

opinion

OSPIRG's funding measured, supported

Student groups ideally organize and employ students in a professional manner and work toward educating and changing society and the University for the better.

This has been the successful mission of the Oregon Student Public Interest Group in the past and could be in the future.

Students should vote yes on Ballot Measure No. 2 to increase funding for the OSPIRG for the 1983-84 year. The measure would increase student fees by \$1 per student per term to raise more than \$39,000 for OSPIRG.

However, the Emerald believes that like all student fee-funded groups on campus, OSPIRG should have to justify their fee collection each year. For this reason students should vote No on measure No. 3, an ASUO constitutional amendment to put OSPIRG's funding to a referendum test every two years.

Throughout the 1970s, OSPIRG was an important and well-funded group on campus. Using \$1 per term from nearly every student in the state, they were an organized and influential action group, researching such consumer and political matters as renter's rights, the bottle bill, and the cost of pay telephone calls.

Then the group, through poor management and lack of motivation, lost contact with the students, the issues, and in short, lost enthusiasm. They have been cut for the last three years by the IFC to the current budget of approximately \$9,400.

This year's University OSPIRG reactivated student interest in consumer issues. It has published studies on banking, bike repair, optometrists, and second-hand clothing stores in the Eugene area, along with operating a consumer hotline.

A campus visit by Ralph Nader, the man who invented the notion of PIRGs, helped increase the public's interest in OSPIRG.

To change their image and re-enthuse the University, OSPIRG has actively campaigned to inform students on their purpose. They acquired the signatures of 3,250 students and 120 faculty members who supported their cause.

OSPIRG now has a group of 40 participating students and more than 400 volunteers "on cards" who are willing to work in some capacity for them.

They are now working on a Consumer Utility Board, to provide citizen input in utility rate-hike decisions, and a "lemon law" to protect consumers who buy new cars that don't work.

OSPIRG needs a show of support at the general election to finance their reinvigorated staff.

Decisions on the research projects for next year will be made in May, but they are considering such topics as a consumer survey on Eugene childcare facilities, transportation of toxic waste in the state, and toxic chemicals found in art supplies in all branches of education.

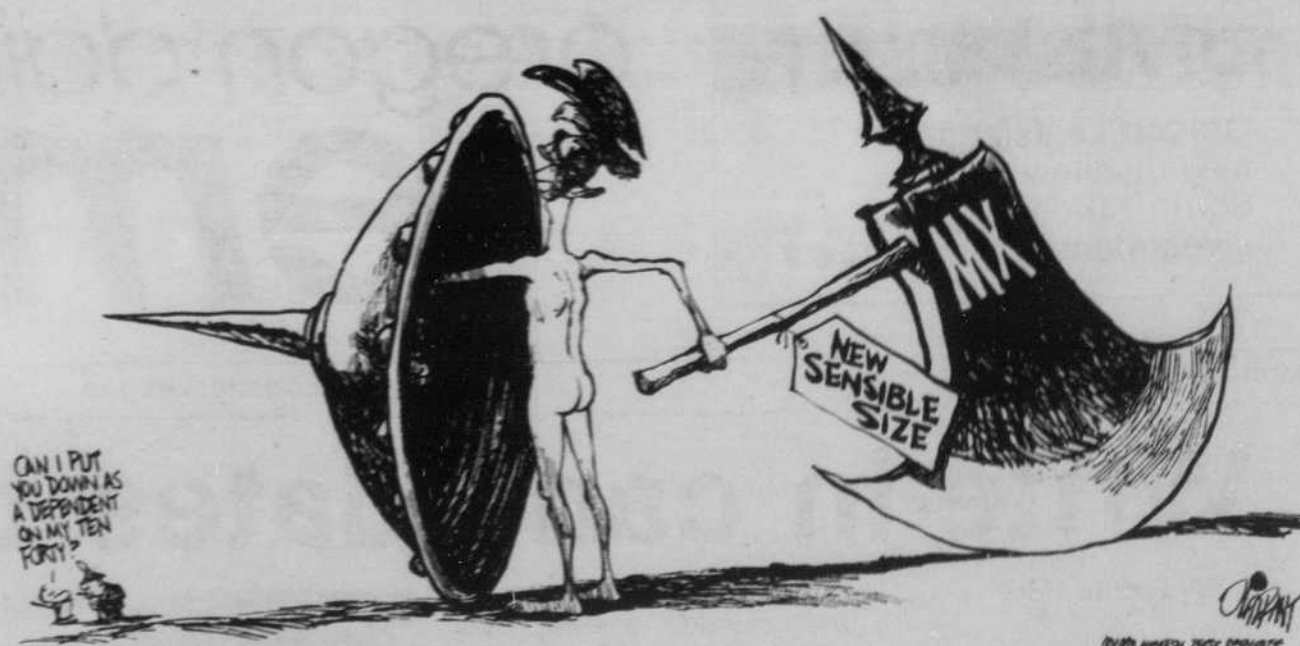
OSPIRG is an avowedly political group. Students need to understand that voting yes on Ballot Measure No. 2 is voting for a \$1 per term addition to their incidental fee to support a group based on a philosophy of consumer advocacy through research and political activism.

