April 1995

Iowa students unite against tuition increases

Darcy Dougherty
Iowa State University

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If Gov. Terry Branstad's budget passes, Iowa State tuition may increase by 7 percent to 12 percent. But some Iowa students are not giving up without a fight. More than 60 students from Iowa's regent universities attended a rally at the state capitol in mid-February to impress their financial concerns on state legislators. The rally was organized by the United Students of Iowa.

Jeff Rains, the Iowa State campus director for USI, said students' protests weren't ignored. "We got a lot of attention from legislators on both sides of the issue," Rains said that representatives from Ames, Iowa City and Cedar Falls were some of the students' strongest supporters.

Several student leaders and state legislators spoke at the rally against Branstad's budget recommendations. Iowa State's USI Board Member John Kiernan was one of the speakers.

"I have to work to support myself in school, and my situation is not unique," Kiernan said. "I've heard legislators say they are comfortable with this proposal, but I don't know how they can be comfortable with a proposal that doesn't even keep up with the rate of inflation."

Graduate students should be particularly concerned about Branstad's plan, Rains said, because it includes cutting regents' request for $355,000 for graduate student stipends.

Though historically Iowa State students have been leaders in lobbying, Rains said, student support has not been as strong as he would like. USI sent more than 300 letters to student leaders to promote rally attendance, but only 15 Iowa State students showed up.

"We were just a little set back by the turnout. We really need more students to get involved," Rains said.

USI will be holding events in the Memorial Union and the residence halls within the next few months. It will also be mobilizing students to participate in phone call and letter writing campaigns to legislators. Rains said USI will make it as easy as possible for students to get involved.

"It only takes five minutes to make a phone call," said USI field director Joshua Foster. "If you want to write a letter, forget about writing in correct business letter style. Just sit down and explain your situation and how funding cuts will affect you. Legislators need to hear students' personal stories."

- Darcy Dougherty

Veishea highlights education

To reemphasize the theme of education, the Veishea Open House Committee is attempting to incorporate open houses into the classrooms on Veishea Friday.

Veishea Open House Committee Co-Chair Nikole Upton said letters were sent to professors asking for input as to how open houses could be used in class curricula.

Upton said the purpose of the Friday open houses is to provide opportunity for students to see what other students are doing.

"If these displays are open on Friday those students who aren't involved can get a feel for the different organizations," Upton said.

The committee has worked closely with the Council of Deans to discuss alternatives and potential problems. They also receive input from a Veishea advisory council consisting of various members of the faculty, Vice President for Student Affairs Doctor Thomas Thielen, and representatives from the Student Alumni Association, Graduate Students, Government of Student Body and others.

Upton said communication between the faculty and the committee is very important.

"If they can do it without interruption of classes, I'm all for it. If they cannot, we'll have to take another look at it," Thielen said.

- Jennifer Wing

It's an empowerment thing

The FBI reports that a woman is raped every six minutes in the United States, and that one in four college-aged women have been or will become victims of rape or attempted rape.

In response to these frightening statistics, organizers put together the United State's first Take Back the Night Rally in San Francisco in 1978. Today, rallies are held annually throughout the nation.

On April 6, Take Back the Night at Iowa State will focus on its theme, "Working Together To End Violence Against Women."

"It will focus on educating the ISU community about the problem and prevalence of sexual assault and the need for everyone on this campus to work together," said Meg Morris, a graduate student helping to coordinate the project.

Judy Dolphin, a YWCA advisor to Take Back the Night, said activities are geared towards eliminating vulnerability that women can sometimes feel while getting around on campus.

"We hope to create solidarity for everyone, not just women. This campus belongs to everyone," Dolphin said. "It's about empowerment."