

News & Views



Faculty and Staff Newsletter of the University of Oregon

November 20, 1998

Loans help university retain students

One scaldingly hot summer night two years ago, Student Loan Manager Jim Heiss was sitting at a local restaurant, eating pizza with his family and drinking water like it was going out of style.

Amazingly, the waitress kept returning to fill his glass after he had emptied it. Surprised at the good service on such a busy and humid Friday night, Heiss wondered about the bright-eyed, 20-ish waitress who was bustling about with speed and efficiency.

"Are you a student?" he asked.

"Well, I'm trying to be," she replied.

"What does that mean?"

"I owe the university some money and they blocked me from registering. I only have two terms to go to finish my journalism degree," she explained. The waitress was one of the many students with outstanding debts payable to the University of Oregon who are "blocked" from registering for classes and are unable to complete their degrees. Heiss, who had seen this situation many times in the past 20 years, felt that something had to be done. Using this story as an example, he campaigned for the new UO Student Loan Program, which removes "blocks" from class registration for those students who owe money to the university.

"We were trying to find a way to help them stay in school when they hit the wall financially," Heiss

says. "Many of them were working two or three part-time jobs to get the money they needed."

The program converts a university account into a university loan account that students can pay back at the rate of \$20 to \$40 monthly. Students with good academic standing and a strong desire to complete degree requirements are prime candidates for the program. So far, success has been the buzzword, with 16 students graduating in spring and summer terms.

"We've had students literally want to hug us," Heiss says. "And there's no better investment they can make for their futures because they are investing in themselves in a way that no one can ever take away."

Katie Hutchinson is a student who benefited from the program after her father was killed in an accident. No longer receiving financial help from her parents, she almost dropped out of school last winter term to support her 2-year-old daughter because class registration "blocks" would have prevented her from attending school spring term.

"When the loan came through, it saved my life," Hutchinson says. "Nobody wanted to hire a single mother carrying 20 credits."

Heiss points to the Student Loan and Student Billing staffs as the key participants in the new program since its debut spring term, because they bring energy and enthusiasm to their jobs and perform the indispensable duties required to make the program work.

"It's a win-win situation for the students and the university," Heiss says. The program improves retention and graduation rates for the university, while letting students complete their programs.

The Student Loan office has made loans to 150 students totaling \$714,000 since the program's inception. As of late October, five loans had been paid in full and the university had received \$21,669 in payments.

"While our focus is on seniors, it makes us feel good when we can help the serious students stay in school so they can complete their degree requirements," Heiss says.

--Leigh Freeman, COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

Do you really know the UO...

- Knight Library was the first member library featured this fall on the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) website www.oclc.org/oclc/membership/univ_oregon.htm. Nominated for the honor by regional OCLC staff, the UO library spent two weeks in the spotlight for its long-standing membership (since 1981) in the world's largest library consortium as well as for its leadership in interlibrary loan activities.
- The UO is one of 25 schools in the country commended for the graduation rate of its football team. It

earned honorable mention accolades for graduating more than 70 percent of its 1992-93 freshman class by the 1996-97 academic year.

Inserts explain tuition tax credits

GTFs and other students will find a potentially good piece of news when they open their UO billing statements for November and December. Inserted in each month's mailings will be a flyer explaining two new tax credit provisions that Congress, to help make college more affordable, included in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997.

"We want to be sure people know these credits may be available to them," says Shereé Johnson, administrative project coordinator for the Taxpayer Relief Act in Business Affairs.

The Hope Scholarship provides tax credits for up to two tax years to taxpayers who pay qualified tuition and required fees for attending college at least half-time.

"The Hope Scholarship caters to middle-income families," Johnson says, noting the maximum credit per student is \$1,500 which may be used to offset tuition costs during the first two years of college.

The actual amount of the credit depends on each family's income and the amount of qualified tuition and fees paid, minus the amount of certain scholarships and allowances.

Like the Hope Scholarship credit, the Lifetime Learning Credit provides tax credits to taxpayers who pay qualified tuition and required fees at an eligible institution. It differs from the Hope Scholarship in that the student is not required to be enrolled at least half-time, and it is available to both undergraduate and graduate students.

A family may claim a credit of up to \$1,000 per tax year until Jan. 1, 2003, and \$2,000 per tax year after that. Families may claim the credit for periods of enrollment beginning and paid for on or after July 1, 1998.

