

opinion

Plan or statement?

"The Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Oregon, 1983-87," or at least its draft, does not outline strategies for meeting the problems higher education now faces.

The drafters should be commended for their succinct statement of the value of higher education in Oregon. The State Board of Higher Education's adopted plan, or at least this draft, should succeed as a public relations tool for the state system.

But, the "Strategic Plan" is not a four-year plan at all.

The board needs to make some tough decisions about increasing overall revenue, lobbying for more state and federal funding and setting specific criteria for allocating funds.

Such oblique suggestions as: "... Each institution should strengthen its office of institutional planning to ensure that the institution is operating as efficiently as possible and is keeping abreast of changes in state and federal policies affecting higher education" skirts the issue of how these eight institutions are going to be able to do this. It begs the question, "aren't they doing this already?"

The draft does a good job of tipping its hat at the problems now facing the state system schools: the general fund falling nearly 10 percent in the last 10 years, the inadequacies of the full-time equivalency funding system, the lack of money for building maintenance and the lack of coordination between community colleges and the state system.

To meet these problems the state system is going to have offer more specific suggestions than: "The State System should seek from the Legislature the resources needed to provide a good quality general education program in all the undergraduate institutions of the System."

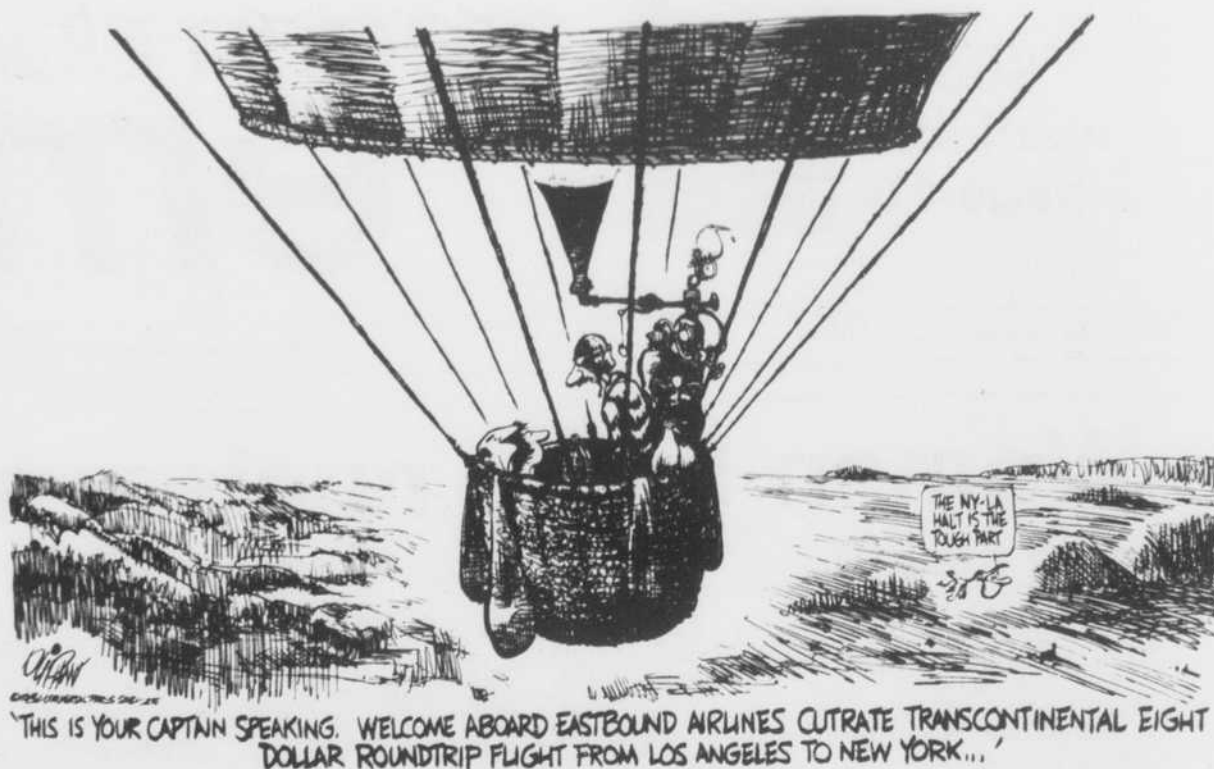
What the state system really needs is either a scheme for boosting the funding of all the institutions, the University in particular, or a real "plan" on what to do if funding isn't there.

