

Wrong villain

Following the revelation Tuesday by George Layman, president of the State Board of Higher Education, that the board has little choice but to raise tuition, many students were probably asking themselves, "Well, who can we deal with then?"

After Tuesday's meeting of the board's finance committee, which recommended a 12 per cent tuition increase, Layman observed that a refusal by the board to raise tuition would not force the state legislature to allocate more money to education. He remarked half-facetiously, "They'd (the legislature) probably just abolish the board."

The hard facts are that the last session of the legislature did not vote enough money to operate the system for the next school year. State System of Higher Education Chancellor Roy Lieuallen pointed out that the board submitted a budget with no tuition increase to the last session of the legislature. The members of the legislature, already under public pressure to cut back on spending and hold down taxes, tossed the problem back to the board by not allocating enough to cover the budget. This move forces the board to come up with the difference.

All of the options available to the board to make up the difference contain disadvantages. These basic options include: shuffling budget line items so as to add to some areas by short-changing others; cutting back allocations to program areas, and increasing tuition.

Students still have one more chance to influence the board's final decision. Most likely the board will still meet on March 23 because meetings are scheduled many months in advance. Layman, however, offered the possibility that the board could carry the issue over to an adjourned meeting in April. He stated at the Tuesday meeting that he "would not be opposed" to delaying the final decision if other members did not object and if such a delay did not affect the printing of college catalogues.

Before the next meeting of the board, the ASUO and other groups opposed to the tuition increase are going to have to do some homework. It is one thing to oppose the increase and quite another to come up with alternatives. By combining a partial tuition increase with reshuffled line items and some program cutbacks students may be able to hold the tuition increase down to a more reasonable level. Rather than opposing any tuition increase, it would be more realistic to work toward holding the increase to less than 12 per cent.

The real villain in this episode is not the board, but the legislature. For now, we will have to deal with the board and try to make the best of a bad situation. In the future, our efforts should be directed at the next session of the legislature to make sure they live up to their responsibility of fully funding the state's education system. When the legislature fails to adequately finance the system and forces tuition increases, it defeats the purpose of a state supported higher education system. This purpose is to ensure that the children of the rich are not the only ones who receive a college education.

Letters— Portrayal offered

My letter (Feb. 17) questioning the statement (Feb. 6) that in 1970 "the National Guard came on campus to stop a student strike" was intended to help bring to light a clearer portrayal of what actually happened. The editor's note, to some extent, contributed to this result by declaring that the National Guard—along with city, county and state law officers—broke up a "sit-in demonstration at Johnson Hall." So instead of the picture of steel-helmeted Guardsmen with bayoneted rifles grimly patrolling the campus, breaking up picket lines, we have, even according to this note, the somewhat different spectacle of police and Guardsmen terminating the occupation of the University's administration building. There is a difference between "stopping a strike (sic)" and stopping illegal actions supposedly in support of a "strike."

But there is a question as to whether National Guardsmen participated in restoring Johnson Hall to its official and normal use. The University's statement at the time, I believe, was that the Guardsmen

were sent in without the request, and contrary to the desire, of the administration and that only police officers were used in the evacuation of the building. Although former president Clark is not currently on hand to comment, other members of his administration should be available. And no doubt there would be counter comments. Thus interested present day students might learn more about what went on at the UO so recently—and yet also, fortunately, so long ago.

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Time to thank

I think it is about time for all of us who are frequent users of the library to thank the people who help us daily but receive no thanks. The people I am referring to are the reference librarians. They help us find materials, they suggest new ways to attack a problem and they answer specific questions when they can. Anyone who spends as much time in the library as I do realizes how truly valuable they are. All of us, and myself in particular, owe them our gratitude.

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opinion

Evaluations dangerous

I would like to point out what I see as some dangers in the student evaluation procedure currently being followed by the students in evaluating professors. There is little doubt of the importance of such evaluations; people base their course decisions largely on what they hear about them from others. But since this is such an instrumental feature of choosing courses, care should be taken to insure that the evaluations offered are either fair, or obvious as to their limitations.

The student evaluations are neither. Statistically, the response is usually both small and not necessarily representative of the apathetic majority. Less obvious, but vastly more misleading, is the nature and wording of the questions themselves. Students are asked to judge a course, its relationship to its subject matter (what is the difference?) and the professor's expertise in terms of each student's separate individual values ("Using your own criteria") without making any provisions for discovering and differentiating those values and adjusting the results accordingly. Is a student who takes a course to fulfill a requirement going to view it the same way as one who is not? Does the fact that a course does not live up to your expectations automatically negate its applicability for someone else? If students judge their professors in different ways — say, between strict academic proficiency and student-faculty accessibility and friendship — who is right? More importantly, does either have the right to force his conclusions on the other? Yet that is

exactly what the vague, unspecified questions on the questionnaire do; without giving any indication of values (only of the judgments made on the basis of those values) they force the student to use only values he respects (his own) to interpret data created without consideration for those values, indeed, data which gives little indication that differences may exist.

If these evaluations are not being taken seriously on campus, this may be a cause; if they are, then either the entire procedure of evaluation should be reconsidered or it should be known exactly how valuable the present system is. This is not to say that the questionnaire is totally useless; it's possible that both the superb and the abominable will be obvious—that extremes will tend to overcome everyone's particular tastes.

Most courses at Oregon are varying shades of grey, where some students will enjoy a course and others not, depending entirely on personal preference. Insofar as the best and worst courses at Oregon will tend to be already known, regardless of the survey, it is not possible that providing what is therefore a sketchy, inconclusive and thereby illusory analysis of the "grey" courses at Oregon (covered, by virtue of its "liberal" structure and student-run character, by a patina of veracity) will do more harm than good?

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