

Editorial

ASUO should have retained Kittredge

Whom does the director of the ASUO Office of Student Advocacy, the student advocate, work for? The ASUO president or the student body? Bill Kittredge was fired for choosing the wrong side. He worked for the students.

Students pay the advocate's salary through incidental fees, mandatory fees tacked onto students' tuition. And according to the ASUO Executive's job description, the advocate is a "grievance administrator for students experiencing difficulties with the decision-making processes of the University and Oregon State System of Higher Education."

At the same time, the job is contracted through the ASUO Executive. And only the ASUO president and anyone he or she chooses to participate has the power to hire and fire the student advocate.

But what happens when a student's grievance is with or connected to the ASUO Executive, which includes the ASUO president? Unfortunately, it appears that if the advocate wants to keep his or her job, he or she should side with the ASUO Executive — exactly opposite of what an effective student advocate should do.

This is precisely the situation Kittredge faced when students came to him with complaints that the insurance they purchased through the ASUO was not paying their claims. As he did throughout his term as director, Kittredge did what he could to solve the students' problems.

ASUO President Steve Nelson delivered a memo to Kittredge dated May 30 instructing him to quit representing students with insurance complaints. The memo told Kittredge to refer all complaints to the ASUO insurance coordinator.

Another memo dated May 30 that reached Kittredge June 5 informed him that his contract would be put out to bid.

And ASUO representatives, most of whom supported Margie Hendriksen in the hotly contested District 4 congressional race, also were resentful of Kittredge's work on the campaign of the victorious candidate, Peter DeFazio.

Nelson and ASUO Vice President Caitlin Cameron insist that Kittredge's dismissal had nothing to do with anything he did as director. Cameron pointed to a non-binding ASUO Executive policy that suggests that contracted jobs be put out to bid every three years. Kittredge had just completed his third year.

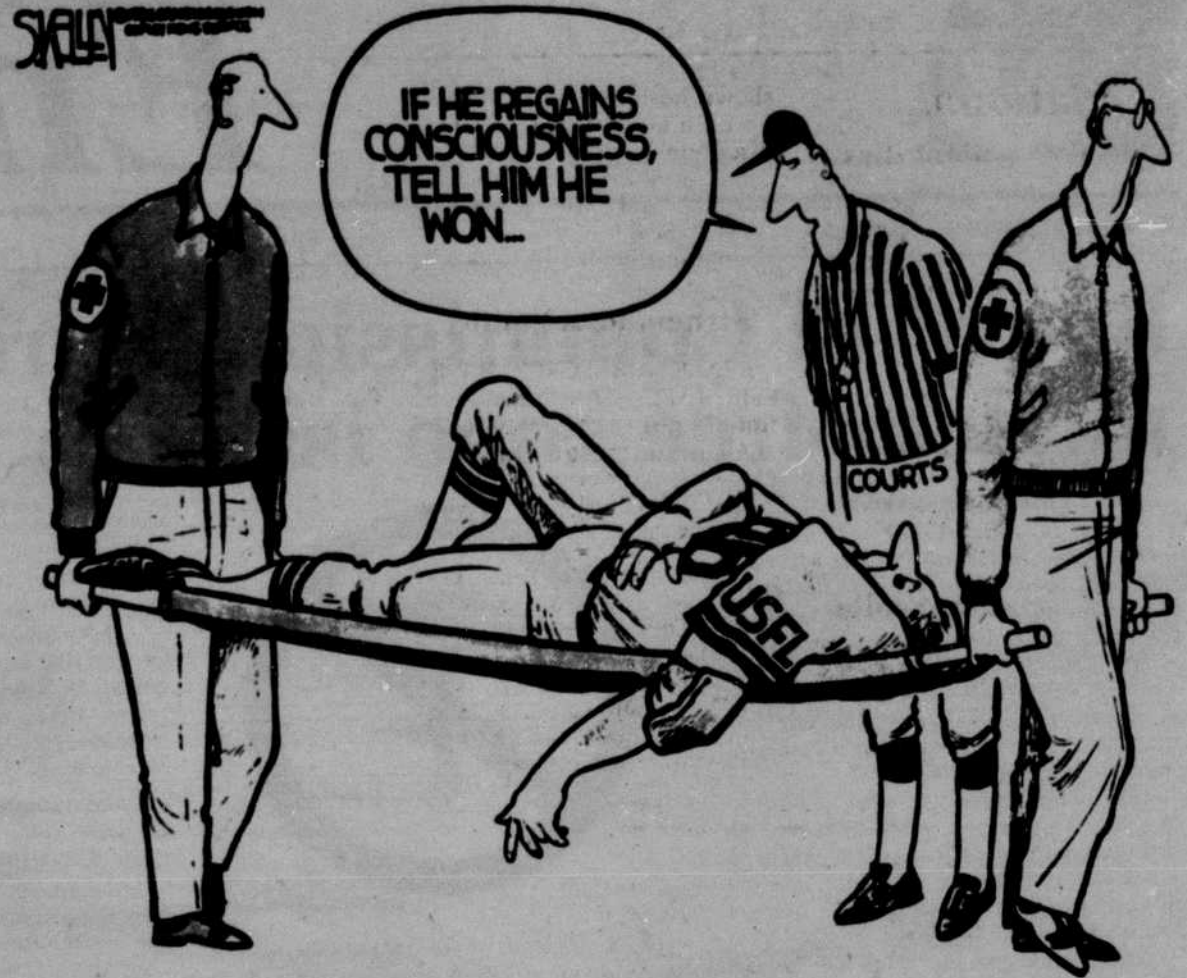
But even if the ASUO was acting in good faith, it is hard to see how Nelson, Cameron and former ASUO President Lynn Pinckney, who interviewed applicants, could find anyone more qualified than Kittredge. With his record of service, it is hard to understand why they put the contract out to bid in the first place.

