



A reason
to rejoice

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Higher education walks funding tightrope

By Doug Nash
Of the Emerald

As has been the case in the recent past, the dollar sign remains both the big problem and necessary solution in the minds of higher education officials this year.

And the quality of Oregon's university system hinges directly on the Legislature's attempts to find an answer to the property tax dilemma, they say.

"The thing that affects the University right now is the funding," says John Altucker, a State Board of Higher Education member and a Eugene resident. "These are difficult and troubled times because the resources have shrunk and the need is still there."

Altucker, who heads the board's subcommittee on planning, instructed his colleagues Friday to contemplate "why we have public-supported higher education at

all." The board can devise a flexible plan when those reasons are agreed upon, he said.

Until then, Altucker urges decision-makers to "keep their imaginations open." Educators this year will have to walk a fine line between tightening their belts and maintaining quality education.

Some facilities in poor condition at the University and Oregon State University are an example of needing to maintain quality, says Board President Robert Ingalls.

"Some of the buildings are more than 50 years old and in need of repair," Ingalls says.

Further, "we've received some money but not enough," for university libraries around the state, he says.

On the budget-trimming side, Ingalls says

the board will try to pinpoint weak courses that could be eliminated from the state system. He would not elaborate on which courses.

In addition, the board's information systems subcommittee currently is researching a centralized computer system that would integrate student information on both the campus and state level. Such a plan would drastically streamline the university information process, Vice Chancellor Bill Lemman says.

"The technology is here to support that kind of integration," Lemman says.

Though he is not prepared to forecast the future system's cost, Lemman estimates a "seven-figure savings" when it is implemented.

He emphasized, however, that any such system would have to conform to each in-

stitution's needs.

"We're not trying to design one rigid system that everyone is squeezed into."

The plan would end the University's arena scheduling process, Lemman adds.

"We would hope that the University would be the first institution that would be able to implement the (centralized) computer registration."

Otherwise, the semester system controversy, which was one of the biggest questions the state board decided last year, does not promise to continue into this school. Biology Prof. Sanford Tepfer, whose proposal for a University semester system proved unsuccessful last winter, says the state board is unwilling to allow one institution to leave the quarter system.

"It isn't going to happen unless the whole system goes to the semester system," Tepfer says.

nicaragua

A country struggles to find its reality

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

Emerald editor Debbie Howlett recently returned from an 11-day trip to Nicaragua. This is the first in a five-part series.

Nicaragua is a country of struggle. It is a country struggling to end a long history of guerilla wars. It is a country struggling to heal and educate its population. But most of all, Nicaragua is a country struggling to rid itself of the United States' influence.

The endless rhetoric coming from Nicaragua's Sandinista leadership contains two wishes: a softly spoken plea for peace, and tucked within the softness, a growling demand for the United States to disentangle itself from anti-Sandinista attacks.

If Nicaragua is a country in struggle, its capital, Managua, is a city without a center. The buildings that formed the city's center crumbled in the earthquake of 1972, and aside from a spray of tall grasses here and there, most of the buildings look as they did immediately after the tremor.

Former Nicaragua Pres. Anastasio Somoza, in what seems typical of his regime, refused to rebuild Managua's shaken center. And despite Sandinista efforts to reconstruct what Somoza left, Somoza's rule still permeates the city — especially what was once the center.

Somoza's oppressive government policies still emanate from the remaining rubble of the buildings, now occupied by squatters. His mark still touches a great number of the city streets, which are paved with interlocking bricks known as "Somoza Stones."

Somoza is a slow-healing cut in the Sandinista government.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT

The United States' influence was, and still is, at least as visible as Somoza's influence.

Gunboats off the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts are constant reminders of U.S. influence. Nicaraguans, understandably, are not receptive to the U.S. government, although they distinguish U.S. citizens, with whom they are friendly, from the U.S. government.

An example of Nicaragua's opposition to U.S. actions is contained in a line from their national anthem: "We're fighting against the Yankee, the enemy of humanity."

But past U.S. influences are less tenable.



The only building left undamaged from the 1972 earthquake, the 17-story Bank of America dwarfs every other building in Managua. Several people have claimed the building's obtrusiveness is a metaphor for U.S. presence in Nicaragua and all of Central America, in addition to the United States' seemingly unshakable power.

That the Bank of America is an American bank is symbolic of the U.S. dollar's power in Nicaragua. With a legal exchange rate of 28 Cordobas to the dollar, the desire for U.S. dollars has driven the black market rates as high as 87 to one.

The Bank of America sits next to the newly rebuilt, heavily guarded Council of State. But the proximity of the state buildings is not a metaphor of close relations with the United States, more than anything, it may stand as a challenge.

Challenges between the United States and the Sandinistas are nothing new. The two governments have been battling each other's influence in Nicaragua for nearly 60 years.

POLITICS IN PERSPECTIVE

In the late 1920s, Augusto Sandino led a small force of followers in guerilla attacks against U.S. Marines stationed in Nicaragua. From dense jungle outposts, Sandino vowed to stop his attacks only when the Marines left Nicaragua. When the Marines cleared out in 1933, Sandino came out of the jungle to meet with General Anastasio Somoza. Somoza had Sandino executed. Following the execution, Somoza took control of Nicaragua and received support from the United States.

The Somoza rule, handed down to Somoza's sons and then his grandson, held Nicaragua until July 1979, when the Sandinistas overthrew Anastasio Somoza II. The Somoza reign had been one of terror and brutality.

