

opinion

Student votes offer faculty new perspective

Students have gained more influence over University operations since the militant years of the 1960s. Cries for "Student power" and for a "Peoples' university" have since died down and faded into the background.

Because of this lag in public outcry, the University administration is in a comfortable position to decide whether student input should be increased, maintained at its present level or reduced.

OURS

We agree that student activism is not what it once was. Indeed, apathy is a buzz word which accurately generalizes student attitudes on campus. But the administration must realize that this generalization does not include many students who wish to influence their university without using inflammatory tactics.

These interested students have something valuable to offer the University community as a whole. They should not be thought of solely as

advocates for student wishes but as potential providers of fresh approaches.

Faculty members should not reject the concept of these students voting on departmental hiring committees because this input may prove useful. An obstructionist posture on the part of the faculty can only convey an arrogant attitude that puts more distance between students and staff.

Student votes are not a threat to the faculty; they may even unify the campus community if incorporated and maintained fairly. The administration should draw reasonable guidelines for student participation that would allow students influence without dominance.

Personnel procedures provide a good example of where these guidelines should be drawn: The administration and the faculty should dominate hiring and firing procedures, but students should vote on the initial pool of applicants and help faculty members to narrow the field before any final decisions are made. These student votes should not be differentiated from those of faculty members since this differentiation can allow decision-makers to ignore student votes.

Of course, there are many students who would fail to make constructive use of such a vote. But it is highly unlikely that students of minimal concern or capability would apply or be appointed to such a decision-making body.

One question involves how well student representatives could adequately reflect the wishes of the student body. Faculty and department committees are quite different than the ASUO, for instance, in their representative function. Their members should be making decisions based on individual judgements rather than on public mandates from either students or faculty. Student representatives to these committees would be most effective if they also cast their votes in this individual decision-making manner.

We look for a compromise between the winner-take-all philosophy of '60's radicalism and the old-school view of students who study and learn in an environment devoid of all real decision-making. Some students are capable of shedding new light on old problems. Their enthusiasm, good judgement and fresh perspective should be tapped by the faculty and administration much more than they are at the moment.

YOURS

Arrogant view

I found William DiMarco's letter of Oct. 26th, comparing US sponsored dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere with the USSR, particularly ill informed and arrogant. In the last 15 years over 50,000 people have been killed by the government and unofficial "death squads" for leftist political activists in Guatemala, 15,000 killed and another 10,000 imprisoned in Argentina, over a million killed and tens of thousands still in prison in Indonesia. In Uruguay one in 500 people are in prison for their political beliefs.

In contrast, according to Amnesty International there are at most 350 political prisoners in the USSR (this includes those imprisoned for illegally attempting to leave the country and those in forced exile on state

farms). Since 1960 the Soviets have incarcerated people for their political activities at the rate of about 50 a year (the same rate that leftists were incarcerated in the US from 1948 to 1955). Uruguay's rate of jailing people for political activities is thus 1500 times that of the Soviets. At further reports that the Soviets do not practice torture of prisoners, while torture of political prisoners is routine throughout Latin America. At laments that it has adopted no political prisoners in Guatemala because they are all killed. At further reports that 80 percent of all urgent appeals for aid for political prisoners come from the US-client states in Latin America.

In summary, there is no comparison between the qualitatively greater repression used to maintain US-supported dicta-

torships, which allow "freedom" for US corporations to exploit local resources and utilize cheap labor, and the rather mild repression of the countries like the USSR.

During the period of military dictatorships in Latin America the income share going to the rich has increased, while the standard of living of the masses of people has declined. In Brazil in 1960, the richest 5 percent received 44 percent of all income, in 1970: 50 percent. This compares with the poorest 80 percent's 35 percent and 28 percent respectively. Latin American dictatorships are clearly run by and for the local rich and the US corporations that sponsored the coups that overthrew the democratic regimes they followed.

In countries like the USSR (as well as China, Vietnam, and

Cuba) there is far more equality in income and wealth. In the USSR the ratio of income exceeded by the top 10 percent to that exceeded by the top 90 percent is 2.9. This compares to 6.4 for the US. Further, there are no hereditary super-wealthy such as the Rockefellers who are able to guarantee that their children become multi-millionaires.

It is peculiar to call a system democratic in which there is seldom any substantive difference between the two parties, and when there is, people's preferences bear no relationship to policies actually followed; e.g. Johnson was elected on a program of "no surrender" in Vietnam. If we judge how democratic a society is in terms of the effect of state policies on different groups in society, a strong case can be

made that the Soviet (And Chinese, Cuban, Etc.) states are considerably more democratic than capitalistic states (even those with parliamentary forms) because: 1. their income and wealth distributions are considerably more egalitarian; 2. their rates of upward mobility into the top positions of society are considerably greater; 3. their welfare services are far more advanced and humane; and 4. the participation of people in the decision making processes which effect their daily lives is far greater (unions, workplaces, apartment buildings, neighborhoods, towns, etc.).

The rhetoric repeated by DiMarco serves only to help the US state mobilize the American people to once again willingly support Vietnam-style interventions, this time in the Near East and Latin America (both of which are currently powder kegs of popular discontent). These interventions will once again be made in the cause of "freedom" and "democracy" even when popular movements are fought against, and highly repressive military dictatorships, supported only by the wealthy, are defended.

Al Syzmanski
associate professor, sociology

Paint praises

Speaking on behalf of our track men at Oregon and the many fans who support our program, I wish to express praise and thanks to the Interfraternity Council on their project of painting our old east stands at Hayward Field.

Many of the fine things we enjoy in the way of a facility at Hayward Field are a result of University and community involvement. Because it comes from the University and the community and not just the Athletic Department, we can all take pride in this facility and the success of the program. My sincere thanks.

Bill Dellinger
Head Track Coach
Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1979

theirs

