



HIGHER EDUCATION

Senate sets aside New Partnership endorsement

Unanswered questions lead to the postponement on voting, not denial

ADELINE BASH
NEWS REPORTER

With the Oregon Legislature's vote on the New Partnership postponed until February, the University Senate decided yesterday to table voting on its endorsement of the proposal and focus on grade inflation.

"There is a general feeling that there are still some unanswered questions about the New Partnership," said Senate President and biology professor Nathan Tublitz. "We really don't know what we're endorsing."

The endorsement motion will return to the Senate next year, and until then, lingering questions by faculty and students will be addressed by the Senate budget committee and academic council.

In a speech to the Senate, University President Richard Lariviere expanded on his decision to hold off on the New Partnership to focus on furthering Governor John Kitzhaber's plan to reform education at the statewide level.

"I'm okay with that as long as it allows us the opportunity to flourish," Lariviere said.

Kitzhaber's plan, which would create the Oregon Education Investment Board to oversee Oregon public education from kindergarten to college, matches very closely with the University's plans for a new governance model, Lariviere said.

The president added that supporting Kitzhaber will hopefully give the University the leverage it needs to move the New Partnership forward.

"It's not about merits," Lariviere said. "It's

SENATE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

about inside baseball politics."

In his speech, Lariviere also discussed his experience of participating in the Association of American Universities conference in Washington D.C.

The University has survived what other universities are just starting to deal with, Lariviere said.

"We've lived on bread and water for so long," Lariviere said. "If we're able to pull off the New Partnership, if we can generate funding like I think we can, we could be in a very strong position in the future."

With the New Partnership motion tabled, the Senate

focused on measures the Undergraduate Council has spent five years developing to address grade culture on campus. The first motion, aimed at establishing department-specific grading guidelines, was only one of three provisions that passed. The other two — one that would make available online comparative statistics on grade distribution and another that would alter students' individual transcripts to include similar information — were criticized by Senate members and faculty for being too constricting.

"This is trying to promote too much conformity, too much continuity over how people are grading," said communication disorders and sciences

professor Marilyn Nippoid. "It's a modern form of peer pressure."

In a letter read by Tublitz, Senate Vice President Robert

Senate members agreed that grade culture on campus should be addressed eventually, but they were hesitant to rush to

"We've lived on bread and water for so long. If we're able to pull off the New Partnership ... we could be in a very strong position in the future."

RICHARD LARIVIERE
UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Kyr, who could not attend the meeting, said the measures did not permit departments the liberty to address problems locally and decide how to move forward from there. The Undergraduate Council does not have the authority to impose such policies, Kyr said.

impose any measures past promoting more structured discussion within departments.

"This should be seen as tabling the issue," Tublitz said. "We're not saying it's not a good idea."

HIGHER EDUCATION
ABASH@DAILYEMERALD.COM

SENATE
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4