

opinion

Furor over editorial requires clarification

Surrounded by the furor caused by Monday's editorial about the Pacific Northwest Resources Center and University Pres. Paul Olum, we'd like to clarify our position.

We did not intend to attack Olum for a decision he has not yet made about whether the PNRC — which is funded by the National Wildlife Foundation — should be moved off campus. What we wanted to stress — and still maintain — is that we

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feel pressure from several timber-oriented businessmen has and is influencing that decision.

In a letter to the State Board of Higher Education June 26, Olum said his "own feeling" is that the disadvantages of an off-campus PNRC are "less significant than the risks inherent in a widespread public belief that the presence of the Center in the law school building does indeed compromise our institutional neutrality and independence."

Now coffee is linked to cancer

Add to the ever-expanding list of cancer causing substances the humble cup of coffee. Perhaps there's a space for coffee somewhere inbetween beer and the all-American hot dog.

The New England Journal of Medicine has recently published a report which links a greater risk of pancreatic cancer to coffee consumption. Think about that when you're on your second cup.

The culprit — rather — professor who started this is Karl H. Pegel, of the University of Natal in South Africa.

And you thought they were just biased toward rugby.

Professor Pegel identified a substance in the coffee bean called atractyligenin. Try telling a waitress to hold the atractyligenin when she asks if you want cream and sugar.

Atractyligenin is described in the Ninth Edition of the Merk as highly toxic, with a strychnine-like action, and present in coffee beans. When you take that first sip the toxic molecules are absorbed instantly into your system disrupting the metabolism of your mitochondria.

Apparently coffee doesn't just wake you up.

The mitochondria are essential to cell respiration — and atractyligenin is not the most congenial of molecules. According to Professor Pegel, the pancreas and its insulin production is thrown for a loop by the introduction of atractyligenin.

Professor Pegel maintains coffee drinkers are administering not altogether lethal, though chronic, doses of poison to their pancreas. He believes pancreatic cancer is the likely result. The good professor is so certain of his findings that he has been urging the Food and Drug Administration and worldwide regulatory agencies to cease the importation of coffee beans.

Can you imagine the catastrophe if coffee beans were banned?

Business hours would have to be moved back to accommodate the people who just-can't-seem-to-get-out-of-bed. The entire time scheme of the economy is hinged on the lowly cup of coffee. There would be no late nights — indeed, morning newspapers (The Emerald included) would become afternoon dailies.

What upheaval hath Professor Pegel wrought?

But rest easy, the controversy has only just begun. The professor's report is being challenged by a group at Yale University. Those professors contend the research was poorly done.

So coffee drinkers — and we are legion — pause with that steaming cup inches from your mouth and patiently wait while the researchers fight it out.

He then said, "I am prepared to propose that after Dec. 31 the Center move to such an off-campus location." Olum added that he would not make a final on-or-off decision about the PNRC without giving law school faculty, students and the administrators an opportunity to "present their own views." He said nothing about what weight those views will be given.

Olum said Wednesday that he is still personally in favor of ousting the PNRC. "Nothing has changed since I wrote that letter."

Olum's stance, we feel, places too much of an emphasis on how the PNRC appears and not on what it does. And we feel this is an over-sensitive reaction to the cries of businessmen that the PNRC is anti-timber.

The main issue, Olum says, is whether the University — by housing the PNRC — is violating the "strict neutrality" policy he places at the top of his priority list. But a University, by nature, cannot always be strictly neutral. What it teaches is not always "strictly neutral." Does the University teach scientific creationism along with evolution

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Principle of fair play

I support the retention of the Pacific Northwest Resources Center as an important component of this Law School's Environmental Law Program. But, I support even more strongly the principle of fair play, and your September 28 edition criticizing President Paul Olum's position on the PNRC violated that principle.

It is simply not true that all criticism of the support our environmental program receives from the National Wildlife Federation emanates from business groups. Some of our alumni, including several staunch supporters of the Law School who are members of our Board of Visitors are among those who believe our arrangement with an outside environmental group is unwise.

We at the Law School are doing everything we can to educate our critics as to the educational value of our environmental program, and the appropriateness of maintaining it in its present form. That task is not made easier by unfair criticism of President Olum who must make, in these difficult times, decisions that will deter-

mine the future of this University.

so it can be "strictly neutral?" No. The PNRC pays its own rent. It is officially separate from the law school. The law school has said it is not picking and choosing according to an environmental bias — it would welcome a business law clinic. Law students use the program and consider it valuable. An on-campus location is convenient.

And, from what Olum has said, moving it off-campus would be for looks only although he claims he is not bowing to timber interests.

"Universities, when they're properly going about their business, are apt to look subversive," former University Pres. William Boyd once said. "Openness and tolerance of a broad range of criticism and deviance goes with being a University."

This is such a case. Rather than buckle in to outside pressure, we urge Olum to decide that it's better for timber businessmen to stay mad — and for the PNRC to stay on campus.

That's what we were saying in Monday's editorial.

Derrick Bell
Dean, Law School

Don the Everlasts

Paul Olum's letter in the Wednesday edition of The Emerald was well over the emphatically stated limit of 250 words. How does he rate? Who does he know? Any special interest groups out there?

I don't know how righteous Mr. Olum is, but his letter read suspiciously like a diary entry of someone who knows their snitchy kid sister sneaks a peak. His letter was great — it said all the right things. But, again, I don't know how pure his heart is.

Face it. Head administrators, top people, big business, lots of money and power — all are active ingredients in things done behind closed doors. Echelons where many of us do not frequent. That's the way the world works. And I don't see anything wrong with it, as long as it's acknowledged by the players. So hang up the goody two-shoes, don the Everlasts, and come out boxing.

That's it, all in 154 words.

Barry Northrop

THEIRS

