



Retirement Association of Portland State

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College sock-hops and football games? Not so much for today's PSU students

Two Portland State Student Ambassadors, dressed in their trademark blue blazers, gave RAPS members a look into the lives of present-day PSU students on May 20. They spoke at the finale of the 2009-2010 Program/Speaker Series.

It was easy to come away with the impression that sock-hops, pep rallies, and squeezing 20 students into a VW do not figure prominently into the lives of Portland State students these days.

Rihana Mungin is a third-year mechanical engineering student. "I've had to be financially independent of my parents," she explained, which required her to balance work and school. "That's my biggest struggle



Rihana Mungin



Keighty Gallagher

being a student—especially in the engineering (school), where you don't have time for extracurricular anything."

Her involvement in the Student Ambassadors program (see sidebar on page 2) helped Mungin win a scholarship, enabling her to leave her job and

devote more time to school.

Keighty Gallagher, a senior in marketing and advertising, grew up on Vancouver Island and won a track scholarship to the University of Oregon. After an injury, she decided to branch out and joined a student group, the American Marketing Association. An internship brought her to Portland, and she eventually enrolled at PSU.

Both Mungin and Gallagher endorse the University's new rules that make academic advising mandatory and require freshmen to attend Student Orientation.

The reason behind the move is Portland State's dismal six-year graduation rate of 36 percent—that is, of freshmen

enrolling at PSU, only 36 percent will have graduated six years later. According to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems Information Center, a nonprofit located in Boulder, Colo., that provides higher education data, the national six-year graduation rate for bachelor's students is 55.9 percent. The statewide average for Oregon is 56.6 percent.

"We want to get that number up dramatically," said Melissa Trifiletti,

NEXT UP

RAPS' annual summer picnic, the event that traditionally kicks off the year. Be there or be square!

Thursday, Aug. 19, 4-7 p.m.
Willamette Park
SW Macadam and Nebraska

More info will come your way.

President's Message

LARRY SAWYER

At the June 10 RAPS Board meeting, members and committee chairs will be submitting their annual reports, and I will turn over the gavel to Clarence Hein. Reports will be posted on our Web site, www.raps.pdx.edu, for all to read.

In May Bob Vogelsang and I attended a regional conference of retirement associations hosted by the Western Washington University Retirement Association in Bellingham, Wash. Most of the Washington public universities were represented, plus PSU, OSU, and a visiting representative from Montana State University. We discussed our different activities and degree of university support. We have more university support than some others. We were also interested in their scholarship programs. Most had some endowed funds and means to secure funds for scholarships. The OSU Retirement Association has accumulated almost \$25,000 in endowed funds since their formation in 2001. We have just over \$1,000 in unendowed funds and will be offering some small scholarships for next year.

Finally, I attended a May 12 University Public Forum on PSU's future. Other RAPS members were also in attendance. There were presentations by President Wim Wiewel, Chancellor George Pernsteiner, and Lindsay Desrochers, vice president for Finance and Administration. Pernsteiner noted that in 1968 Oregon and Minnesota had the best-educated 25- to 34-year olds in the world. We are now in the bottom five states in that category. We have record enrollment (presently around 29,000 head count) and operate under tight state controls. Both Pernsteiner and Wiewel called for changes in our compact with the state government. Desrochers gave a Power Point presentation on our financial history and our present status. Last November Wiewel formed a task force with representatives from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the private sector. They are asking for input. More information on the forum can be found in a press release by Suzanne Pardington on May 13. Check the Web at <http://www.pdx.edu/news> for the release.

Have a great summer, and I will see you at the RAPS picnic on August 19.

Advising, orientation to be mandatory . . . *continued from page 1*

director of New Student Programs, who also spoke to RAPS.

The Student Orientation attendance requirement goes into effect next fall, and it's a no-nonsense rule. "If you don't go to Student Orientation, you do not register for classes," Trifiletti said.



Melissa Trifiletti

The mandatory academic advising regulation also has teeth. "All students, starting with freshman class, have to meet with an academic adviser before they can register for classes," she explained.

To meet what will obviously be greater demand for advisers, Provost Roy Koch is hiring 13 new advisers who will fan out to the various schools across the University.

"I'm really excited that mandatory advising is in the works because it's so easy for kids to get lost," said Gallagher.

Mungin agreed, recalling that she didn't go to Student Orientation her first year. "I was just flying by the seat of my pants when I first came to PSU."



So what's a Student Ambassador?

Rihana Mungin and Keighty Gallagher are two of a dozen students who make up this year's contingent of PSU Student Ambassadors.

Established in 1995, the program provides the University community with a diverse group of outstanding students who represent PSU to visiting speakers, educators, and dignitaries. They also conduct campus tours, perform community work, and act as hosts at official functions and VIP events.

Students are nominated to the program by faculty and staff. Successful nominees have a record of academic excellence, strong communication skills, and strong leadership skills.

