

IFC irresponsibility delays asuo budget

The transition of the ASUO budget from the students to the administration has been unnecessarily complicated by the Incidental Fee Committee (IFC). The transition has been complicated not by delay tactics, but by shoddy bookkeeping practices and carelessness.

The budget recommendations, originally submitted to the ASUO executive June 25 after much prodding, was incomplete and inaccurate. Five budgets, including the Athletic Department's proposed budget of \$140,627.50, were not submitted.

Twenty-one budgets were submitted with a variety of miscalculations, omissions and other errors unacceptable in a document allocating over \$1 million in student fees. The budget miscalculations ranged from 20 cents to \$2,441.

In addition, 11 budgets contained line items with sums to held in reserve with no conditions for release. Two programs had their entire budget for '75-'76 impounded by the IFC with no specifications as to when and under what circumstances the funds could be released.

The IFC is the primary coordinating force for the 53 student organizations and programs requesting funds for the next 12 months. The executive, dependent upon the IFC for information gathered during almost six months of investigation, has only a limited amount of time in which to scrutinize the submitted document before making its own decisions. When

the IFC does not provide written rationale for alteration of line items, the executive literally operates with hands tied behind its back.

How then, did the IFC expect the ASUO executive to make funding decisions when 142 line items were changed by the IFC with no written justification? The IFC cut \$301,482.14 without justifying the cuts and, again with no justification, added \$16,772 to other line items.

The whole matter was further complicated in that the IFC's final recommendations, with all the errors, were not even submitted to the ASUO executive until five days before the budget was to be on University President William Boyd's desk for final review.

In that short period of time, the executive was expected to review the budget requests of 53 programs, to review the IFC recommendations for each budget, and to submit budget vetoes to the IFC (it would take a vote of five of the seven-member IFC to override a presidential veto). In that period of time, the IFC also expected to have a chance to review and act on all vetoes and to type the huge final statement.

The IFC's mishandling of the 1975-76 ASUO budget has caused problems not only for the executive, but for the University administration as well. In a letter to ASUO president Jim Bernau, dated June 26, University vice-president of student services Gerald Bogen reluctantly extended the due date of the budget to July 11.

The vice-president justifiably wrote Bernau that "delay beyond that date may force us to rather arbitrarily set a figure (for incidental fees) based on what is now conflicting and sometimes contradictory data and recommendations."

Monday, the executive was forced to verbally discuss each line item with members of the IFC. According to a time table established by Bernau to meet the July 11 deadline, the executive will have only five days to review the total budget. The IFC will then have three days to deal with executive vetoes. The remaining two days will be used to type the final draft of the budget.

Because of the short period of time the executive has to deal with program budget requests, many deserving programs may not get the full attention their proposals deserve.

It greatly concerns the *Emerald* that the irresponsibility of the elected IFC members may permanently damage the ability of many programs to function properly. And it greatly concerns the *Emerald* that the efforts of a new student administration to become involved with such issues as faculty tenure, collective bargaining, and establishing an EMU tavern have been hampered and delayed because of the IFC.

It is inevitable that the University will have a new ASUO budget. IFC members should pat themselves on the back for that because it's likely those will be the only pats they receive.

Letters

Lettuce stand popular

I'd like to correct an unusually ignorant statement that appeared in your newspaper. In your article about Robert Clark, you said, "The lettuce boycott, of course, was going on and Clark clung to his decision, largely unpopular with students, to keep buying Teamster-picked lettuce, as well as United Farmworker lettuce." (emphasis mine)

If you EMU clowns would venture out of your circus tent once in a while, you'd know that President Clark's veto of the ASUO's arrogant lettuce policy was one of the more popular things he's done. The ASUO's own most recent poll showed that 69 per cent of the student body agreed that the EMU should sell both kinds of lettuce. (For the record: 22 per cent said "support our union or get your ass out of our cafeteria," which

was the original ASUO demand; and only 9 per cent said "all right, then, sell neither," which is the ASUO's subsequent and current attempt at statesmanship.)

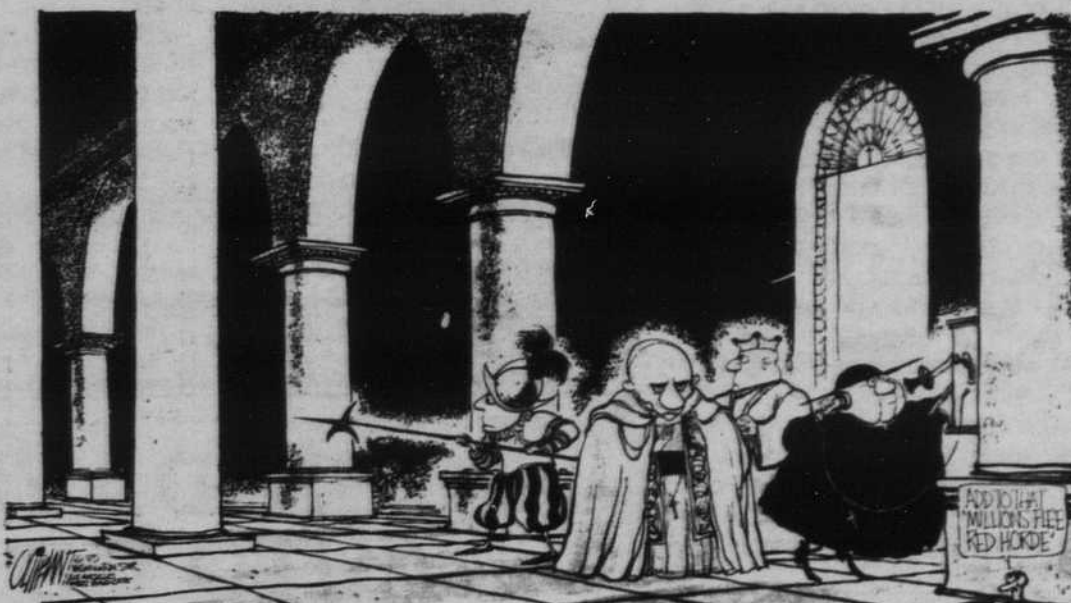
Further on, your article stated that "most University students—if they even know who the president is—view him with an unspecified sort of hostility or just plain ignore him." This is supposed to be about Clark, but it seems infinitely more applicable to a certain moralistic political organization on campus that is the apple of the *Emerald's* eye but that attracted less than 5 per cent of the student body to its last election, in spite of the fact that the only excuse for its million-dollar-a-year existence is to increase student participation in the University governance. This organization, by the way, is very critical of other organizations that aren't representative enough and of small groups of people that control inordinate amounts of money.

