

News & Views



Faculty and Staff Newsletter of the University of Oregon

April 9, 1999

OUS agrees to stay with PEBB in 2000

The Chancellor's Office has notified the Public Employees' Benefit Board (PEBB) that the Oregon University System (OUS) will continue to offer employee insurance benefits through PEBB in 2000.

OUS officials cited the high level of employee satisfaction with the prior State Employee Benefits Board (SEBB) and Bargaining Unit Benefits Board (BUBB)--bases for much of PEBB's program--as fundamental to the late March decision to stay with PEBB. Equally important was the Legislature's and the governor's support for a single, unified benefits program for state employees. At this time, with approval of OUS' new budget undecided, officials decided the best option is to continue with PEBB next year.

For 2000, the new, merged program will offer comprehensive, high-quality benefits familiar to state employees. Retained will be cafeteria-style, pre-tax spending on premiums and cash-back for those selecting economical plans. Employees with other coverage may continue to opt out.

Insurance companies offering current coverage in 1999 will be asked to bid again on plans for 2000. The same wide range of plan types--PPO, copay, Kaiser and HMOs--will be available, with the possible addition of a Point of Service (POS) plan for unclassified employees. During contract renewal negotiations with PEBB this June, insurance carriers also will be required to ensure that worldwide coverage is available under any plan they offer.

In addition, PEBB has decided to ensure full-family coverage with no employee-paid premium for those who enroll in the HMOs.

Despite this broad framework, OUS officials say questions remain to be answered on key issues.

OUS officials say they would have preferred more information about the final plan design before deciding to use PEBB in 2000. However, decisions on the costs of the plans, and the resulting cash-back amounts, won't be known until contracting is complete in mid June. Likewise, the size of opt out payments for not enrolling in health insurance will be contingent upon the plan's ability to provide comprehensive benefits at reasonable costs.

OUS officials say employee input has been a critical factor in this decision. PEBB has responded to a number of issues identified by OUS employees, who communicated through discussion groups, surveys and direct communication with PEBB. Many of the features identified as important, including regional access to good health benefits and worldwide coverage, are part of the negotiations with carriers for 2000.

More information about the OUS decision to stay with PEBB and updates on the contract renewal process will be available in the coming months. Helen Stoop, UO benefits administrator, says she plans to pass along such information as soon as it becomes known.

"As usual, detailed information about plan choices, opt-out and cash-back won't be available until sometime in the fall prior to the open enrollment period," Stoop says.

Additional information, including a question-and-answer page and a benefits glossary, also can be found at the OUS Web site at www.ous.edu/hr/benefits/pebb.htm.

Four Morse Chair Vision Grants awarded

Four Vision Grants, ranging from \$11,000 to \$20,004, have been awarded to campus and community members to support the visit of political scientist Frances Fox Piven in April of 2000. The grants, addressing the theme "The Rich, the Poor and American Politics," supplement the Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics, which Piven will hold next year.

"The new grants were a way to get the community, students and faculty more involved with the Wayne Morse Chair," says Morse Chair administrator Debbie Eldredge, Administration. "We are open to grant requests that include recommendations for a specific person to hold the Wayne Morse chair, including detailed explanations of how the grant would support their visit."

Recipients of the first Vision Grants are:

- POLITICAL SCIENCE, for a yearlong series of courses designed to enhance understanding of class and politics;
- ANTHROPOLOGY, WITH NORTHWEST TREEPLANTERS AND FARMWORKERS

UNITED (PCUN) AND MOVIMIENTO ESTUDIANTIL CHICANO DE AZTLAN (MECHA), for research about the farmworking experience and guest lectures from PCUN;

- ALAN SAPORIN AND NANCY SOLOMON, for dialogues on civic journalism that eventually will be broadcast on KLCC; and
- THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY, for a conference to coincide with Piven's visit entitled "The Rich, the Poor and American Politics."

Later this term, the Wayne Morse Chair Faculty Committee will send out information for the next round of proposals. They will be due in September.

