

Guest opinion: Pres. Paul Olum

Letter to students,

Judging by information I am receiving, many of you are worried and confused by the reports in the news media concerning Oregon's economy and its effect on the future of the University. The announcement by Gov. Atiyeh of a \$248.5 million shortfall in state revenue and his call for state agencies to prepare budget reduction plans of up to 20 percent has led to many statements of "worst case" possibilities by state officials. This has led in turn to misunderstanding as people think these "worst cases" — such as an 80 percent tuition increase to cover all of higher education's deficit — are actually being proposed. They are not. They are being discussed to help decision makers understand the gravity of the situation they face.

In this letter, let me try briefly to share with you several key points that I think you need to understand as you continue planning your education. I hope it will clarify the rumors and misconceptions.

First, the University will not be closing academic programs during this current 1981-82 academic year. That is virtually impossible to do, and would be very unfair to students. We will be making every effort to preserve all of the academic programs at the University, many of which are rated in the top ten in their field in the country, for future years, as well. Second, I think I should comment on why you may be hearing more about the University's budget woes than about the fiscal situations at the other schools in the state system, other than the obvious fact that you are here on this campus. The University has a long tradition of openness in discussing important issues. We have assembly meetings, student convocations, classified staff convocations, and so on. In addition, Eugene is an active media town, and University news is reported in considerable detail. The fact is that the schools in the state system are all facing the same very serious budget crises.

Third, public colleges and universities across the country are facing similar problems created by the recession. Washington, Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio are among the states that have been or are being faced with major shortfalls in state revenue. To date, no state that we are aware of has gutted its public higher education system; instead, solutions have been found to balance some budget cutting with new sources of revenue. Washington, for example, just increased tax revenue through the existing tax structure. Responsible legislators in Oregon can be expected to work to insure that the state's colleges and universities are not crippled beyond repair, but these legislators need support for that position.

Fourth, numerous proposals for new revenue sources are already being proposed by Oregon legislators and by editorial writers for the state's daily newspapers. These suggestions include adjustments in personal and corporate income taxes, a sales tax and an income tax surcharge. Others are suggesting that the property tax relief and basic school support programs should share in the budget reductions. The University has no position on which of these or other methods should be adopted to raise the necessary revenues. The fact that such proposals are already being given serious consideration, however, gives me hope that in Oregon, as in other states, the legislature will not ruin the higher education system.

Finally, you need to know that you and your parents can play a vitally important role in helping legislators from your districts understand the University's plight and the need for new revenue during this recessionary period. If you need to know the name, address and telephone number of your legislators, you can call the Office of Public Services, 686-5555, or the ASUO, 686-3724. A packet of information is being mailed to parents of students from Oregon, along with a letter from me. Thus, you will have information at hand over the holidays for use in visiting with your legislators. The ASUO has also prepared information packets which are available in EMU Suite 4.

In conclusion, I know you are concerned. So am I. I have no special crystal ball, so I cannot predict the future perfectly. Still, I urge you not to be dispirited. Be of good faith and "hang in there" with us through the special session of the Legislature in January. The people of Oregon and their elected officials have a long tradition of protecting the quality of life in this state, including educational opportunity. The strength of the University is important also to the economic health of Eugene and Lane County, and it is widely recognized that the possibilities of economic diversification for Oregon's economy are crucially dependent on the excellence of the universities of the state. Nothing is certain, of course, but I am confident that the Legislature will act in such a way as to preserve those academic programs which are so important to our students.



SURELY, SAYS I, NOT THE JAMES WATT, FOLK-HERO AND FAMOUS WILDERNESS RAPIST! THAT'S ME, SAYS HE. AND I SAYS, NOT THE RENOWNED DESPOILER OF OUR PRECIOUS NATIONAL HERITAGE! RIGHT, SAYS HE. SO I ATE HIM.

letters

Yellow ribbon

Oct. 16, two members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade were convicted in Eugene of first degree felony arson. Their action was a protest burning of a yellow ribbon during the "homecoming" of Victor Tomseth to the University, in the EMU Ballroom.

With the sentence hearing today, it would seem wise to stop and reflect upon the trial of John Kaiser and Nancy Whitley.

Occasionally, our judicial system goes overboard in zealotry. Have these two

been convicted for their politics, or for burning in protest a worthless object?

Clearly the prosecution attempted to paint Kaiser and Whitley not as the activists they are, but rather as dangerous "terrorists." Clearly this should lead one to remember back to a time when another pair, Sacco and Vanzetti, were also convicted for their beliefs, instead of a crime.

The possibility of a term of 20 years and \$2,500 seems excessive in a land which professes to stand for liberty and freedom of expression. In 1776, many people gladly accepted a price

upon their heads, choosing death if they could not have the political freedom for which they fought.

Kaiser and Whitley may yet spend some time in jail for their point of view, and some day "force of law" may come to bear against those who call themselves Social Democrats, but we must keep in mind that ideas die hard.

As Nicola Sacco said, "It is true, indeed, that they can execute the body, but they cannot execute the idea which is bound to live."

Dick Schoonover

jeff dickerson

editor's note

It's that time of year again.

Santa is on every corner, you're heading home for the holidays and the "spirit of Christmas" is everywhere you look.

Or is it? Doesn't Christmas seem different to you this year? Aren't you about ready to punch the next person who tells you we celebrate Christmas because of the love God the father demonstrated in sending his son Jesus to the Earth?

The older you get the more you become aware of the plights of others. It's hard to have that old Christmas spirit when so many people are so unfortunate.

"I'm sorry," you say, "but there's just too much pain in the world for a benevolent and just God to exist. So, away with this silly religion."

"Ow, that hurt."

Two young twins were still feeling the pain from the spanking they had received.

"It still hurts a little, but the pain is going away," said one boy, drying his tears. "I hope I never do that again," he said, thinking back to what had caused his father to punish him.

"Oh, what did we do, anyhow?" asked his brother. "We can't do anything without getting in trouble. How can he love us? He doesn't let us do anything we want to do!"

Two days later, the boys' father told them he had done something really special for them — he had taken all the money he had set aside for their future and begun a trust fund for their college educations. He said it was something that would pay off for them in the long run and reap benefits they couldn't

imagine now.

One boy, already upset over the punishment he'd received, complained, "But I was hoping you'd spend that money on a train set for me."

"A train won't last," replied his father. "I don't care — I want a train instead . . ."

As the boys grew toward adulthood, one had a loving relationship with his father. "Why are you so happy," asked his college roommate, "when you didn't get the extra money you wanted from your father?"

"My father has control over his finances," he replied. "Sometimes I don't understand why my father gives me some things and not others. But that's OK. He's my father, and he has better knowledge about his money than I. I'll trust that he knows what he's doing."

The other boy left home as soon as he could and didn't answer letters or phone calls from his father. He took the old train set and all the other things he received from his father and hawked them for what he could get from the outside world. Now he was poor, destitute of food and feeling sorry for himself.

"Go ask your father for some money," offered a friend.

The young man looked at his friend, thought for a moment about the times he had been punished by his father when he felt like he didn't deserve it and all the times his father had refused to give him what he wanted, and then answered:

"I don't have a father."

Friday, December 11, 1981