By Jan. 31, 1999, the university will mail IRS Form 1098-T to all students and to the Internal Revenue Service. This "return" lists what each student has paid in tuition as well as what each student has received in scholarships. Students will use information on the 1098-T to claim these tax credits.

UO employees cannot offer tax advice, Johnson stresses. However, for questions about information reported on Form 1098-T, call 6-3160 or browse baowww/newweb/tax.htm to learn more about these new tax credits. For detailed information, see an extensive IRS publication at www.ed.gov/inits/hope/tax_qa or consult a personal tax adviser.

Announcements...

"UO TODAY," spotlighting the academic interests of humanities and other faculty, airs on Wednesdays at 9 p.m. on TCI cable channel 12 and at 9:30 p.m. on cable channel 11. The program schedule for the next month includes:

- **NOV. 25:** Pine Mountain Observatory with Greg Bothun, Physics (repeat)
- **DEC. 2:** Rennard Strickland, Law dean, and Richard Delgado, Wayne Morse Chair
- **DEC. 9:** Richard Stein, English, and Al Acres, Art History
- **DEC. 16:** University Theatre production of "Guys and Dolls"

THE FRESHMAN SEMINARS AND DISCOVER OREGON PROGRAMS invite eligible faculty members to submit proposals for innovative courses designed to enhance the first-year experience of UO students. These programs provide funding for courses that create a learning community and build students' academic abilities. Freshman Seminars provides funds to faculty members who design 3- or 4-credit seminars through which students can investigate fascinating academic topics, explore and exchange ideas, and sharpen critical reasoning and communications skills. Discover Oregon provides funds to faculty members who design 1-credit, year-long seminars through which students can survey areas of study, reinforce study skills, and strengthen their understanding of academic and career choices. Proposals must be submitted to Student Retention Programs, 372 Oregon Hall, by **Jan. 20, 1999**. For applications and information, call 6-1136.

THE 1998-99 GUIDE TO TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY AND STAFF has been distributed to deans, directors, department heads and officers of administration. The 66-page guide lists courses open to faculty, staff and GTFs about diverse topics such as communications and teamwork skills. To request additional copies, call 6-3159. The text is also available on the Web at darkwing.uoregon.edu/~humanres/train98.ht.

THE EMPLOYEE TRAINING RECORD FORM is now available on the Web for easy downloading. Begin at the UO home page, click on Jobs, then click on Employee Training Record Form to view and print the form. These forms, collected by June 30 each year, are for full-time permanent classified employees and should only list the training that Human Resources provides. For information, call Leona Neef, 6-2954.

THE STUDENT WAGE SCHEDULE will increase Jan. 1, 1999, to reflect the increase in Oregon's minimum wage to \$6.50 per hour. Get an updated wage schedule from the web at darkwing.uoregon.edu/~humanres/wages.htm or call Chris Lonigan, 6-2963, or Chris Brown, 6-2964.

A NEW RECYCLING POLICY at UO requires all campus departments to use 50 percent recycled paper for copiers. As of Oct. 1, departments won't receive virgin copier paper unless it is specifically requested. Direct questions to Printing and Mailing Services, 6-3807.

Charitable pledges edge toward record sum

Attention, all you 10-o'clock scholars who may have forgotten to turn in your Charitable Fund Drive pledges or may have misplaced your pledge forms on an overflowing desk.

The university's CFD coordinator, Nancie Fadeley, says donations are still welcome, so dig out that pledge form and sign up to support the myriad causes available by payroll deduction, outright gift or annual pledge.

"Late-arriving gifts are coming in every day, bringing our campus total as of Nov. 12 to \$100,000," she reports. "With a good number of leadership givers (\$1,000 or more) and governor's cup donors (\$500 or more), there is very good reason to believe that we will surpass our record-breaking \$157,396.40 total from last year."

She is quick to list reasons to support CFD agencies.

"Our CFD dollars give those of us who want to find a cure for Fanconi Anemia but lack the necessary expertise a way to support the frontline researchers who are looking for effective ways to treat that rare disorder." Fadeley cites a multitude of other ways that CFD dollars can do what individuals can not do, and go where individuals can not go.