I feel that I should warn you guys at the

Emerald that I've written a letter about you to Old Man Coors. You know what he'll do, don't you? Well, I haven't sent it yet, but if I see any more whoppers in your paper like

this one about the lettuce, into the mailbox it goes!

Mike Sylwester
Russian



opinion

Benefits hike 'acceptable' unemployment level

By NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

WASHINGTON (KFS)—Unemployment is running over 9 percent, and we have been taught to believe that no politician and no party can withstand joblessness on that scale. That has been the one unarguable axiom of American politics for 50 if not 100 years.

For successive months now, the Democrats have greeted each new announcement of a rise in the unemployment rates with public horror and private satisfaction. Seventy-six was going to be their year, but where is the general anger, the mobs and marching which should give human and political expression to these statistics? How come Jerry Ford can waltz himself around the country without being booed wherever he goes? Granted, he's a better politician than he's been given credit for. He has turned the liability of a reputation for stupidity into an asset in the form of a good-natured running joke.

But the reason that Ford isn't getting eggs and tomatoes is our system of unemployment compensation. For some millions of people the level of compensation benefits is so high that they really aren't feeling much of a pinch. "The benefits replace two-thirds or more of the lost net income. In some extreme cases, the individual may receive more net income by being unemployed than by returning to work at the previous wage," writes Martin S. Feldstein in the April-March issue of the *Harvard Business Review*.

If that doesn't jibe with what you've been brought up to think, it is because when we talk about unemployment compensation we compare the benefits with pre-tax income; but when we live on unemployment

compensation we compare our take-home pay with what we're getting in jobless benefits, and then things don't look so bad. Unemployment comp is tax-free money. That didn't make much difference when the system was first installed because only about 4 percent of the population paid Federal income taxes, and state income taxes weren't even a Bolshevik's dream.

Bearing this in mind, Mr. Feldstein has done some calculations on what happens with a hypothetical Massachusetts family with two children where the father is making \$120 a week before taxes and the mother is making \$80. If the father is laid off for 11 weeks, his actual cash loss after receiving his unemployment comp is \$15.50, so what's to complain about, especially if you figure he may be picking up a little change on the side which he isn't reporting. If that man went back to work, he'd only be making 50 cents an hour more than he would be staying home and watching the Red Sox. If the mother were laid off, our Harvard professor figures, she would only make 30-cents more an hour by going back to work. Now you begin to see why they're not running through the streets trying to lynch Ford.

The pattern of who gets and who doesn't get unemployment compensation further tends to tranquilize people politically. "Middle and upper middle income families receive most of the unemployment compensation...only 17 percent of benefits went to families with incomes...below \$5,000. About the same share of benefits went to families with incomes over \$20,000," writes Feldstein. If that seems just too astonishing, remember that poor people are less likely to have worked and therefore be eligible for benefits.

It is the middle-income range worker who is politically dangerous. He's the one with organizational contacts and the social skills that can cause trouble at election time. Since he is also the main beneficiary of the unemployment compensation system, he is happily immobilized. The people who are cut out are the blacks and similar folks, but they were being cut out before and, standing alone, they have no better chance at beating Ford than they did of beating Nixon. As far as crime and social disorder are concerned, we've got 'em bottle up pretty well in the cities and on the reservations where mostly they mug and rape each other.

Mr. Feldstein has some other numbers which strongly suggest that the unemployment compensation system is so irrationally cushy (cq) that it actually prolongs joblessness. This bothers him as well as a few fringe people on the political far right and far left, but your average electoral politician isn't concerned by the anomalies of waste, underproduction and mis-used and unused people. That may cost us all a great deal down the road a piece, but what the pols are learning from this recessionary experience is that "the acceptable level of of unemployment" is much, much higher than any of us had thought a few years ago.

This is why Ford can predict only a mild diminution in the jobless rate next year and still realistically think he can run and win. For blacks, for youth and for women, all of this should be as bad news as it is good for the Republicans.

Not so dumb after all, Jerry babes. Send me an invitation to the inauguration ball.

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