

# opinion

## Humanistic studies remain imperative

The initial smattering of people turned to a swell, eventually becoming a large crowd at yesterday's convocation ceremonies. It must have been gratifying for the educators there to look out upon the Memorial Quadrangle and see such a large turnout.

The University's Brass Choir started the ceremonies with "Onward Oregon." Perhaps it was the gravity of the event, but no one stood, even though everyone stands when "Onward Oregon" is played in Autzen Stadium.

This fall convocation was conducted with much the same pomp and circumstance associated with a spring graduation. Standard bearers preceded the faculty procession up the aisle. Each yellow and green standard bore the emblem of a respective school or college at the University: Architecture and Allied Arts, Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Human Development and Performance, Honors College, Journalism, Law and Music. The bearers placed the standards behind the podium.

Why such emphasis on the standards? Because, as if by an uncanny hand some standards were toppled by the wind, evoking a powerful symbolism.

On the podium were a distinguished group including Robert Berdahl, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, University President Paul Olum, ASUO President Mary Hotchkiss, Chancellor Bud Davis and the speaker Peter Pouncey, dean of Columbia University.

Pouncey, the keynote speaker, spoke on "Humanistic Imperatives in a Technological Society." Pouncey's deft handling of the topic was both encouraging and thought-provoking. As a speaker Pouncey was highly literate, erudite, informative, while, if possible (and indeed it is) was entertaining.

The gist of Pouncey's speech, if we can distill the hour-long speech and still retain its essence, was the lack of confidence among humanists in this age of technology. Especially important to the students at this University is the question of whether they can afford to pursue an education in the humanities when the more lucrative, but perhaps not as promising, direction is in a scientific education.

Pouncey's call was for the humanities to cease deferring to the sciences, to gain more confidence in its essential worth. This is something that bears repeating again and again at every institution dedicated to liberal arts. There will always be a place for the humanities — there must be or the quality of the human life will pale.

As Pouncey cited a passage from Dickens' "Hard Times" describing Coketown (his metaphor for Manchester, England), the wind stirred a few standards to fall. Later on, when he remarked on Descartes, the standard for Human Development and Performance also succumbed to the breeze.

In the end, as Pouncey wrapped up his speech, the wind struck the final irony, permitting the only standards to remain standing as Journalism, Architecture and Allied Arts and Music.

## Humanities center enhances University

Monday was a red letter day for humanities at the University along with the well-attended convocation, a \$300,000 grant to the University from the National Endowment for the Humanities was announced by Pres. Paul Olum.

The grant is intended for a three-year project to improve the teaching of humanities at the University. Olum stressed the emphasis of the project will be on the arts of interpretation, imaginative rethinking of past thought, writing and discussion.

All of these areas have been neglected in recent years with the accent on high-technology studies. Not that high-technology studies are any more or any less important than the humanities.

The project is expected to benefit a substantial number, about 10 percent, of University undergraduates. This is the first step according to administrators of the development of a Center for the Humanities at the University.

This grant, and the establishment of the Center for the Humanities, will enhance the excellence of an already excellent program at the University.



'AW, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, JIM — THEY'RE ONLY MY RUNNING SHOES.'

## letters

### Inspiration

It is a tribute to the human spirit that someone is able to endure four years of liberal-rational-humanistic university existence and still be sensible enough to check under the bed each night for Commies.

Thank you, Richard Burr, you are an inspiration.

I have firsthand experience of how evil those OSPIRG pinkos are, having, as Off-Campus Housing director, to distribute that Renter's Handbook; and thereby depriving countless landlords of their God-given right to squeeze every last penny, legality aside, out of student tenants.

Steeped in 16th century puritanical thought as you and I are, we both recognize the necessity of making money above all other pursuits. That's all James Watt wants to do for American business, and those OSPIRG creeps, in preventing his carving up of the environment, are downright unAmerican. (You'll have to explain to me, Burr, how Watt, also feeding at the public trough making political decisions for business is different from OSPIRG doing the same for the public...but I'm sure there is a difference.)