"As soon as we heard about last spring's shooting tragedy at Thurston, many of us yearned to help, but didn't know how. Fortunately," she points out, "a number of programs supported by the United Way of Lane County were able to respond immediately, reminding us of the importance of disaster services at a time when help can't wait."

Through the Environmental Federation of Oregon, Fadeley says donors can encourage efforts to preserve very special places like Opal Creek.

"The Children's Trust Fund enables us to support programs like Birth to Three's Make Parenting a Pleasure," she adds.

Fadeley says the genius of CFD is that it gives people choices choices like the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, which gets assistance from the Black United Fund of Oregon; the Oregon Youth Suicide Prevention Conference and the Oregon Freedom to Marry Coalition which are supported by the Equity Foundation; and more than 200 other programs which receive CFD funds.

To replace lost donor forms and for information, call 6-3013.

Our People

In the spotlight

New Graduate Council members, whose terms end in June 2001, are **Paul Doerksen**, Music; **Peggy Pascoe**, History; and **Hal Sadofsky**, Mathematics.

Serving through June 2000 on the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee are **John Leahy** and **Brad Shelton**, Mathematics; **Nathan Tublitz**, Biology; **Jim Mohr**, History; **Lynn Kahle**, Marketing; and **Bill Ryan**, Journalism and Communication.

Susan Stairs, Comparative Literature doctoral student, is the recipient of a 1998-99 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation Fellowship.

Merv Loya, Law, is president of the Lane County Bar Association, the first UO faculty member or administrator to head the local or state bar.

Laura Blake Jones, Student Life, is one of just two recipients of an Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession that will be presented to her by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators during its annual conference.

Cathy Whitlock, Geography, is president-elect of the American Quaternary Association, a 1,500-member professional organization of North American scientists studying the last two million years of Earth's environmental history.

Peter Ho Davies, Creative Writing, won the H.L. Davis Award for Fiction at the Nov. 10 Oregon Book Awards, for his book, The Ugliest House in the World.

A study by **Michael Russo** and graduate student Michael Fouts, both Management, of Fortune 500 firms whose adoption of environmental strategies increased company profits has earned the pair the 1998 Moskowitz Prize for outstanding research from the Social Investment Forum.

On the move

Heather Brown, Museum of Art public relations assistant, resigned this summer after three years at the museum to move to Seattle.

Eliza Schmidkunz joined the Museum of Natural History as program and marketing coordinator on Sept. 1. She succeeds program assistant **Erika Remmy**, who resigned this summer to marry Harry Butler and move with him to Rochester, N.Y.

Robin Holmes was promoted to associate director of the University Counseling Center on Oct. 1. A staff psychologist at the center since 1992, she had served as assistant director since August 1995.

Susan Zadoff has been given the rank and title of senior instructor emerita upon her retirement from

Dance.

In Print/On Display

John Lukacs, Anthropology, edited Human Dental Development, Morphology and Pathology: A Tribute to Albert A. Dahlberg, No. 54 (September 1998) in the Anthropology Paper series.

Dora Natella, Fine and Applied Arts, is the featured artist through Nov. 28 in "Feminea Vitalitas" at the Feldman Gallery of the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland.

On the podium/stage

Hill Walker, Education, was among featured presenters Oct. 27-30 on "Saying 'No' to Violence" at the 1998 Western Regional Symposium on Child Abuse and Sexual Assault in Eugene.

Diane LeResch, Student Life, presented "Facilitating Inter-cultural Conflicts: Best Practices" at the annual conference of the International Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution.

In memoriam

Owen Meredith Wilson, former president, died Nov. 7 in Eugene of a malignant brain tumor. The university's ninth president, Wilson, 89, is credited with transforming the Graduate School into its position of distinction today. He also imposed stricter tenure requirements for faculty, created the Institute of Molecular Biology, opened the Museum of Art to the public and mandated the racial integration of fraternities and sororities on campus. A graduate of Brigham Young University and the University of California in history, Wilson left in 1960 after six years at the UO helm to serve seven years as president of the University of Minnesota. He directed the Center for Advanced Studies of Behavioral Sciences at Stanford until 1975 when he retired to Eugene. Memorial contributions may be made to the UO Library System or to the Owen Meredith Library at the University of Minnesota.

Go back to [Current Issue](#).

© [1998 University of Oregon](#)