

your turn

ROTC sets precedent

The students of this university are to be congratulated: The debate they sponsored and the questions they asked on ROTC this Monday evening were of such quality as to make the faculty's contributions at the University Assembly look lame indeed. There are still, however, a few aspects of the Olum administration's argument which remain unexamined.

Of the three elements of the Ryan motion, the administration proposes to take care of one (the awarding of scholarships which discriminate against gays) by insisting that it is the Department of Defense which awards the scholarships and not the University. It proposes to take care of the non-admission of gays to ROTC's upper-division program described in the University Catalog by rewriting the catalog. But the justification for appointing faculty on the basis of sexual preference seems consistently to tax even Olum's logic.

There is little question of the facts. Military science professors must be officers of the U.S. Army, and gays are not permitted to be members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Quite obviously gays cannot be professors of military science, and appointments to that department violate University policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual preference.

Now there are two parts to the administration's path around this contradiction. First, Olum argues that appointments to the military science department are "courtesy appointments" not supported by University funds but by an outside agency. Secondly, Olum asserts that it is not the function of the University to impose its values (read "rules on no discrimination") on any outside body. Since we cannot "impose our values" on the U.S. Army, the University must accept discrimination against gay people in the appointment of faculty to the military science department.

It is clear enough that ap-

pointments to the military science department are anything but the usual "courtesy appointments." Here, after all, is an entire department composed of professors on "courtesy appointments" offered in a blatantly discriminatory manner.

Most troubling is the precedent implied by the second part of Olum's argument: If an outside agency is invited to establish and fund a department or program on our campus, we cannot enforce University non-discrimination guidelines on that agency. We can, of course, insist that it abide by federal and state laws on equal opportunity. But in cases (such as discrimination against gays) where University policy goes beyond those laws, this administration does not intend to see that University guidelines are enforced.

Let us consider where such a policy might lead. Suppose a Middle Eastern nation offered to establish and fund a Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University, but that it would pre-screen candidates for faculty positions to ensure that only anti-Zionists were appointed. That would involve no racial or religious discrimination — only a distinction on the basis of political orientation. Would the administration welcome such a department?

Suppose someone wished to make an additional grant to support the Center for the Sociological Study of Women on the condition that applicants be pre-screened to ensure that only lesbians would be appointed. Would that situation differ at all from the present situation in the military science department?

In much of the rhetoric in defense of ROTC, the argument is made that we must avoid any return to the terrible errors of the 1960s. That is what Olum is really talking about when he condemns using the University as a "vehicle" to change society. But the present administration policy not only reverses the 1960s, it threatens to reverse much of the 1950s' struggle over "loyalty oaths" as well.