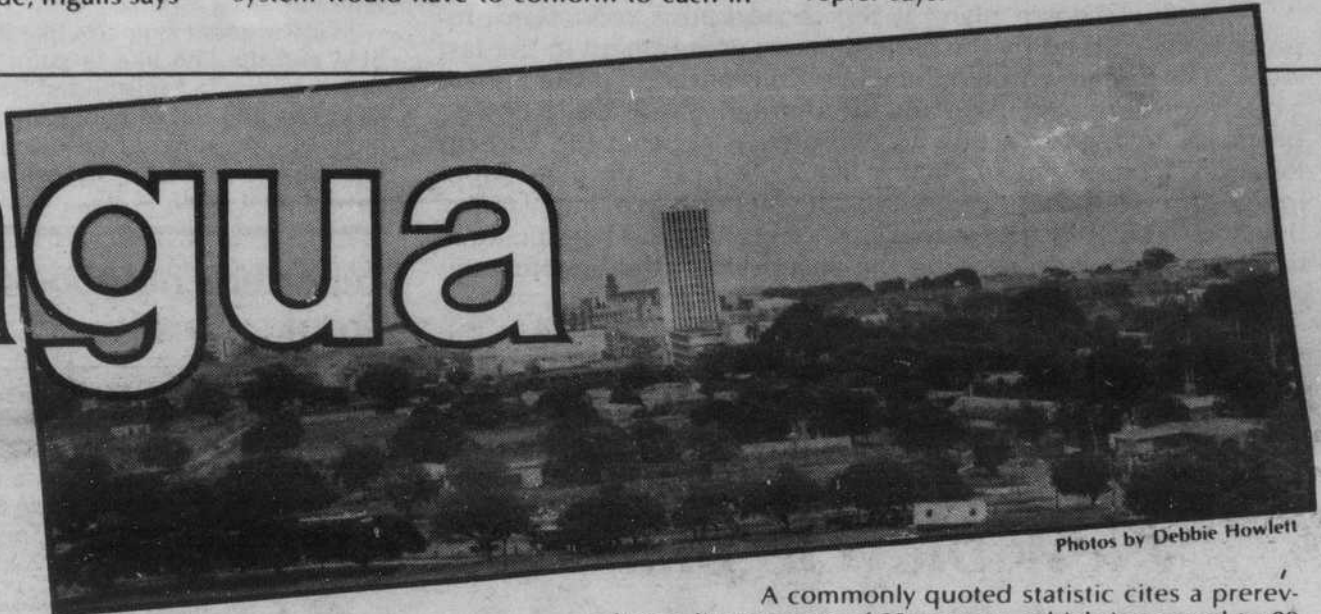
The United States has dealt with all of the Somozas in much the same philosophical manner Franklin D. Roosevelt had. "He's a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch," said Roosevelt of Anastasio Somoza I.

VOICES OF SUPPORT

What has happened in Nicaragua has been hailed by most Nicaraguans as a revolution of political independence and social growth.

Social growth is apparent in Nicaragua.

There have been advances in educating Nicaraguans.



Photos by Debbie Howlett

A commonly quoted statistic cites a pre-revolution literacy rate of 20 percent, which increased to 80 percent through a massive literacy campaign started a year after the revolution.

There have been advances in health care for the majority of the population. The government has nationalized some health care, providing public clinics without charge. Because of that, 70 percent of the babies born in Nicaragua now are delivered in hospitals. Before 1979, the

figure was 30 percent. Despite the crowded, sometimes unhealthy looking conditions in the public clinics, doctors and facilities are at least available.

Political independence is not as easy to define. While the Sandinista government says they are non-aligned politically, allegations that they are aligned with the Soviet Union, largely through Cuba, still are accepted in a number of sectors.

The Sandinistas also have promised to hold elections before the end of 1985 (although the Sandinistas reneged on a promise to hold elections two years after the revolution).

VOICES OF OPPOSITION

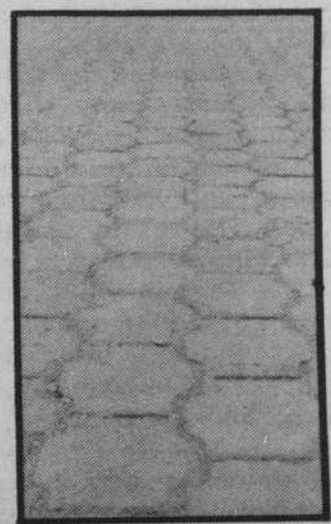
But there are other voices: an upper-middle class, which is slowly shrinking in size; a number of Nicaraguan Roman Catholics, who have joined dissenters in the Catholic Church and Nicaraguan Archbishop Obando y Bravo; and the counter-revolutionaries, "contras," one group is led by a former, and popular, Sandinista leader.

While most Nicaraguans who support the current regime eloquently voice Sandinista philosophy, some anti-Sandinista citizens struggle with thoughts of opposition.

A cab driver in a Managua market says he is not satisfied with what his government calls progress. He is worried that his young son will end up in the military fighting a seemingly endless war. He also is concerned because his food is rationed, and, even though he has enough money, he can no longer purchase some goods.

The cab driver commends the United States' "covert" aid, while in the same breath, he condemns Somoza. He is not sure what type of government he wants, but he is

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Somoza stones.