The issues taken up by OSPIRG, while student researched and organized, are not strictly "student" issues — they assume the student is a citizen as well as a student.

Should the University student body pass Ballot Measure No. 2, much of the money would go to OSPIRG's general fund, which includes money from Portland State University and Willamette University, the other two state members of OSPIRG.

The make-up of OSPIRG's state board is based on the amount of funding contributed to the state group. If the measure passes, half of the board would be University representatives. With the increased money OSPIRG would appoint a professional director for the state group, among other expenditures.

Voting for Ballot Measure No. 2 is risking \$3 of your fee next year toward making OSPIRG a viable public interest organization — as it once was.



letters

SUAB response

I must respond to the misguided statements of Sherri Schultz in her letter of April 12. She writes that there are "ineffectual student representatives" in the ASUO and cites the Semester Conversion vote of which the Student University Affairs Board (SUAB) was a part of.

First, SUAB is the representative body composed of 18 members elected within Academic Constituencies. Part of the SUAB's responsibility is debating and voting in the University Senate and General Assembly. To debate more effectively, SUAB members survey classes and students within their departments.

They also survey students in the EMU main lobby at the Information and Grievance Center (IGC). Students who haven't been reached by these surveys and want to voice their opinions on matters as important as Semester conversion, may contact their SUAB representative during posted office hours in their department, the IGC, or in Suite 3 EMU.

In the Semester Conversion vote, SUAB members did research how much support or disapproval there was to the proposal.

The only department and school that showed overwhelming opposition to the semester conversion was in the department I represent: Architecture & Allied Arts. Other departments were either in favor of the proposal or opposed it with just a small majority. Not students from all departments whose overwhelming opposition to semesters as you asserted. I voted according to my department's stand as did every other SUAB member. We as SUAB members voiced the options the opinions of the student

during the debate in the University Senate and Assembly along the lines our research showed we should.

The semester conversion proposal came before the faculty and students in the proper manner, just as it has before, most recently two years ago when it was narrowly defeated.

One further note, the actual calendar year of the semester can still be changed before or after it begins in the fall of 1985. During the ASUO general election on April 20 and 21, three questions on the semester system go before the entire student body for a vote. These votes will be for the informational use of the SUAB and the administration in helping to determine what systems students feel benefits their education most. The vote will show the support a traditional or early semester system has vs. the current quarter system. Other important issues and candidate races will be on the ballots as well. Also, if you ever have any questions or complaints concerning the structure, or actions of the ASUO, SUAB, or IFC please ask your representative before you make misinformed judgments.

Michael Prothe
junior, architecture

Candidate reply

As a candidate for the Incidental Fee Committee, I would be more than happy to respond to the letter printed in the April 15 Emerald. In the letter, Raube wanted to know what the organization is which I "allude" to in my campaign material. Well, let me apologize if the mysterious element of my campaign has captured the curiosity of the masses — I didn't mean to keep anyone in the dark.

The organization which I founded in 1981, of which I am

now president and manager of a \$40,000 budget, is an international Star Trek fan club devoted to the promotion of the future and the human element that will make the future possible for everyone, regardless of their ethnic origin, religious persuasion or other extraneous characteristics.

I am also very proud to be the president of this organization because of the 3000 members that we have from around the world. We have members throughout Europe, Canada, the United States and Mexico.

In closing, I would like to say that my experience as president of this organization gives me the unique qualities that make my candidacy different from those of my colleagues running for IFC. I am the only independent candidate for IFC.

Eric Stillwell
sophomore, political science

Gay rights

It's often been said that liberals are for freedom of speech — just so long as you agree with them. A case in point was the press conference held Thursday morning by the Young Americans for Freedom, to criticize the "gay rights" bill currently before the Oregon Senate. This proposal would essentially require "affirmative action" quotas for homosexuals, and would even apply to private Christian schools. About 10 lesbians showed up at this conference, where they proceeded to sit down, disrupt and otherwise harass the speakers. I think these individuals need to learn something about allowing other people to speak, even they may not agree with what they have to say.

Thomas Karter
freshman, history

letters policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor 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 office. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

"Your turn" is an Emerald opinion feature submitted by members of the University community. "Your turns" must be limited to 500 words and typed. This editorial column will not be edited by the staff, but selection will be based on appropriateness.

Letters to the editor and "Your turns" should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300 EMU.

Unsigned editorials appearing in the Emerald are based upon the majority opinion of the editorial board.

oregon daily emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations, by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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