For more information, call Eldredge, 6-3004, or send e-mail to djm@oregon.uoregon.edu.

'UO Today' lists spring shows

"UO Today," which highlights the scholarly pursuits and interests of the UO humanities faculty, will air the following shows at 9 p.m. Wednesdays through mid-June on TCI cable channel 12:

APRIL 14: Peter Ho Davies, Creative Writing; Robert Alter, Kritikos Lecturer

APRIL 21: Ron Mitchell, Political Science; James Lavadour, 1999 O'Fallon Lecturer

APRIL 28: Denise Matthews, Journalism, The Oregon Documentary Project

MAY 5: Dean Joe Stone, Arts and Sciences; Normandy Helmer, Knight Library Preservation

MAY 12: Barbara Altmann, Romance Languages; Dean Robert Melnick, Architecture and Allied Arts

MAY 19: Mike Majdic, Knight Library Media Services, The Woody Guthrie Documentary Project

MAY 26: Gerald Berk, Political Science; Mavis Mate, History

JUNE 2: Wayne Westling and James O'Fallon, Law

JUNE 9: Kate Nicholson, Art History; Henry Drewal, Cressman Lecturer

JUNE 16: Ken Calhoon, Comparative Literature; Frank Stahl, Distinguished Professor, Biology

'Curiosity never retires' at Baker Downtown Center

Right now, the room is quiet. The chairs are positioned neatly in rows and boxes of name tags are

carefully organized alphabetically, awaiting their wearers.

The room features top-notch video and audio equipment for the classes that are held here almost daily. An adjacent kitchen eagerly anticipates the sound of laughter as participants chat while drinking coffee and eating rolls.

The banner on the wall says it all: "Curiosity Never Retires." In this room, it never does for this is home to Continuing Education's Learning in Retirement (LIR) program. This 382-member organization is committed to creating comfortable learning environments and experiences for the over-55 and/or retired part of Lane County's population.

"LIR gives older people the opportunity to share what they have learned from their life experiences," says LIR Council president Ray Hawk, Administration vice president emeritus. "It also provides a unique learning environment that makes the university seem less intimidating because it allows university faculty to lecture at our classes."

Past workshops have included "Violence in the Media" by Debra Merskin and Dean Tim Gleason, Journalism and Communication; and "Promoting Safe Schools" by George Sugai, Special Education and Community Resources.

Other regular features include foreign language groups, often meeting weekly, and the "Armchair Traveler," a monthly series highlighting the trips of travelers to exotic locales such as Turkey and Tunisia. Some groups, such as "Thinking Allowed," address controversial issues such as the influence of the Christian Coalition in American politics.

"Some of the discussions in 'Thinking Allowed' have been lively," says Hawk. "It's our goal to stimulate critical thinking by exposing our students to different points-of-view."

Field trips and special events also fill the LIR schedule, with a future trip to the Shakespearean Festival in Ashland and past trips to the Oregon Legislature and local theater performances.

Membership costs \$100 annually, which includes free parking at the Baker Downtown Center, and members may attend an unlimited number of classes and workshops. The only prerequisite is a desire to learn and a willingness to participate in group activities to ensure LIR's success.

For more information, browse lir.uoregon.edu or call LIR coordinator Corinne Hunt, 6-0697.

-- LEIGH FREEMAN, COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

DID YOU KNOW...

PC Week (March 15) listed the Oregon University System, at No. 82, among the Top 100 Fast Track Technology Innovators for Government and Education.

Announcements...

NOMINATIONS FOR TWO \$500 GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOW DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARDS are due by 5 p.m. Monday, **April 19**, at the Graduate School. All GTFs involved in classroom or laboratory teaching are eligible for nomination by students as well as faculty.

ORDERS FOR ACADEMIC REGALIA for Spring Commencement must be placed with the UO Bookstore before **May 10**. To order, visit the store, call 6-4331, Ext. 264, or send e-mail to arlyns@oregon.uoregon.edu. Orders after the deadline will be charged a \$20 late fee.

