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letters

Offense taken

I take offense to the cartoon in the Jan. 30 edition of the *Emerald* ("You wouldn't be cheating on your test? Would you now, Mr. Smith?"). As student prosecutor for the University, my job is to represent the University in contested cases against students accused of violations of the Student Conduct Code. Unlike the impression given by the *Emerald* (the cartoon; the article interviewing Bill Kittredge of the Office of Student Advocacy), conduct hearings are anything but "star chambers."

It is true that Vernon Barkhurst, the coordinator of student conduct, may informally handle cases of his choosing. This rule exists to help, not hurt, students. Barkhurst is limited in the sanctions he may impose. Only a hearings officer may expel or suspend a student.

Formal cases before a hearings officer have much of the trappings of a criminal trial, even though as administrative hearings the rules of evidence are somewhat relaxed. The accused has the right to counsel, provided free by the Office of Student Advocacy (and funded by student fees). The hearings officer comes from the community and has no connection to the University. Both sides present evidence and make arguments. The burden is on the University to prove the case by a preponderance of the evidence. The hearings officer issues findings of fact and decides on the sanction. The accused has the right to appeal the hearings officer's decision to the University Appeals Board.

If Barkhurst decides to go informal, the student still may choose to take the formal route. He has the right to counsel from the very beginning. Usually students choose to go informal because they realize their guilt and don't wish to go through a formal process.

During my tenure as student prosecutor (the past two terms), no student has been expelled or suspended as a result of conduct hearing. The stiffest penalty so far was a sentence of 96 hours of community service to be served over three terms. That student admitted to taking a math class for his brother. Another student found guilty after a lengthy hearing of cheating on a test also received community service (the case is currently on appeal). I was very surprised to find that academic dishonesty usually does not result in expulsion or at least suspension from this University. At my undergrad school (Cal State Fullerton), a student

caught cheating or attempting to alter school records was summarily expelled.

Therefore, any allegation that students aren't afforded full due process at this University is entirely unfounded. However, if students think cheating should be allowed and don't care that someone earned a higher grade dishonestly, maybe we shouldn't prosecute these cases.

Karen Altman
student prosecutor, law

Evaluating

A professor does not fail students or give incompletes to make the headlines of a student newspaper. A professor has no reason to do this. In giving students any grade, a professor is offering an evaluation of student progress and quality of work — a marker by which the student evaluates his own directions.

Unlike reporter Doug Nash, I admire Professor William Kleinsasser's integrity and judgement in giving 10 of his 20 fifth-year architecture students (undoubtedly serious students deserving of frank and strict evaluation) non-passing marks. There is nothing shameful — or even sensational — in this, either on Kleinsasser's part or on the part of his students. It is simply an indication to these fifth-year students to do some serious self-evaluation.

That Nash's front page Feb. 3 article should, by its headline alone, insinuate incompetence on Kleinsasser's part is irresponsible, sensational journalism, written by a student for a sympathetic student audience. I was extremely disappointed by Nash's one-sided handling of the issue. Nash did not provide input from the students that failed, nor did he solicit opinions of students familiar with Kleinsasser's teaching methods. His article was all but a forum for a "student advocate" blathering about unfollowed procedures, despite department head Jerry Finrow's denials that such procedures are required.

Nash has been criticized in this letters column before for irresponsible journalism — I imagine he should expect more of the same.

John Givens
senior, Russian

The sign...

Having only last term transferred to the University I am very surprised at the uproar caused by a sign in the EMU.

Yes, ASUO Pres. Mary Hotchkiss, I am for equal rights for both men and women, but I fail

to see how changing a piece of history will change the future. In 1984 people changed the records of past history to correspond to the present. Is this the beginning of 1984? How long before all the old speeches, letters and records are altered to meet today's non-sexist ideal? Do we change the Gettysburg Address to include "these men and women," or the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics next?

Come on, this is history. We can't change the attitudes of our forefathers, but we can change the attitude of those today, and improve the attitudes of future generations.

I don't want anyone to change history to suit today's ideals, unless you want George Orwell's 1984. I say leave history history (and why not donate a new updated motto to the University when you graduate) and look forward to an enlightened future.

Jessica Hockley
junior, sociology

Bad breath

Pres. Ronald Reagan has bad breath. It is this stench one detects between exhalations of platitudes and policy statements. It is the smell, to borrow a phrase from Celine, behind even teeth and clear white smile.

Where does this smell originate? In a basic philosophy toward the role of government, in the belief that if things are good on the top they will, by corollary, be better at the bottom. It is an argument as old as privilege itself. And usually expounded by the privileged. One can find its crude expression 125 years ago in a nation struggling over the issue of slavery. It is the same argument that, as Abe Lincoln said, professes to the belief that, "the richer the slaveholder the better fed will be his slave." The argument hasn't lost its stench in its modern, more "subtle" expression.

Time has passed but the smell remains. It trickles down from lofty ranches and private mens clubs to infest busted unions and church basement soup kitchens. It finds its way into empty rooms where legal aid offices used to be, into school lunch rooms (to mention but a few places) and, ultimately, it seeps into places where the despondent sit wondering if they are indeed useless.

Reagan has announced his candidacy for re-election. Can we endure four more years of this smell?

Carmen Pecheone
speech

oregon daily emerald

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