

## Meddling muddies affirmative action plan

The muddiness of the University's affirmative action policy became apparent at Pres. Paul Olum's press conference Thursday, when he advocated letting each "unit" — school or department — devise a policy separate from the that of the University. Olum's remarks were in reference to the recent case of FBI recruiting being deferred by the University law school because of alleged discrimination in hiring.

But more than muddiness — letting the University's affirmative action policy be tampered with by all the departments and schools weakens the aim of affirmative action and promotes chaos. Olum should be advocating one and only one affirmative action policy for the entire University.

The paragraph in the affirmative action statement most frequently subject to attack prohibits discriminatory hiring practices based on race, sex, religion, handicap, national origin or extraneous considerations not directly related to effective job performance. The "extraneous considerations" clause is the main point of contention.

It was the "extraneous considerations" clause that turned away the FBI recruiter from the law school. That would make it seem a powerful tool to prevent discrimination. Although, Career Planning and Placement abides by the University's affirmative action policy in all areas except the "extraneous considerations" clause.

The complaint against the "extraneous consideration" clause is that it is anything but explicit. But, point in fact, that lack of explicitness is the "extraneous considerations" clause greatest strength.

The ambiguity of the clause is reminiscent of

the ambiguity of certain Constitutional amendments. The ambiguity of the "extraneous consideration" clauses permits a similar scope of interpretation to a broader range of incidents.

The discriminatory circumstances the clause addresses need not be explicitly outlined in the entire affirmative action policy. To do so limits the policy to a narrow application, making it almost self-defeating.

An example of the effectiveness of the ambiguity is if an applicant for employment is discriminated against because of past political views. These political views can be as simple as being a democrat, or as complex as having been a member of the communist party.

The clause can also protect discrimination

against an overweight applicant. That sounds facetious, but it is a valid consideration.

The "extra considerations" clause has been interpreted to protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. That may be so — but it also protects against discrimination because of past drug abuse, a prior criminal record, a temporary psychological dysfunction, and any past medical treatment.

There has to be an affirmative action policy for the entire University, and it must be adhered to by all the schools and departments. To permit each "unit" to make its own policy, as Olum said he favors, muddies affirmative action, producing chaos and discrimination in hiring.

## letters

### Foreign students

I'd like to correct a bit of misinformation in the article on foreign students (Nov. 5). I was quoted as saying, "Our goal is to prepare students for life after college." That sounds as if the American English Institute is in the business of career placement, marriage counseling, or family planning.

What I said to the reporter was that the institute is concerned not only with helping students to gain admission to this or other American universities, but with preparing them to succeed in college once they're admitted. We offer intensive classes in writing, grammar, reading, oralaural skills, as well as American Culture and preparation for the TOEFL (Tests of English as a Foreign Language).

While my grandmother will be delighted with the photograph of me, it would have been more appropriate and informative to feature the students who were being discussed.

Iris Esau Moyo  
Director, AEI

### Dichotomous critics

Evidently a trend towards dichotomous criticism is emerging once again on campus — the Greeks vs. the GDI's. In the four years that I've attended the University, the antagonism which pervades these two groups shines forth once again. Please... let me offer a different perspective concerning student life.

The issue at hand here is not of an ethical nature — which group can morally degrade the other to a point of indignation? Rather what should be remembered is that each one of us are unique individuals — we each have the capacity to make our own decisions on what type of living environment best suits our individual needs, not someone else's needs. Granted, some individuals may not have enough experience to make prudent decisions on conducive living styles, nevertheless once the decision is made, future experiences will verify the intelligence of that decision. If the choice turns out to be a bad one, a resolution is always the next step. No one should be condemned on how they choose to live!

The Greeks seem to be the most susceptible to stereotypes not because of their esoteric behavior, but rather because of a profound naivety among the students who fallaciously comment on something they do not understand nor care to comprehend. Instead of criticizing the group being stereotyped, why not criticize the one forming the stereotypes, namely the biased



person (you know, the one who is unsettled about his or her own identity). Better yet, don't stereotype at all!

Oh yes, to meet the curiosities of some, I am a GDI, but should this make a difference??

Darius Mrkoncic  
Senior, psychology/business management

It is possible to write about an organization or religion without advertising for it. In the future, try for a more balanced, less opinionated approach.

Merri Horine  
Political science/psychology

### Opinionated

Last year, the Emerald was beset by criticisms stemming from misquoting. This year the Emerald seems to have developed a larger problem: bias in reporting. These two examples, the article on Greeks and the one on cults, whether through naivete or conscious effort, clearly show onesidedness and lack of objectivity. Rather than misquoting, it seems the reporters preferred to use as few sources as possible.

The Greek article totally excluded those of us who do have valid criticisms of these. These are not the stereotypes in the article, but are often criticisms conceded by the organizations themselves. They include the over-emphasis on high alcohol consumption, rampant graffiti, high midweek noise levels and an anti-dependent (non-Greek) attitude. The pro-Greek bias of the article only serves to aggravate the stereotypes.

The cult article read more like an all-out push for Christianity. The article both warms students about their susceptibility to cults and invites them to study Christianity with an "open heart." It seems to say the only answer to the problem is through Christianity and no other religion (such as Judaism). It casts all "Eastern" thought as dangerous, making no distinction between Eastern religions themselves, which often predate Western ones. It urges us to take the position that the Bible was inspired in its entirety by God, making no mention of the fact that many parts were plagiarized from earlier works (such as the Gilgamesh epic) and that it has been translated from a long dead language by modern, human translators (one early translator gave Moses horns when he misread an accent mark). The loose interpretation of the word cult itself could lead us to believe that Masons, Mormons, Psychology and even fraternities are cults. Cults are a problem in our society, but this article falls due to very Christian bias.

### Auto fumes

Bicycling up to work at LCC, and choking on the car exhaust, we realized we have been poisoned by the fumes all our lives. What a horrible thought!

And some drivers have no respect for cyclists, either. Often on roads without bike lanes we are honked at and told to get out of the way. We won't get out of the way. We have the right to use the streets equally and safely with cars. I just wish fewer people would use cars; at times this valley is as smoggy as Los Angeles.

Come to think of it, why do we still tolerate the auto-culture? The misery of the assembly-line factories, the non-human pace and stress of driving, ugly free-ways imposed on nature, traffic deaths — not to mention the poisonous pollution. Wake up drivers; get a bike or walk.

Suzy Downs  
John Zergan  
Eugene

### letters policy

The Emerald will accept and attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on issues, ideas and topics of interest to the University community.

The letters **must** be limited to 250 words, signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to The Emerald offices, EMU 300.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content. Publication is dependent upon the space available.