Top students in accounting go to Beta Alpha Psi seminar

By Janine D. Jefferson
Lantern staff writer

Accounting students from around the country attended the Thomas J. Burns National Student Seminar for Beta Alpha Psi, held at the University Park hotel Friday and Saturday.

Beta Alpha Psi, a national accounting fraternity, was founded at Ohio State in 1966 by Burns. The OSU Omicron chapter hosted the first seminar that year.

At the last national convention, held in Orlando, Fla., this summer, the national board of the fraternity voted to name the seminar after Burns.

Burns has been an accounting professor at Ohio State for the past 25 years. He was national president of the fraternity until 1979, and is currently active as the adviser to the OSU chapter.

"I thought it (the seminar) was a good way get top accounting students from around the country to write papers on their own on the same subject, or variations of it, and come and discuss it," Burns said.

The seminar, held annually, is hosted every other year by the OSU chapter. Eighty-five undergraduate delegates from across the United States attended this year's conference.

The students wrote 15-20 page papers on a supplied topic or subtopic and came to the seminar to discuss their position, Burns said.

"Participants are selected and only one delegate comes from each chapter because, obviously, you have to control the numbers," Burns said.

William R. Welke, president of the fraternity's national council and also a faculty member from Western Michigan University, said the organization has 170 chapters in the United States, though only 85 were represented at the seminar.

"The seminar is not a competition, just a discussion of the topic," Welke said.

Chapter membership is limited to schools that have been accredited by the American Assembly of the Collegiate Schools of Business, Welke said.

David Kirkey, assistant student chairman of the seminar said the OSU chapter currently has 80 students.

The host chapter is responsible for choosing the topic and then it must be approved by the national board, Burns said. This year's topic was "Statement of Cash Flows: Are the Financial Accounting Standards Board (F.A.S.B.) Changes Optimal?"

The F.A.S.B. is the national rulemaking group for accounting in the private sector, Burns said.

"Each year for the last six years, an OSU accounting graduate has worked as an intern for the F.A.S.B.," Burns said. "We are the only undergraduate accounting program in the country to do this."

Mike Keegan, an OSU student from Worthington, is Communications Officer for the honorary and was a moderator for the seminar. He said students in the honors accounting program are usually asked to join the fraternity after they get into Honors 520, an intermediate accounting class.

"I'm glad I got involved with the honors business program because its really helped me develop," Keegan said.