

editorial

Evaluation handbook deserves support

It has been called the longest running debate at the University. The issue is whether or not students should have access to course evaluation forms filled out in class at the end of each term. The forms would then be used to supply data for the creation of a course/instructor evaluation handbook to assist students in choosing classes.

The controversy started in 1966, when University Pres. Arthur Flemming announced that course/instructor evaluation forms drawn up by a student committee would be given a "trial run." When the ASUO published the results of the evaluations in an attempt to assist students in their selection of classes, some disgruntled professors threatened to sue for libel. Course/instructor evaluations were then discontinued.

In 1975, the Oregon State Legislature passed a law requiring evaluation forms for all instructors teaching courses from 001 through 499. The ASUO again tried to gain student access to the forms in order to create a course/instructor evaluation handbook, but once more they were refused permission and were unable to carry through with plans for the handbook. Since 1975, the ASUO and the Student University Affairs Board (SUAB) have repeatedly pushed for a course/instructor evaluation handbook, but they have been systematically denied access to the evaluations needed to create one. The main opposition to ASUO and SUAB efforts has come from the University Assembly and the State Education Committee. In November, SUAB brought the issue up again.

In our opinion such a handbook would be an important resource for students, and we commend SUAB and the ASUO for continuing the struggle to publish a course/instructor evaluation handbook. Harvard University has been publishing such a handbook since 1924. The University of California also uses one, as does the University of Washington, Johns Hopkins University, Princeton University, and many others.

The University Assembly has opposed the creation of such a handbook on grounds that, among other things, it would turn teaching into a popularity contest, that it would encourage faculty competition, and that the student evaluations would furnish inadequate or misleading information.

When looked at in light of the success of course/instructor evaluation handbooks at other Universities, such criticisms are groundless. On the contrary, course/instructor evaluation handbooks have not only assisted students in choosing classes, but they have also assisted faculty members in strengthening their teaching skills. Furthermore, far from the creation of faculty popularity contests, a course/instructor evaluation handbook may have a salutary impact upon professional arrogance and pomposity. And finally, in the mature environment of a University and with the creation of valid questionnaires (such as those used at Harvard), a course/instructor evaluation handbook would create an important resource for students, while also creating an important system of accountability for professors.

As the new SUAB proposal to gain student access to course evaluations gets under way, we hope that the University Assembly and University Pres. Paul Olum will support SUAB's effort. Some of the best schools in this country have used course/instructor evaluation handbooks for decades, and the results have been positive for both faculty and students. We encourage members of the University faculty and staff to support students in what they have been striving to attain for 19 years.



letters

Quite simple

In its editorial "Anti-abortionists give conflicting messages" (ODE, Jan. 16) the Emerald, after rightfully condemning the bombing of clinics by militant anti-abortionists, and after insinuating that proliferators like President Reagan and the Rev. Jerry Falwell are really hypocrites, says that it hopes that pro-lifers "will see abortion for what it is: a complex social issue..."

Ah, yes, the old "It's a complex issue" argument. We know it well. But, actually, the issue is quite simple; unborn babies are being torn limb from limb, burned alive by saline injections or are ripped from their mothers' wombs by hysterotomy (C-section) abortions and tossed into garbage cans to die. These "operations" are performed on 1.5 million unborn victims every year.

And where is all this killing happening? In El Salvador? In South Africa? In the far reaches of Outer Oogie Boogie? No. It's happening right here in the good old USA.

And guess what? You folks have cast your vote in favor of all this killing. Now I know that you don't support violence or killing or even abortion. No, you support "Choice" (with a capital "C"). Yes, Choice! The Choice of a mother in cahoots with her abortionist to dismember or burn alive her unborn child, for her peace of mind and his profit. (Abortion is Big Business!)

But what the heck. I know that you pious folks are so busy with your worldwide crusade

for human rights that you can't afford to expend any of your precious righteous indignation over such a little thing.

Tom Visoky
Journalism

Watch out

I have had it! I'm tired of flying off my bicycle because people are too ignorant to look before they cross the street. Imagine college students who can't remember the first thing their parents taught them.

Twice in the last 2 months I have literally flown off my bike, sacrificing myself because these ignorant people don't look.

To you, the kid on the skateboard who came shooting out from Chapman Hall across 13th St. with your head turned away: thanks for stopping on a dime so you could jump off and allow me to ride up onto your skateboard and flip over my handlebars in front of a thousand people. Fortunately, the pavement felt soft today and I didn't break my arm. Hope you learned something.

And you, the woman who stepped out into the bike path at Alder and 14th St. without even looking, you're lucky I swerved into the oncoming traffic sliding down onto the wet, leafy road and laying there so you could continue to walk across the street.

People, be aware! Please, for your safety as well as us bike riders, look both ways before crossing the street. It's really quite simple and it might save someone's teeth.

Lauri Neely
Telecommunications

Throwing mud

Emerald trashed Jerry Falwell for being against fetuscide but for nuclear bombs (ODE, Jan. 16), while the Emerald, under the guise of "choice," allowed for the option of fetuscide and denounced the bombs. Such spurious logic typifies the position you advocate.

To make that choice must you also resort to: "Tu quoque" Falwell can't be right about abortion because he's wrong about strategic defense, and "ad hominum" if all else fails, caricature the advocates of life as Bible-toting, bomb-throwing Ayatollahs (Emerald cartoon). I agree with the Emerald, we need a dialogue; but I regret that the Emerald began its dialogue by throwing mud.

Timothy Smith
Music

Bike theft

Well, you've managed to do it again. You have taken an otherwise calm collected University student and transformed him into an irate uncontrollable beast. Surely you must know what I'm referring to here. Front wheels of parked bicycles just don't suddenly pop off and walk (roll) away. They are assisted by irresponsible individual(s) like yourself.

You probably have no idea what it is like to be crippled. Crippled in the sense that I, like many other college students, depend on my bicycle for transportation to and from campus. It is the only set of wheels that I own (or did own). I should have known that you would be back on campus again this year after cutting my cable and riding off with my bicycle last year. Although you only managed to get away with my front wheel this time, I can only reinforce that old cliché, "crime doesn't pay".

Sooner or later I will catch up to you and resolve my frustrations in a calm and collected manner. But until then, I ask you this: Why must you make life hard for me and other college students with similar problems? Do you want the University campus to be overtaken by irate uncontrollable beasts waiting to get their claws in you? Think about it before it's too late!

John Falconer
Architecture

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 and 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.

Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

Oregon daily emerald

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