery, cups, straws and plates. Their mission statement, according to their Web site, is to "reduce economic injustice and environmental degradation through education, community networks and sustainable enterprises."

Their cutlery products are 80 percent potato and cornstarch, and 20 percent is other biodegradable fillers. According to the Web site, the type of resin they are using allows biodegradation to begin as early as 60 days and may take up to one year to completely biodegrade.

Almquist said she learned of the organization through the Ashland Food Co-Op, who also purchases biodegradable products from World Centric. Almquist said she felt good about using this company because of their non-profit organization status, and she feels they, rather than a large corporation, are more likely to be supportive of SOU's mission.

"We have to be more globally responsible," said Almquist. "If we all take care of our immediate surroundings and friends, then you can see immediate results." Almquist said when she first came to SOU a few years ago she immediately started seeing changes she wanted to make for a more eco-friendly campus.

"I believe in taking action wherever we are," said Almquist.

"This is my community." While attending the University of Oregon, Almquist was a politically active member of the Green party and is excited to put some of her beliefs from her college days into action.

"I see SOU as a steward. I see us a leader for other universities," said Almquist.

Food Services feels students are an integral part of the project, and they asked the Ecology Center of the Siskiyous to become involved. Bill Brown, the associate vice president for Resident Education Services, feels student involvement in this project is key.

"We're here for the students. Yes, we are a business, but, learning can go right on in Elmo's," said Brown. This is not the first time SOU's Food Services and

ECOS has teamed up. The campus club uses the compostables from Elmo's and Cascade to disperse into the community garden.

"This is pretty revolutionary for a school or a business," said Laura Rost, co-director of ECOS and is overseer of the project. "I'm very impressed."

Rost said Almquist approached ECOS and asked them to become involved. They found two ECOS volunteers to be the liaison between their club and Food Services for the project.

"Sustainability should be a big deal," said Alex Golden, a junior at SOU and one of two students advertising the campaign. "We're trying to give SOU a focus and baseline to move forward."

Golden said he is passionate about this project because he believes SOU and the City of Ashland have the potential to be leaders for an eco-friendly community. He stressed the importance of taking action now in preserving the environment before important natural resources get used up.

ECOS is working on building special bins to place around campus for students to leave their biodegradable flatware, cups and plates. Golden said he hopes to have 22 bins out by Valentine's Day.

Almquist said she has been getting a lot of positive feedback from students and staff and is happy students appreciate the effort SOU is making to be environmentally conscious.

"It's my personal green beliefs being born into reality," said Almquist.

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Magdalena Staniek, coordinator for International Studies at Southern Oregon University recently received the news that her job was to be downsized in President Mary Cullinan's recent provisional plan.

Staniek ...

Continued from Page 1

and cultured them to realize the true importance of international studies," Staniek said.

Staniek noted that she savors the many memories with hundreds of students over the years but wants to see them do their part during this harsh situation.

"The students should take responsibility for change and get their voices heard not just as the state level, but at a national level," Staniek said.

"This whole process involves everyone, so every student needs to stand up for other students, faculty and administration that have changed the face of SOU."

Staniek said that in a time of globalization, we cannot remain ethnocentric; students have a tremendous social responsibility to be proactive in making a change not just in our country, but throughout the world.

"This is my opportunity to take what I have experienced at this wonderful university into the future and keep changing people's lives," Staniek said.