RAPS club reports

Book Club: 'The Women'

The RAPS Book Club will meet on Tuesday, June 15, at 9 a.m. at the home of Betsey Brown, Holiday Park Plaza, 1300 NE 16th Ave., Portland. Contact her at 503-280-2334 or aebport@hevanet.com to RSVP and for directions. We will discuss *The Women*, written by T. C. Boyle. The book is described on the back cover:

Is it easy to live with a genius? T. C. Boyle's dazzling new novel, *The Women*, will let you know. Having brought to life eccentric cereal king John Harvey Kellogg in *The Road to Wellville* and sex researcher Alfred Kinsey in *The Inner Circle*, T. C. Boyle now turns his fictional sights on the colorful and outlandish Frank Lloyd Wright. Boyle's incomparable account of Wright's life, as told through the experiences of the four women who loved him, blazes with his trademark wit and inventiveness. There's the Montenegrin beauty Olgivanna Milanoff, the passionate Southern belle Maude Miriam Noel, the spirited and tragic Mamah Cheney, and his young first wife, Kitty Tobin. Boyle deftly captures these very different women and, in doing so, creates a sexy, gripping drama about marriage, the bargains men and women make, and the privileges and pitfalls of genius and fame.

Looking ahead, our selection for July is the 2009 Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction, *Olive Kitteridge*, written by Elizabeth Strout. We plan to meet throughout the summer. Check the RAPS Web site or contact Mary Brannan at 503-239-1077 or brannanmg@comcast.net for time, place, and selections.

—Mary Brannan

Bridge Group: Second Tuesdays

The RAPS Bridge Group meets at 1 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. The group is open to all members of RAPS. If you are interested in playing or need information about the group, please call me at 503-292-0838.

—Colin Dunkeld

Hikers: Drift Creek Falls

On Tuesday, June 22, we will hike to Drift Creek Falls. The falls are located about nine miles south of Highway 18 and five miles east of Highway 101.

It is a 3.7-mile roundtrip with a 340-foot elevation change. The hike will go through alders and second- and old-growth firs and hemlocks. Near the falls we will cross a 240-foot long suspension bridge. The falls and plunge pool can be seen from the bridge.

The hike is listed in William Sullivan's *100 Hikes/Travel Guide: Oregon Coast & Coast Range*.

Please bring a sack lunch to eat at the falls. We will carpool at 9 a.m. from our usual spot at the Cedar Hills Shopping Center near the DMV office. Confirm with Larry Sawyer, 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net, by Monday, June 21. —Larry Sawyer

Past Tense VIKINGS OUTLAST DUCKS

Those of us retirees well remember the difficult times Portland State faced in its early days, much of it because the University of Oregon was constantly blocking our progress.

In the first years of Portland State, progress was often stymied by an imperative that seems almost unbelievable today: any new course PSU faculty wished to offer required the permission of the like department or school at the University of Oregon. Obviously that institution fought hard not to allow Portland State College to grow beyond the size it was when it was known as Vanport Extension Center.

Through some miracle two omnibus numbers made it through the Oregon State Board of Higher Education: 150 (lower division) and 350 (upper division). Although the University of Oregon never allowed new numbers to be added to our catalog, it was now possible to add courses through these two numbers. The catch: they had to be called "Special Studies." The Music Department, for example, now could add very necessary courses such as Mus 350 Special Studies: Arranging, Mus 350 Special Studies: Counterpoint, and Mus 350 Special Studies: Composition (the colon was always necessary). The dean of the school of music at UO was furious, but there was nothing he could do about what the state board had dictated. As the years went on, Eugene was forced to relax its grip on PSC and new numbers were allowed, eliminating the "Special Studies" notation.

For more about the early growing pains, please refer to Gordon Dodd's history, *The College That Would Not Die*.

—Gordon Solie

Past Tense features glimpses into Portland State's history. To submit a story (or an idea for one), e-mail the RAPS History Preservation Committee at raps@pdx.edu.



Photo by Karen Vogelsang

Windswept

RAPS Hiking Club member Maxine Thomas walks along the overlook to the beach at Ecola State Park during the Hiking Club's outing on May 25. The overlook offers spectacular views to the beach below, the rocks offshore, and the historic Tillamook Head lighthouse. With the original hike from Ecola Park to Indian Beach shelved because recent rain turned the trail to mud, the hikers chose to walk the beach from Haystack Rock to Tolovana. Terry Rohe and Jack Cooper hosted lunch at their nearby home.

A word from your about-to-be former 'RAPS Sheet' editor

Your fearless editor has some good news and some better news. The good news is that I am retiring after three-plus years of editing *The RAPS Sheet*, providing an opportunity for new blood to make a better publication.

The better news is that Dawn White is the new blood. Dawn has been a Portland State fixture for, well, a long time. She joined the RAPS Board of Directors a couple of years ago, has been a tireless worker on a number of projects, and it took only a minimal amount of smooth talking to convince her to edit *The RAPS Sheet*. There's nuthin' to it, Dawn. Really.

My thanks go to Mary Brannan for convincing me to take on this job back in January 2007. It has been

an immensely enjoyable task. Even more enjoyable has been meeting new friends on the board, renewing old acquaintanceships, and attending the Program/Speaker Series.

My thanks also go to those who contributed club news, "Past Tense" columns, Hiking Club photos, and travel articles to *The RAPS Sheet*. You made it a better newsletter by doing so. A special tip of the hat goes to Vic Dahl, who does such a fine job on the obituaries, a sad but necessary duty.

The good ship *RAPS Sheet* now goes into dry dock for the summer. It will be back in September, with Dawn at the helm—which makes you a member of a lucky crew, indeed. —Doug Swanson