

Evaluation showdown

The final and most important vote in the long history of the student course evaluation issue will take place Thursday in the Oregon House of Representatives. The legislators will vote on House Bill 2702, which would require the release of tabulated information from the evaluation forms students fill out at the end of most University courses.

The Oregon Student Lobby (OSL) prepared the bill and pushed it through the House Education Committee. The student lobbyists say they are optimistic about the bill's chances before the full house, but it's going to take yes votes from at least half a dozen undecided representatives to make the bill law.

Specifically, HB 2702 would require the State Board of Higher Education to formulate rules for the release of tabulated course evaluation information. The bill would oblige the State Board to develop the rules in consultation with elected student officials. These requirements represent a fair compromise between the rights of students and the State Board's responsibility toward the rights of faculty.

More important than the technical aspects of the bill, however, is the validity of the idea that led to its preparation: the idea that students need more information concerning courses and instructors. The best and most convenient source of such information is the course evaluations. Everyone — students, faculty and administrators — would benefit if students were allowed to use this information.

Students obviously have a lot to gain from HB 2702. On the basis of the evaluation information students could decide whether or not a particular course or instructor suited their needs. Students would register only for courses they knew they would like — the element of risk would be substantially reduced.

Faculty would benefit from student access to course evaluations as much as anyone. It could be assumed that the students who showed up on the first day of class really wanted to be there. Faculty could expect an honest and detailed critique of their teaching methods, classroom demeanor and assignments at the end of each term. Students would take the evaluations seriously if they knew that they were communicating their opinions to 16,000 other students.

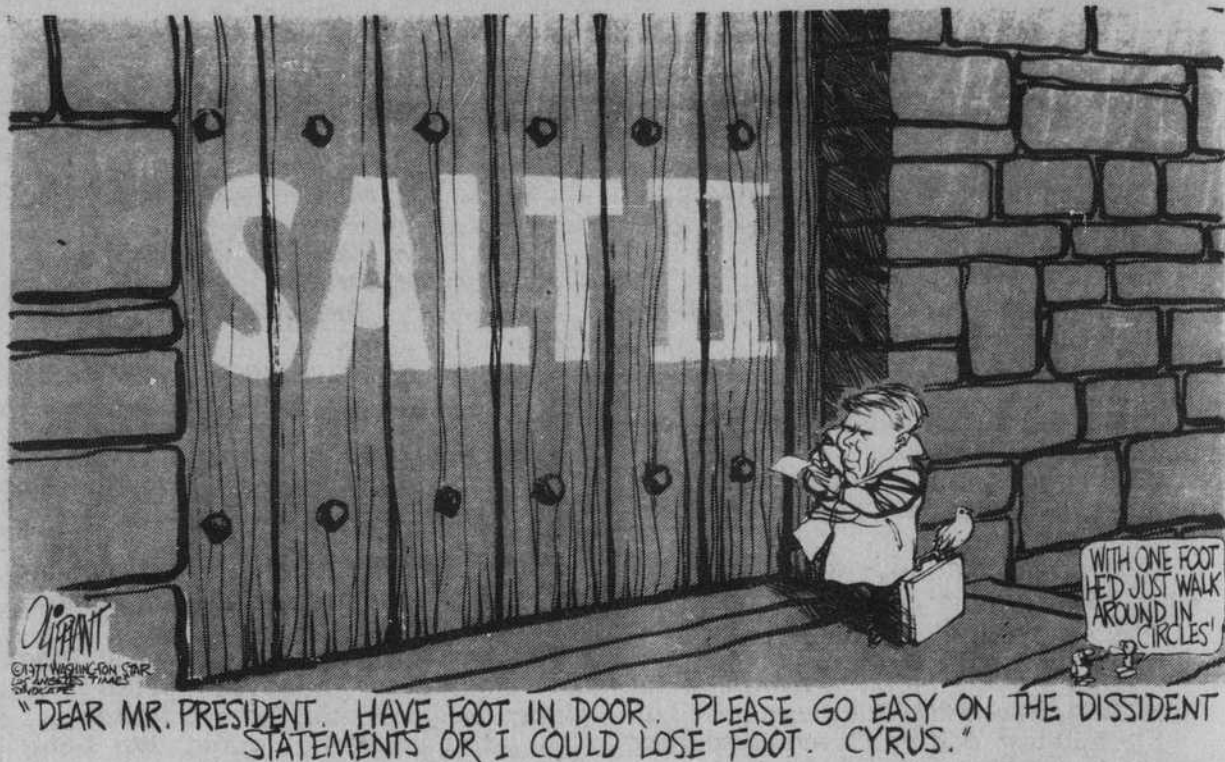
The University administration might find a partial solution to its underenrollment problems in HB 2702. Under-enrolled students generally begin the term with five or six classes, then drop the one or two courses that turn out to be turkeys. HB 2702 would change this situation to one of more stable add/drop patterns.

The bill's opponents feel that to release the forms would somehow invade the privacy of faculty. But only statistical tabulations of the evaluation information would be released; the individual forms and subjective comments would remain secret.

Another objection is that students would come to exercise some sort of tyranny over their instructors if enrollment were subject to the whim of student opinion. This argument implies that students are not qualified to judge their instructors. In fact, students alone are qualified to judge teaching performance and could be expected to do so fairly. The idea of student tyranny also assumes that all students want the same thing from their courses or instructors — that's like saying voters all want the same things from whomever they vote for.

Thursday's vote in the House of Representatives will be the last chance for a good idea to become public policy. HB 2702 is a good idea because it would be useful to all parties involved without costing very much. HB 2702 is the last chance for students to obtain access to course evaluation information because all other parties with the power to grant student access have either failed to act positively or have met proposals with refusal.