The state colleges and universities need some solid ideas to meet the scenario the state system has been good enough to supply the public.

For example: A strategy would say how the system will seek funds to increase library acquisitions and change-over to a computerized library.

The Chancellor's office has not submitted a course of action for higher education. In their own words, "Strategic planning... is more a matter of perspective than planning technique."

The staff of the state system has submitted their perspective on higher education and received little disagreement. Now we await their long-range strategies.



frank shaw

Class boredom

There's no such thing as boring classes — ? only boring teachers.

I've yawned through classes with the best of them, mastered the fine art of sleeping with my eyes open, read the graffiti ingrained on my desk, all the while blaming my boredom on the class material.

Let's face it; the person who gets the coffee rights to some of these classes is going to be very rich.

Is that the way it has to be?

On the first day of class this term one of my professors admitted the course material would be boring at times, and announced he would be handing out door prizes to start off each lecture.

True to his word, the next class began with prizes of books, posters and slugs of type.

It was refreshing to hear a professor admit the material was not inherently interesting. He was willing to do a little extra work to make it more appealing — ? and therefore informative — ? to students.

The door prizes gave me a whole new perspective on boring classes. Up until then I had accepted boring classes as part of education, something like death and taxes — pretty much unavoidable.

But then I started thinking of some other boring classes I've had. They were so tedious because the teachers didn't seem to care whether the students were interested.

They seemed to be convinced that education has to be boring.

They remind me of my mom. When I was a kid she was convinced the worse a medicine tasted the better it would be for me. If it tasted good, it wouldn't work.

Some professors must think the same way. If a student has fun in a class, they're not really learning.

Now I'm not suggesting teachers have a duty to keep students entertained. After all,

not everyone is a stand-up comedian, and not every class is suited to a Johnny Carson monologue.

But if professors can't summon up enough interest to make the class at least marginally interesting, perhaps they shouldn't be teaching it.

The basic goal of any class is to get students to learn something, and learning requires cooperation with students.

The best professors I've had have encouraged class discussion and participation and were open to ideas and suggestions from students.

Of course you can't teach an economics class in 150 Geology using class discussion, but is there a rule that says students can't ask questions, or present ideas, or professors can't use something more stimulating than WWII maps for visual aides?

I have a suggestion for professors who want to test their interest vs. boredom quotient. Tape record your lectures, play them from the back of 150 geology, 180 PLC, or 241 Gilbert keeping in mind the whole time the stimulating decor of the room and the fascinating graph you etched out of crayon about the supply and demand of widgets.

See how long you can stay awake. Believe it or not, it's impossible to sleep and learn at the same time.

Now, where's my cup of coffee?

letters

Causes

Michael Cross' article concerning capital punishment was well supported. However, if Michael had ever studied discrimination in our society, he would quickly realize that Blacks far outnumber other groups on death row. Blacks and other minorities confronting the adversary system cannot afford to pay successful lawyers like F. Lee Bailey. Therefore, they are supported by recent law school graduates just learning the ropes.

For example, Hurricane Carter was charged for murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. Under Atiyeh's proposed legislation Hurricane deserved to be executed. As Michael Cross points out, "Let's stop freeing murderers and instead give

them the punishment they deserve." Hurricane Carter was released after spending 10 years in prison after evidence proved he was not involved with the murder.

In American society, the murder rates remain the same whether or not there is a death penalty. The best deterrent of murder would be an end to discrimination, unemployment and the availability to purchase guns.

Europe has a low murder rate and no capital punishment. The English police carry no guns.

I believe the cause of crime must be thoroughly examined before we make a hasty decision regarding capital punishment. Why do people murder? Will the fear of death deter the motive to kill? Every increase in the percentage of people unemployed in our nation

leads to a corresponding increase of murder. What's Ronald doing to our society anyway?

Drew O'Rourke
senior, sociology

Burning

Instead of cutting faculty and course, the University should cut its heating expenditures. It could start by lowering the temperature in the International Lounge.

Specifically, the thermometer in the Lounge registers in at a sizzling 82 degrees (with the windows open). This situation, besides being economically unfeasible, is in no way conducive to studying (the primary utilization of the lounge). Let's quit getting burned and lower the thermostat 14 degrees.

Randy Pool

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