

# 'Comments on my being fired'

By Tim Travis

Feb. 7, 1973:

It seems to me that you accuse me of silence while you are holding my words. Your editorial of the 7th accuses me of not being out front about my being fired. I gave the Emerald a three page commentary on the subject at around 2:00 p.m. on the 6th.

Please print the commentary and this letter to correct your mistake.

Tim Travis

## The commentary

It was announced earlier this week that I had been fired as ASUO Chief Administrative Officer because of policy disagreements I had with the President of the Association. Having taken a few days to collect my thoughts, and to avoid off-the-cuff remarks, I would like to expand on the difference of opinion that led to my being fired.

As ASUO President, Bill Wyatt has decided that his highest priority is to insure the passage of certain legislation in Salem that is beneficial to students. As a result of this decision, Bill's major commitment is toward lobbying in Salem, where I understand he is doing a reasonably good job.

## ASUO grown stagnant

I have never questioned the value of these legislative tasks, but I do question the ASUO President doing them himself. I think that his first duty is to be chief

executive, and that legislative affairs should be, in the main, handled by the Legislative Coordinators. I think this is especially true now, because the ASUO has grown stagnant and internally weak. The student government is isolated from the students, and most consider it a waste of time, effort, and money.

This cannot be denied. With a few notable exceptions the ASUO is a mess. And while the student government is isolated from the students people within the student government are isolated from one another. This internal isolation divides the ASUO against itself, and causes the periodic power struggles and internal bickering that destroys the Association's credibility.

## Pointless nihilism

There are those who argue that the Association is so screwed up it should be abolished. I do not agree. Abolishing the Association is pointless nihilism. I believe that student government can be valuable, that in some cases it is now valuable. If much of ASUO is useless, as I believe it is, that is something we should change. I firmly believe that people can have influence over events if they organize politically, and that as students the ASUO is a vehicle for gaining some influence in our here and now.

Right now the Association is stagnant, it continues to exist largely because of momentum and bureaucratic resilience. However, there is dormant political energy among the students, and there is never a lack of useful political, social, cultural and academic goals. The energy and the ASUO cannot get together because

the Association operates on assumptions of student power that are four years old. The politics of confrontation—even conference room confrontation—are not only trite but also ineffective. The Association has not been growing.

It is the chief executive's job to do something about this. More than anyone else the chief executive is responsible for the general well being of the Association. When there are problems he should spend his time dealing with them.

## Must lead discussion

The chief executive must be the one to find the common values and interests, to integrate, harmonize and express these in such a way as to provide the Association with a framework of use to all of its members. Above all, in time of crisis, it is the chief executive who must lead the discussion about how to proceed.

Bill Wyatt is doing none of this. He cannot deal with the crisis because he is out of touch with the ASUO, however together and capable he may be in Salem. Bill is working as a legislative lobbyist, a task best performed by specialists in the Legislative Coordinator's office and by interested students. If his lobbying is so important to him, and if he has some special expertise in such things, then he should be Legislative Coordinator and not ASUO President.

The chief executive has many things to do right now, things that only the President is in the position to do. The Association is on the point of breakdown because it does not have a President. Bill Wyatt became tired of hearing me advise

him to act on internal problems, and so he fired me.

## Not bitter

I am not bitter about being fired. I expected it. I did what I could from within the Executive to bring attention to the isolation, stagnation, and weakness of the Association. I did this to the point that I was making many ASUO officials uncomfortable. They argue that public discussion of the Association's problems will show we are weak and undermine our newly won influence with the State Board, the Administration and the Legislature.

That is silly. They already know we are weak. Besides, until we solve some of our problems we won't have any real influence at all. We may have gained seats on many committees and boards that make decisions about how this place operates but we have not encouraged and trained students to sit in those seats. Opportunities may have been created for students to do many things, but few of them are aware what is available.

## Caught in the middle

It would have been ridiculous for me to stay where I was not listened to, carrying out policies that I did not agree with, caught in the middle of crises that could have been prevented. Being fired saved me the trouble of resigning soon. I cannot see being held accountable later for the performance of the Wyatt-Loveys administration. That does not mean, however, that I am no longer thinking about what the ASUO President should do to revitalize the Association. I'll be back.



"GOSH— JUST LIKE THE REAL THING..."