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Wednesday, February 11, 2004 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

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Northwest Sports Briefing

Faculty taking on big-school sports machines

By Seattle Times news services

EUGENE, Ore. — Players, coaches and boosters were thrilled with Oregon's new $3.2 million football locker room, complete with plasma screen televisions, video games and a bronze plaque of Nike chairman Phil Knight.

But professors were less than enthralled: For them, it was the latest sign college spending on sports was out of control. Their calls for more faculty influence on sports spending have helped spark a nationwide movement.

"From a professor's point of view, athletics is a sideshow that has taken on a life of its own and become dangerous and counterproductive to education," said James Earl, a professor of medieval literature at Oregon and co-chair of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics.

The coalition's roots date to 2000, when Earl and other Oregon professors were infuriated by the university's plans for a multimillion-dollar expansion of its football stadium, even as academic budgets were cut. Their movement spread and includes faculty leaders from universities with big, Division I sports programs.

Its members are now asking faculty senates at other Division I schools to vote on a resolution that calls for more restraint on spending on sports and a brake on "creeping collegiate commercialism." The resolution also asks that professors be given more influence over spending decisions at their universities and with the NCAA. The faculty senate at Oregon votes on it today.

Notes

• **Dan Tripps**, a professor at Seattle Pacific, has been named executive director of Athletes for a Better World, a nonprofit organization whose goal is to "restore values and ethics at all levels of sport."

Tripps teaches at SPU in the areas of science of elite performance and the psychology of leadership and achievement. Tripps was president and executive director of the 1984 Olympic Scientific Congress from 1980-84.

• The Western Washington men's golf team edged Saint Martin's College 286 to 288, in a dual match at the Olympic Country Club in Lacey.

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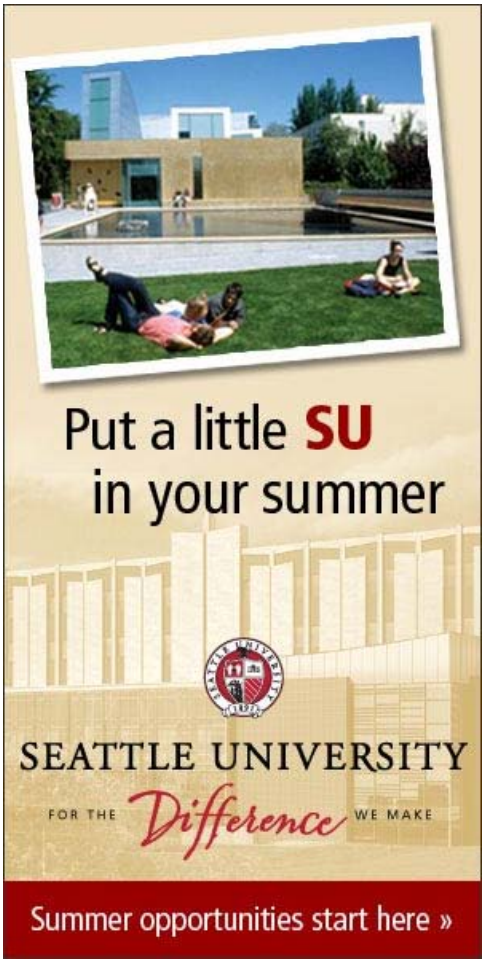

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