REGISTRATIONS FOR SPORTS-O-RAMA begin the first week of May and continue on a first-come basis until filled. The sports camp for children ages 5-10 offers July 26-30 and Aug. 2-6 sessions from 9 a.m.-noon weekdays on campus. Cost is \$60 for one session or \$110 for both. Call Flo DeLaney, PARS Youth Sports, 6-2777.

Our People

In the spotlight

Fourteen employees will be honored April 13 for their outstanding performance and service during a campus reception. Recipients of Officer of Administration Recognition Awards are **Vicki Bockes**, Student Financial Aid; **Paul Csonka**, Honors College; **Elaine Green**, Student Life; **James Heiss**, Business Affairs; and **Jane Wagner**, Olum Child Development Center. Classified Employee Recognition Award recipients are **William Baxter**, **Douglas Gorder**, **Dennis Harrington**, **Abe Ocon** and **Ronald Stockman**, all Facilities Services; **David Espinoza** and **Marcia LeBlanc**, University Counseling and Testing; **Susan Hair**, Applied Behavioral and Communication Sciences; and **Claudia Vincent**, Special Education and Community Resources.

James Hutchison, Chemistry, is the recipient of a two-year, \$35,000 Sloan Research Fellowship from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. He is one of 100 outstanding scientists and economists in the early stages of their careers that were selected on the basis of their exceptional promise to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Hutchison is researching ways to create electronic circuitry from small chemical building blocks, a process that could decrease the size and increase the portability of devices such as computers.

Sherrie Barr, Dance, has received a Fulbright lecturing and research grant to teach Fall 1999 at the Technical University of Lisbon and then to continue her research in Lisbon as well as in rural areas examining the interplay between tradition and innovation in Portuguese dance.

Three faculty members--**Ayse Agis**, Women's Studies; **Daniel Pope**, History; and **Daniel Wojcik**, English--are recipients of 1999-2000 Oregon Humanities Center Teaching Fellowships.

Five GTFs--**Carolyn Bergquist** and **William White Tison Pugh**, English; **Suzanne Kocher** and **Carmen Mayer-Robin**, Romance Languages; and **Caroline Vanderkar**, Anthropology--have been selected for 1999-2000 Oregon Humanities Center Graduate Fellowships.

Inquiry editor **Ross West**, Communications, has been named to the editorial advisory board for *Northwest Science & Technology*, a new quarterly publication from the University of Washington showcasing the region's technical activities and achievements.

David Meyer, Computing Center, is new chair of the Network Research Liaison Council of the 175-member University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development. The council advises on advanced networking in higher education.

On the move

Ann Bentz succeeds **Diane LeResche** as director of Conflict Resolution Services which works with Student Life, ASUO and the UO community to resolve interpersonal and intergroup disputes. A graduate of Sonoma State University and Antioch University, Bentz most recently served as executive director of a community mediation center in Nebraska.

Joining the Student Loan office are **Marquita Endicott** as a student loan account representative and **Christopher Stokes** as a student loan collector.

Chelsea Budzko has joined Purchasing Support Services as a research/analyst.

Three long-time faculty members--**Randi Brox** and **Françoise Calin**, Romance Languages; and **Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe**, Music--have been granted professor emerita status in recognition of their more than eight decades combined of scholarly achievement and university service.

Yvonne Kleeberg has been promoted from office assistant to administrative assistant at Public Safety.

On the podium/stage

Kris Winter, Student Orientation, and **Troy Franklin**, Student Life, presented a workshop, "Coalition Building: An Effort in Building More Diversity into Your Orientation Program," at the National Orientation Directors Association Region 1 Conference March 5-7 in Tacoma, Wash.

John Lukacs, Anthropology, delivered "New Perspectives on the Indus Civilization: Cemetery

Excavations at Bronze Age Harappa" on March 16 to the Salem Society of the Archaeological Institute of America at Willamette University.

Sharon Gizara, Career Center, presented "Evaluating Doctoral Students, Identifying Impairment" on March 26 at the Association of Psychology and Postdoctoral Internship Centers in Orlando, Fla.

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