

opinion

Library Project '83: students do care

Library Project '83 shows that all students are not created apathetic. Some students have been keenly aware of the financial travails of the University and have done something about it. Too many people believe the state's economic ills are on the verge of recovery — yet, the University's financial condition, even with doctoring by concerned students, remains in critical condition.

Economic optimists are heralding small signs in timber and employment figures as billboards advertising the long awaited turnaround of the state's financial condition. Economic pessimists are more reserved — waiting for evidence that has more than the one side of a sign.

If the state's economy is "turning around" probably the last to see the benefits will be the University's library. In the three years that the Legislature has been forced by revenue shortfalls to meet in special session the library's budget, through increasingly lower higher education funds, has been underfunded or at best in a holding pattern.

It doesn't take a cynical eye to see that any substantial increase in funding to the library will be years in coming. Not that the financial problems of the library aren't invisible. Students, the library's primary users, seem to be constantly irritated by the library's lack of specific research materials, its antiquated collection and its lack of space. Visitors may be charmed by the outside architecture of the library, its ornate interior and its specialized collections. They would not be able to discern that the teeth of this educational tool have been dulled and are badly in need of sharpening.

Private benefactors have often come to the aid of the library — railroad magnate Henry Villard and former University track and field coach Bill Bowerman to name a few. Benefactors are appreciated, though cannot be relied on to shoulder the support of the library. But it's rare when students stop groaning about the library and set about improving the facilities.

The Library Project, a senior class fundraising project, has been such a benefactor to the library. Matt Schermerhorn, and members of the Student University Relations Council, are to be commended for their fundraising efforts on behalf of the library.

Only last year the University's library ranked 84th out of 101 research libraries according to figures released in the "Chronicle of Higher Education. At the time Don Smith, assistant University librarian for budget and planning, said: "That's not good." No, that's not good. That's why the efforts of Schermerhorn's group is so important.

Legislators only see the library as an item on the University's share of higher education's overall budget. They don't see the research materials that the trickle down of funding buys. Nobody sees the research materials the funding isn't sufficient enough to buy.

The students in the Library Project do though. They have seen library costs for books and supplies increase by 350 percent since 1968. But there's more. The costs for maintaining the library's periodical collection increases nearly every year. And the facility is badly in need of expansion.

The Library Project have asked every senior to donate \$15 for three years, beginning a year after their graduation. Three percent of the University's 1983 graduates pledged to donate \$45. That amounts to nearly \$4,500 — not enough to revamp the collection. Still, it's funds the library wouldn't have had otherwise.

Schermerhorn wanted every member of the '83 senior class to have pledged a tax-deductible donation. It would have endowed the library with about \$150,000 instead of \$4,500. Still, their efforts can be applauded as a success.



WADDAYAKNOW — TAKE A SNIFF AT THIS OLD STUFF AND TELL ME WHAT IT IS... NERVE GAS. RIGHT?'

letters

Thanks Paul

On behalf of the ASUO and the students of the University, I would like to commend Pres. Paul Olum for his advocacy of students' rights at a recent legislative hearing on a bill designed to give students more control over the distribution of their incidental fees. While other college and university presidents followed the chancellor's lead in denouncing the bill, Olum continued to maintain that students have the capability and should have the right to reasonable influence over the use of their own fee money.

Although the chancellor's office seemed to feel that Olum had compromised their office's opposition to the bill, he continues to assert that the bill is well-thought-out and reasonable.

At a time when many university presidents obviously feel it wise to make political compromises, it is especially gratifying to have Olum working with us on our campus.

Mary Hotchkiss
president

Arrogance

The arrogance of the status quo in Oregon was illustrated by the recent vote of the state Senate regarding the distribution of Coors beer in Oregon. It was evident that the quality of Coors' filtration process was not the real issue involved in the rejection of Coors, as the State Health Division didn't even enter into the debate.

The true issue involved here, as alluded to by Sen. Margie Hendricksen and Irv Fletcher (president, AFL-CIO), was Coors alleged anti-labor and anti-woman practices, and contributions to right-wing political causes. A company

that pays its workers an average of \$26,000 a year and offers four free years of college tuition could hardly be called "anti-labor." A recent CBS "60 Minutes" segment found that Coors has an excellent record of hiring and promoting women and minorities. That leaves involvement in right-wing causes as a reason for the outcome of the vote. Since when do we persecute people for their political affiliation and activism? I'm sorry folks, but this smacks of McCarthyism, this time from the left.

It's unfortunate that the political leaders in this state harbor fear and resentment for people who don't think as they do. It may news to some of them, but diversity can be a healthy thing. Wouldn't it be nice if those who spout liberalism and tolerance would put their rhetoric into practice.

Mark Sorenson
geology

Vindication

During this 1983 summer session, I recently found myself reflecting on the sometimes "bittersweet" experience of being a teacher. My ruminating, I suspect, was influenced by the significant number of public school teachers who study on campus each summer, and by the realization that my own career in American higher education has now covered 25 years.

But let me proceed with this true story — fashioned from some anecdotal notations about a former student.

On the morning of Friday, July 10, 1981, as I pulled my car into a favorite campus parking space, a chap walking by with his dog, called out to me by name. I recognized him as "Karl" (a pseudonym), a former politically active member of the University student body who had been

enrolled in a class of mine in the summer of 1977. At the end of that course, in which "Karl" did not fulfill the stipulated requirements for a grade higher than C, he dashed off a very critical letter about my teaching to the dean of my college — and directed some threatening innuendoes to me.

Well, on that pleasant morning in July 1981 — four years after the unsettling scenario mentioned above — "Karl" said he'd been hoping our respective paths would converge again, because he felt he owed me an apology for his earlier behavior.

Needless to say, his manly gesture (its belatedness and off-the-record character notwithstanding) helped to "make my day" — and deep inside I felt a surge of "vindication."

As recently as the afternoon of March 10, 1983 I chanced to see "Karl" near the bookstore. He cordially initiated a brief chat; and disclosed that he was now a first-year law student at the University. He said he felt quite comfortable with his switch from public school teaching to the study of law — I wished him well in this new venture.

It was thoroughly amiable encounter — and one which can be cited to indicate that student evaluations of teachers which are offered "prematurely" (during times of possible student emotional disquiet, etc.), may unjustly taint the credibility of a teacher's classroom performance.

I believe there is much to be said for a "critical distance perspective" in the reliable evaluation of teaching. Both students and teachers should take this point into account in responsibly carrying out our respective roles in the educational process.

Ron Rousseve
counseling psychology

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, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. 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 Turn" columns must be limited to 500 words and typed.

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

oregon daily
emerald

The summer edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald is published Tuesdays and Thursdays, except during exam week and vacations, by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 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.

News and Editorial 686-5511
Display Advertising and Business 686-3712
Classified Advertising 686-4343
Production 686-4381
Circulation 686-5511

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