

# Commentary

## Commentator discrimination based on political views

Imagine a hypothetical situation involving a student group, say, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance. A minority group on campus funded by student fees, it does a good job providing support for its members and adding to campus diversity. But when it asks for a few thousand dollars from the Incidental Fee Committee to continue its activities the following year, it is told it is "too controversial."

Several students, obviously closed-minded, have expressed their feelings to the members of the student government, upset because they don't like homosexuality and don't like to see it around campus. They certainly don't think a minority student group should be supported by student fees and suspect that a majority of students might agree with them in a student vote.

The IFC agrees — after all, isn't that what a "controversial" student group should expect? — and votes to deny it funding unless it receives a majority vote in a student election. Furthermore, the IFC rules that even if the student group should win the election, its student funding will be cut in half. The IFC decision is extraordinary — no other student group has been forced, against its will, to go to a student ballot to receive student funding. But the group is told that it should feel good about the decision, since the IFC isn't being "too unfair."

If this were to happen at the University, would anyone call it discrimination?

Of course they would, which is what makes it so troubling that few will do the same for the Oregon Commentator, a campus journal of opinion that prints articles from a conservative point of view, among others.

The Commentator's request for a moderate increase in IFC funding, based on its third year of successful publishing, was met with a unanimous IFC decision to place its decimated budget on the ballot. Being a minority group, it is doubtful that the Commentator can win a majority, and it is hardly worthwhile to campaign for such a small amount anyway. The IFC decision in effect may represent the death of the Commentator.

What is wrong with the IFC decision? Clearly, there would be few student groups if each was required to receive a majority of a student vote to exist. That is why there is an Incidental Fee Committee: to encourage a diversity of student groups. And clearly, the members of the IFC do not have to agree with the outlook of each student group they fund — if so, again, there would be few student groups. That is why members of the IFC are expected to put away their personal biases when making student funding decisions.

In fact, they are required to do so by law. The equal opportunity guidelines of the University, based on the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religious belief, sexual preference and political belief.

Is the Commentator a victim of discrimination? Compare the treatment it has received from the IFC to the treatment the IFC gives other groups. As I already have mentioned, the Commentator is the only student group that has been forced to the ballot against its will. The Emerald goes to a student vote each year because it asks to be placed on the ballot.

The treatment the Commem-

tator receives is especially ironic considering it is one of the few student publications that actually publishes as many issues as the IFC funds, and consistently of high quality, as its professional awards indicate. It produces 15 issues a year on a budget of \$6,300.

I have been told The Record, the ASUO's publication with a budget of \$5,000, has managed to publish three issues this year. That is remarkable, if only because in past years, with budgets of \$10,000 and all the resources of the student government, the paper was published even less frequently. Yet year after year, the paper is funded

by the IFC.

Clearly the Commentator is treated differently than The Record because it is not "politically correct." The Record is controlled perennially by members of "Students for a Progressive Agenda," who also happen to control the ASUO and the IFC. And the funding of other politically correct publications that appear on campus is never challenged, year after year. Clearly this constitutes de facto, institutionalized discrimination against the Commentator on the basis of political belief.

The Commentator is contemplating a civil rights suit

against members of the student government. But this really isn't the sort of solution the staff desired. The preferred course of action would be for students at the University — even students who disagree with the paper's particular political opinions — to force members of the IFC and ASUO to stand up for the Commentator's right to exist, to add to the campus diversity, and to serve as an alternative voice.

By Robert Davis

Robert Davis is a former editor of the Oregon Commentator and a 1985 graduate of the University.



## Letters

### Four women

"He hit me, and it felt like a kiss. He hit me and I knew he loved me."

Martha Davis  
The Motels

"He showed me what the hole was for."

Chrissie Hynde  
The Pretenders

"I love it when he calls me names... I love it when he beats my brains out."

Joan Armatrading

"Hit me with your best shot."

Pat Benatar  
I believe the headline for the Feb. 19 story, "Crazy men aren't always major rape perpetrators," should have read, "Men aren't always major rape perpetrators."

And just a sidenote to Karen Kane... I appreciate that you chose Bruce Springsteen as a representative of American men, but, "Fire," the song you quoted to prove that he somehow condones rape, was

brought to the charts by the Pointer Sisters — four women.

Vince Adams  
Journalism

### Clarification

I'm sorry to say that reporter Andrew LaMar seemed to miss the point of my talk sponsored by the University Arms Control Forum on Feb. 19. This was that the elimination of nuclear weapons should be accom-

panied by an elimination of large-scale conventional weapons.

Furthermore, such an elimination could probably not be accomplished without, in the words of Jonathan Schell, "revolutionizing the politics of the earth." In the short term, we should be working toward a reduction in nuclear weapons, recognizing that the extent to which a nuclear power believes a nuclear war is "winnable" rather than suicidal vastly increases the probability of the use of nuclear weapons.

For this reason, I believe it is imperative the current situation of "mutually assured destruction (MAD)" be continued until we are able to accomplish the (hopefully) final elimination of both nuclear and large-scale conventional weapons.

Incidentally, such current policies as the Strategic Defense Initiative and the Counterforce Strategy are unilateral attempts to escape from MAD, and thus I believe them to be destabilizing and dangerous.

John Moseley  
Vice President, Research

### Freedom for all

Why does Michael Dawson attack the Emerald for supporting the right of all groups, including ROTC and the CIA, to free speech? Doesn't he understand that without freedom of speech for everybody, all other democratic values will be irrevocably lost?

Most of us understand the military and the CIA have some mighty strange ways of protecting our national security, that torture, murder and assassination have become preferred modes of operation in the downtrodden parts of our sphere of influence.

And most of us don't like it.

But rather than abandoning any aspect of our democratic freedoms, why not use our democratic institutions to abolish the CIA altogether? If the "silent majority" realized that, thanks to the CIA, large portions of humanity hate our guts, they might be persuaded that our long-range security depends on the practice of our values abroad as well as at home.

Chris Browne  
History

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