



Letters to the Editor

Graduate Student Examines ASUO's 'Rotten Borough'

Emerald Editor:

I read in the *Emerald* that some revision in the student government set-up is currently in the works. To me, the matter of the graduate student senator seems ripe for discussion. Vertrees, the incumbent, a central figure in the offensive "Dump Buel" affair, was elected by around 17% of the eligible voters, thus holding his mandate from a kind of "rotten borough."

The unfavorable reaction to Vertrees' behavior during the Buel controversy involved more graduate students than voted in the fall election, but still only a small fraction of all graduate students. My conclusions are: a) very few graduate students feel impelled to participate in students government, either as organizers or voters; b) only slightly more are moved by the issues and struggles enough to inject themselves into pressure activities.

WHAT SORTS of proposals for reform can one make from these conclusions? The most ob-

vious is to abolish the "rotten borough" and thus deprive the likes of Vertrees their irresponsible, and probably obstructionist, role. The tritest and vainest proposal would be to thump the democratic myth and castigate the graduate studentry for un-American behavior, and perhaps add a few more populist mechanisms, like a recall procedure.

This will lead nowhere—populist democracy is like the Dodo (or perhaps Griffon, the Dodo at least existed at one time). The problem is, however, not what is wrong with the graduate students as an electorate, or with a faulty formal governmental structure, but the whole system. Students of Russian history may well note, as I do, the parallel between the 1905-1914 period and the University of Oregon.

There is an intransigent and obscurant bureaucracy, an occasional brilliant higher administrator, an authority principle which legitimates suppression of student rights—cause determined by the bureaucrats, a "Little Father" complex wherein moralistic paternalism casts its not-so-tender control over private life. And then, we have the organs of students government—existing on official sufferance, ignored when critical, non-representative, internally fragmented and most times confused, operating in an unreal atmosphere.

IF THIS picture is valid, either we should return to benevolent despotism (it really would be no worse, and probably better, given a good despot), or seek a new authority structure. Since benevolent despotism is no longer in style, and since the Oregon legislature would have us all escorted to the state line for advocating "real change," what is there to do?

My own creed of conservative anarchism tells me to sit back, open my *Emerald* and get a big laugh. Student politics, to pilfer and pervert a Menckensism, is "a canoe-fete of Buncombe." My ultimate endorsement, therefore, goes to the doctrine of inactive spectatorism, which embodies the particular categorical imperative of the zoo fan. Whatever reforms are made, let us hope they don't spoil the show.

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NSA's Future at Oregon

A Strong, Articulate Delegation Will Determine What Oregon Benefits and Contributes

A strong structural framework at the campus level staffed by competent officers will determine whether the University reaps benefits from its affiliation with the United States National Student Association. Campus interest in NSA ran high during spring elections when the issue was the topic of spirited debates, but in recent weeks the NSA interest has fallen flat. Next Monday and Tuesday students will go to the polls to select delegates to represent the University at the national congress, which will be held in Indiana during August.

When ASUO offices closed Friday only six candidates had filed petitions for the five NSA delegate positions. Students should be offered a wider choice of qualified candidates. ASUO President Phil Sherburne reopened the petitioning last week in order that more candidates could file. Today is the last day to file petitions. We urge students who are interested in a national exchange of ideas with top rank student leaders to fully consider the possibility of petitioning for NSA delegate posts.

The NSA summer congress offers a unique experience in debating significant national and international issues, analyzing student governments, their framework and operation, and applying the good aspects of them to ours. Although it also constitutes a two-week sacrifice from work or vacation, the congress also provides a student with an opportunity to meet leading national student leaders who will influence the course of this country during the last half of this century.

The University has much to gain from NSA. NSA affiliation can put us into the

mainstream of American collegiate life, but only if intelligent, articulate delegates are sent to the national congress. The most important benefits from NSA must not stay with the University's six delegates who attend the congress, but must be communicated to the student body by a strong campus structure. NSA can guide campus activities with a focus on significant, meaningful issues which are a part of real life. We have seen the development of the ASUO presidential committees this year on Civil Rights, Mexico and migratory labor. These groups have much to gain from contact with similar groups on other campuses. NSA is the channel of communication.

We are disappointed that more candidates have not filed for these offices which can mean so much to the long range development of student activities on this campus. We are hopeful that in the few hours remaining to file, student leaders will persuade qualified students to run. More than anything we see this as a student leader's responsibility. The same persons who campaigned so hard for NSA affiliation should now come forward and help the University in sending a good delegation to Indiana. As stated before, it is our conviction that ASUO Senators should not be candidates for delegate positions, because the work of organizing NSA on the campus will in itself be a full-time activity position. No senator should shortchange his constituents by seeking another office.

Both the benefits which the ASUO can gain and the contributions we can make to NSA will be determined by the makeup of the University's delegation. We urge qualified students to petition.

Importance of Research

Terrill L. Hill, professor of chemistry and Marshall Fixman, director of the University's Institute of Theoretical Science, explain the importance of research to a university in this article which appeared first in the Portland Oregonian.

There has been some discussion in the press recently concerning the role of research and the support of research in the universities of the State System of Higher Education. We have obtained that the general public, rather naturally, thinks of teaching as the only important duty of a university faculty.

Actually, the faculty has the additional obligation to attempt to extend the frontiers of basic knowledge, through research. But even if this point is ignored and one is concerned only with the quality of student education offered in the state system, then there are still some simple facts of life, probably not generally appreciated, which lead to the conclusion that research cannot be slighted. These facts are:

1. The quality of the education received by the students of a university is determined by the quality of the faculty.

2. Outstanding faculty members are interested not only in teaching but in research, because research is creative, intellectually stimulating, and even, at times, downright exciting. Furthermore, good research men have a real advantage as teach-

ers because they are expert and up to date in their subjects, and often can transmit to their students some of the enthusiasm they have for their respective fields.

3. Consequently, the better universities in the United States provide adequate research facilities (with the help of federal and other grants) and low teaching loads so that their faculties can be active in research.

4. Because these desirable conditions are available elsewhere, superior faculty men in this state will simply move out of state if research is not encouraged sufficiently here.

5. The inescapable conclusion is that the State of Oregon must recognize, encourage and support research, as well as teaching, as a legitimate faculty activity. If it does not do so, the best of the faculty will in due course be lost to other institutions, and the quality of education received by the students will, as a result, deteriorate.

6. Finally, it should be pointed out that the institutions of this state have nothing to be complacent about. There are some areas of excellence in the state system but also many of weakness. Compared to the very best state universities, we have a long way to go, despite recent impressive improvement. When there is still so much room for improvement, the state can ill afford to go backward rather than forward.

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