



Graphic by Sioux Anderson

'We care'

Image makers sell University

Editor's note: This is the second article in a series about the University's public image.

By **MIKE LEE**
Of the Emerald

Remember when anti-war protestors blew a hole in the ROTC lawn? How about the time they blockaded 13th Avenue across from Taylor's? Or the sit-ins in Johnson Hall?

Not so many Oregon parents remember, and that suits Jim Buch just fine.

Buch, you see, is the University's admissions director — the doorkeeper to the ivory towers.

"When we don't want to be crass and say we're recruiting, we say we are doing 'pre-admissions counseling,'" Buch says. "It's a euphemism for getting the bodies in."

Before they graduate — and long after, too — those bodies will be caressed by a line of image-makers at the University, from the orientation office's Gregg Lobisser to the alumni association's Vince Bilotta.

That's not to say image is made in a vacuum, or that one image fits all people.

"The image of the institution is the product of all the smaller parts," Buch says. "In trying to paint the image, you are assuming that you can step into the collective minds of all those people looking at us — and that's not possible."

So when Buch sends his recruiters to Portland, or Bend, or San Francisco, they tell different stories about the University. It's easier out of state, by the way, especially on the East Coast.

"We 'sell' the University as quality education in a quality environment," Buch says. "It's a great place to live, and a great place to learn. And it's true."

Tell that to Oregonians. Oregonians who remember the 1960s, and who are reminded of the turbulence by current protests.

"There is still that segment of the population in Oregon who think that everybody at the University of Oregon, if they're not an avowed Communist, certainly are reading Karl Marx every night before they go to bed, and are likely to declare tomorrow for the Red cause," Buch says.

"Fortunately, those stereotypes are dying, however slowly."

Even after their extinction, though, the University will have image problems in Oregon, Buch says. Eugene is simply a big town in a small-town state.

"Our students can get on a bicycle and ride to one of the state's major shopping centers. It can't be done in any other communities," Buch says. "Our size scares a lot of people away."

Not enough that the University suffers for it — enrollments are holding steady in the face of declining numbers of high school students. But the institution mainly draws in-state students from the metropolitan areas, leaving the countryside for agriculturally-based Oregon State University.

Even after students enroll, the University's size causes problems for image-makers. Gregg Lobisser, one of Buch's employees, sees his job in the orientation office as fighting alienation in a 15,000-student institution.

"We lose the greatest percentage of students in the first three weeks of school," Lobisser says. "Many of them before they even go to class."

To keep them here, Lobisser organizes New Student Week, a dazzle of 130 activities for freshmen each fall. With 100 student hosts, dances and spaghetti feeds, as well as registration and advising, Lobisser wants to show students "we care."

"When all of the knowns in your life have suddenly disappeared — when you come to an institution — you want to have something, some

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