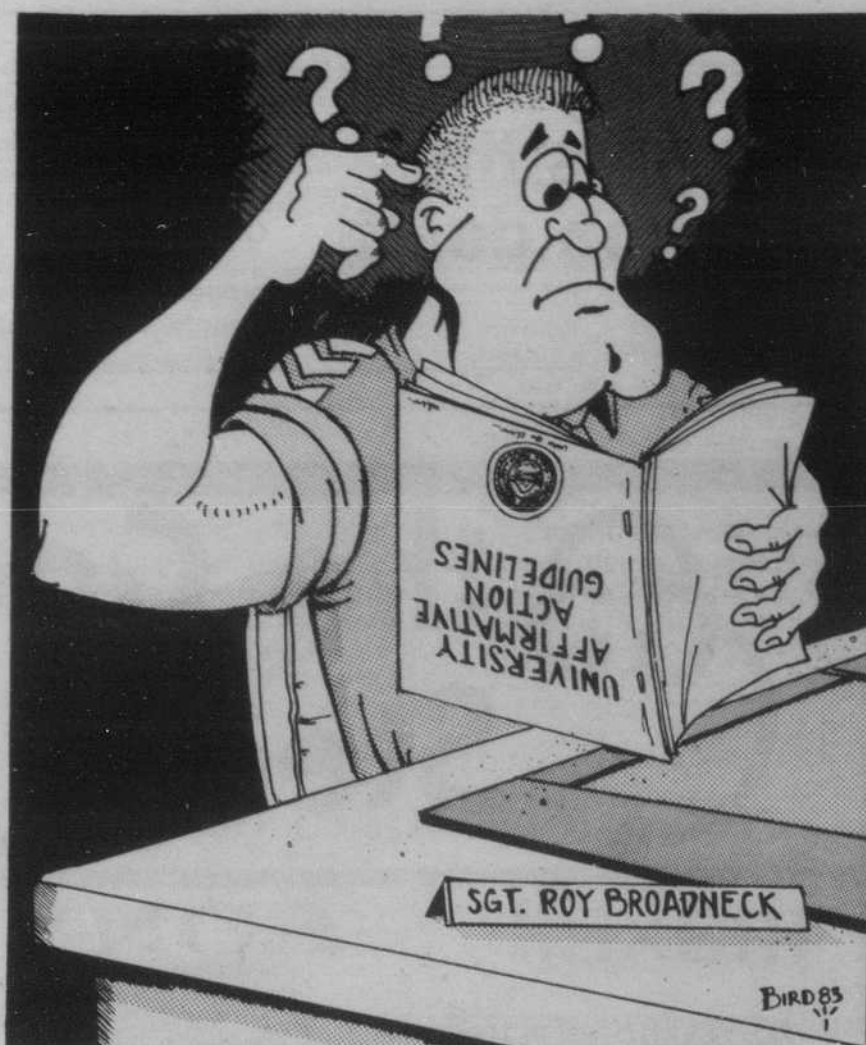
The fundamental question of the 1950s was whether or not universities should run their own affairs according to their own rules.

The Olum administration instead of defending University policy against subversion from the outside, declares unequivocally that if you are an outside agency which established a program on this campus, staffing it with professors on "courtesy appointments," it will not require that you abide by University rules.

What other University policies the present administration will be willing to ignore in such a case remains unclear. But the precedent of the ROTC case leaves little room for optimism.

Joseph Esherick

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letters

Frustration

I have been following the discussion of the ROTC — gay/lesbian rights issue with a growing sense of frustration. From the bigotry of the religious right to the irrelevancies of the gay/lesbian rights supporters, many people seem to have missed the point of the Assembly debate and vote.

Now Mary Hope in her May 23 letter launches a scurrilous ad hominem attack on Paul Olum and Derrick Bell which cannot go unanswered. Both Olum and Bell have been staunch defenders of human rights and in a career of selfless, dedicated service, no member of the University community has done more than Dean Bell to advance the cause of oppressed people.

The issue before the campus is a straightforward example of antinomy, a situation in which two goods are in conflict. One is the immediate, palpable good of maintaining the support and good will of citizens and legislators of Oregon for the University. The other is the abstract

good of upholding individual rights. The argument of Bell and others is that the latter is abstract because no injured party has come forward to press her/his case, and that in the absence of such a person the immediate, palpable good should take precedence. The overwhelming majority of those voting at the Assembly apparently agreed.

At the risk of seeming to suggest tactics, where is the gay/lesbian person whose rights have been denied by ROTC on this campus? Until such a person comes forward, the gay/lesbian rights group is in the difficult position of supporting an abstraction against the real need of the University for public support.

Dean Bell has done a fine job of pointing this out. To make a personal attack on him for doing so not only misses the point but, more important, is unjustified. I urge Hope and others who share her viewpoint to stick to the issues in this important matter.

Michael Hibbard
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No scholarship

I witnessed the debate Monday between Pres. Olum, Lt. Col. Wolfgram, Prof. Cheyney Ryan, and Barbara Ryan. I was concerned that one aspect of the situation concerning ROTC students was misrepresented. I believe that there is an impression that the bulk of ROTC students are on scholarship. That just isn't so.

The bulk of ROTC students are just like me. We don't have scholarships. We participate in ROTC for a variety of reasons which range from a desire to earn a commission to finances. If ROTC were terminated I would not have the luxury of a scholarship student. I cannot take my benefits to another university with an ROTC program. I chose the University for several reasons — one is the quality of education, another is that I can afford to go here, and a third is it's close to home. If ROTC were terminated, I would not be able to earn a commission because my situation will not allow me to just pack my bags and attend another college.

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