I'm also impressed by your accuracy in predicting Communist soldiers right in our streets arresting us Americans. Just because they haven't made any significant territorial gains in 30 years and because they're mired in Afghanistan and Poland; and because they're nearly morally and economically bankrupt; and because Pres. Ronald Reagan is spending \$1,000 a year per American building another 10,000 nuclear weapons doesn't mean we have to drop our guard. Bad news, though, Burr. That \$250 a year that each of us will owe as interest on the national debt that Reagan is accumulating...you

and your Dad will have to pay my share, since I don't make enough money to pay taxes.

But you know, even though the chances of the obliteration of all life on earth is probably 100 times more likely, given all those weapons, than Russians marching down Franklin Blvd., you and I will be vaporized happy, Burr, because at least those anti-Christ commies will be dead, too. And we know that we won't have to deal with them in heaven, right, Burr? Because they won't be let in.

Michael Morrow  
graduate

### Clarify

I would like to clarify and expand on a few points mentioned by Brandon Shepard in his letter published Sept. 30.

Last April students had the opportunity to vote on whether or not to reinstate OSPIRG's traditional \$1 per student per term funding and to amend the ASUO constitution giving OSPIRG a two-year base for that funding. Both measures passed by a sizable majority.

OSPIRG used no clever wording or underhanded political tactics in gaining student support for the organization. OSPIRG followed standard procedure in writing and passing both ballot measures.

Last spring, OSPIRG took its budget request of \$1 per student per term to the Incidental Fee Committee. Members of the IFC did not feel that they could give OSPIRG such an allocation without a student mandate, given the statewide nature of the organization and the amount of the request. The IFC recommended that OSPIRG take its request to the students via referendum. OSPIRG did just that.

Former Chairperson of the Constitutional Review Committee, Alan Contreras, worked with OSPIRG on the wording for the two measures. The wording was then approved by the 1982-83 Constitution Committee. The measures were put on the ballot and students approved them. What is more democratic than following the procedures laid out by agents of the ASUO and the ASUO constitution, itself ratified by the students?

As for OSPIRG using student funds to fight a legal battle to keep itself on campus, the questions, raised do not deal with whether or not OSPIRG can or will remain on this campus, but whether students have the right to amend their own constitution.

OSPIRG students find it regrettable that we have to spend an inordinate amount of our time

defending support that we obtained by following standard procedure.

Every student had an opportunity in April to vote on funding for OSPIRG. It seems to me that this is how the democratic process is supposed to work.

Amy Gredler

OSPIRG state board chairperson

## OSPIRG

Friday, the Emerald printed a letter from Brandon Shepard challenging OSPIRG's basis for financial support. His slam of OSPIRG implied that the group used deceitful tactics to sneak a ballot measure past an otherwise opposing student body.

OSPIRG is not a new group around the University, nor is the benefit of their work hidden in a closet somewhere on campus. For 13 years, OSPIRG has been representing students — Republicans, Democrats, Marxists and even apoliticos — on issues that affect us all, issues such as landlord-student rights, auto insurance pricing, and telephone and utility rates. Unless someone or some group stands up to challenge unfair consumer and environmental practices, we are left only to accept the consequences.

An important part of OSPIRG's agenda is representing the needs and rights of students. But perhaps even more importantly, OSPIRG gives students a chance to get involved. The actions of OSPIRG are not led by faceless bureaucrats somewhere else, but by the fellow students who sit beside you. Students decide what to research, what to advocate, what to challenge as unfair and unnecessary.

Just as students decide what OSPIRG should do, students last spring decided that the group was worthy of financial support. Over two-thirds of those who voted (and any student could vote) said "yes" to the amendments on the ballot.

That overwhelming support is now challenged by a vocal few who use innuendo and false information to challenge an important and worthy student group. That issue now goes before the ASUO Constitutional Court.

Regardless of the outcome, OSPIRG will continue to do an admirable job of protecting the rights of students in this state. And they will continue to deserve the support of the student body.

Mark Smiley  
journalism, rhetoric

Tuesday, October 4, 1983

## 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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Classified Advertising  
Production  
Circulation

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686-4343  
686-4381  
686-5511

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