Any legislator who hasn't decided to support HB 2702 should take a closer look at it. Students with an interest in improving the quality of their educations should contact their representatives before the Thursday vote and urge them to support this important measure. The ASUO and the OSL have information on which representatives need persuasion. If HB 2702 is allowed to fail, it will be a long time before students can organize support for another measure of its kind. It's now or the next thing to never for student access to their own opinions; this opportunity must not be allowed to pass.



Letters

Males stereotyped

As I read Heather McClenaghan's story, "Women's week to prove that women aren't," I was stopped by the phrase, "...a belly dancing lesson from a feminist perspective (no leering men allowed)," and began to wonder if this meant men who leer are not allowed, or that all men are not allowed because they, each and every one, leer.

To make a mountain out of a molehill (or seek deeper meaning in something that seems minor) I then began to wonder if, in redefining themselves, women rely on stereotyped definitions of men, such as 'chauvanistic male,' 'sexist male,' 'oppressive male,' and 'leering men.'

The point I want to make is that prejudice is something we all must deal with, within ourselves as well as others, be it sexual, racial, religious, national, political or cultural. All these forms of prejudice are factors in the disunity of the human race. We must seek liberation from our old disunifying attitudes, not at the expense of each other, but through mutual education and service. When the human race has balanced its male and female aspects, both socially and individually and overcome all prejudice, then both limbs of the human race, the male and female, will be equally strong in building an ever advancing civilization.

Scott Stuart
Junior-Journalism

Confront socialism

I note with some amusement that there is a program scheduled Wednesday for the Women's Symposium titled "Socialist Feminism." (1 p.m. EMU Rm. 101) Since socialism is legalized slavery and the women's movement focuses on "liberation," the idea of "socialist feminism" is completely non-defensible.

I have always been an ardent feminist and defender of capitalism, so I will be there to hear what the misguided Barbara Ehrenreich has to say about her slave society. No doubt she will espouse female dominated central planning instead of the male dominated bureaucratic mess we now have.

But since I've heard all the tired old arguments of Marxist economists (no wonder the socialists changed their name — nobody listens to them since England and New York faced bankruptcy taking their advice), as an act of gratuitous kindness, I hereby challenge Ehrenreich, or any members of the New American Movement or the Revolutionary Student Brigade to an infor-

mal debate at 4:00 the same day in the same room on the subject, Resolved: Socialism enslaves women; capitalism liberates them. And I invite any business types or career women to come help out.

If you're as sick as I am of hearing anti-free enterprise myths, you'll be there to help pin the tail on the donkeys... If they don't show, I'll give my scheduled remarks on "Women as Leaders" which socialists never discuss because they don't like leaders — just followers.

Tonie Nathan
President— Association of
Libertarian Feminists

Legitimate needs

Being a person interested in both entertainment and athletics, I read with interest your editorial "Bad news for night life."

You write: "The Cultural Forum argues convincingly the AD isn't interested in entertaining anyone, it's interested in making money." How is it that you can point an accusatory finger at one segment of campus life because they are interested in "making money" and in the next paragraph state: "The Cultural Forum needs to sponsor profitable big name entertainment events in Mac Court as often as possible to pay for the low-cost or free events in the EMU Ballroom and other locations."

You said it yourself — both the Athletic Department and the Cultural Forum need money! Is it possible that both also have legitimate needs such as minor sports and low-cost or free events?

Royce Saltzman
Professor of Music

opinion

Support GTF union

The election for union representatives for graduate teaching fellows (GTFs) has been officially set for April 27th and 28th. In the coming weeks the GTF-Federation will be raising issues of concern to GTFs — the first being wages.

In 1969 our predecessor, the Graduate Student Employee's Association, negotiated a contract with the University and established the wage schedule which we are presently on. Since that time, however, our wages have not kept up with the cost of living. To illustrate the problem, if the salaries of GTF IIs (those who have completed one year of work) were commensurate with the 1969 salaries, they would now be earning \$147 per month more.

The union's goal is to secure a contract with the University which would immediately bring GTF wages into line with the 1969 wages and also establish a cost of living allowance which would tie our wages to future cost of living increases.

Wage concessions will only come if pressure is brought to bear on the University administration and the State Board of Higher Education. Both these bodies are attempting to define the fiscal situation in their own terms. (See "Chipping the U. of O. Budget Down to Size" in the Eugene Register Guard, 3/27/77.) Without an organization to define and defend our interests, the University's game of "selective" and "accidental" cuts is a game with built-in winners and losers. With an organization we have lobbying power in Salem and bargaining power with the University, and need no longer be passive recipients of arbitrary and inflexible austerity budgeting.

Budget cuts are being used as an argument against unionization. If we get a wage increase, it is said, the University will just cut the number of GTFs hired. This is not true. We can negotiate class size as well. Limiting class size will improve the conditions of instruction and the quality of education while also stimulating the demand for more GTFs to teach the added sections. A strong union contract is in the best interest of the GTFs, faculty and students.

In addition to the wage issue, the GTF-Federation affords us an organization through which we can bargain and lobby for benefits and legislation on a wide range of educational and social concerns. The union has already lent its support to legislation designed to expand child care benefits for students. The union also took a strong stand in the past year in favor of nuclear safeguards. These and other issues concerning students at the University of Oregon can be effectively addressed through a strong union.

Democracy has two sides. Vote for yours.

Cora Fisher
Jerry Lembcke
GTF-Federation

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