Kittredge was not hired, according to Cameron, because he was not as qualified as the successful candidate.

Never mind that both Pinckney and Cameron wrote glowing evaluations of Kittredge less than a year ago. Never mind that for an unqualified person, he did an outstanding job in the position for three years. Never mind that any time the ASUO Executive wanted something done they went to him. Never mind that he was willing to provide advice and help to any student who asked.

Never mind that he knows nearly every administrator on campus. Never mind that he understands how to get through the rat's maze of University systems. Never mind that his commitment has earned the respect of administrators and students alike.

It may be too late for Kittredge. But before a second student advocate is placed in the difficult position of having to decide between working for students and pleasing the ASUO president, the hiring and firing power should be distributed amongst a group of people — preferably a majority of whom are not tied to the ASUO Executive.



Lane Transit District bus ride offers tour of McKenzie River

By Stephen Maher

Of the Emerald

Climbing on board and riding a Eugene city bus can be an unpleasant experience. They stop continuously, fill themselves to the limit with impatient passengers and emit fumes fit for a Louisiana gas chamber but little else.

But thanks to the good folks at the Lane Transit District, there's one route that is actually a pleasure to ride. Known as Bus 16, it leaves the Eugene Mall four times each weekday, passes through Springfield and then travels east along the McKenzie River for 48 miles before heading back.

After suffering through one dog-day afternoon too many, I boarded Bus 16 and deposited the required 60-cent one-way fare. The bus schedule said the trip would take more than three hours, so I settled into my seat with a curious mind and an urge for some good old western adventure.

One of the first things I noticed as the bus motored along was the lack of established bus stops. Passengers departed by ringing the bell and got on by flagging down the bus, which turned out to be a headache for the driver who mistook waving by lonely residents as a signal to

stop.

The bus traveled on Highway 126 and passed through the historic towns of Waltherville, Leaburg, Vida, Nimrod, Finn Rock, Blue River and McKenzie

revealed the counterculture presence in the area, too. Old school buses with makeshift roofs dotted the landscape as well as colorfully painted mailboxes. And at the Cougar Reservoir Hot Springs turnoff, two long-haired gentlemen jumped off, carrying only a can of grapefruit juice and a paper bag filled with an unknown substance.

The fishing influence was strong on Bus 16. Not only did I see fishermen wandering along the banks of the river and hand painted signs extolling the virtues of different sized worms, but passengers on the bus fiddled with fishing poles as they rode and told stories about their search for the elusive Big One.

On the return trip, the bus rounded a corner near Leaburg Lake and surprised a man and woman who still had their lines in the water. As the woman flagged the bus down and carried some of the gear to it, her companion reeled in his line like a worried madman and then rushed off toward the bus.

"You did it to us again," they shouted to the driver as they climbed aboard. Once inside, the man continued trying to untangle line, hook and sinker. While the woman, holding a freshly caught trout in a dripping bag, went from passenger to passenger asking, "Do you want a fish?" To her surprise, however, no one accepted her gracious offer.

An hour later, as the bus came out of the cool hills and into Springfield and then Eugene, I felt like I had been gone for days. My mind felt refreshed and the bad case of the Eugene blues, which I had carried around for some time, had been cured with ease. Bus 16 had been a pleasure.

Reporter's notebook

Bridge. The towns were founded in the later part of the 19th century and, with the exception of Blue River and McKenzie Bridge, all were named after early settlers and their offspring. Turn-of-the-century cottages, general stores, barns and houses could be seen standing in and around the towns, adding a touch of nostalgia to the trip.

The bus ride also offered a quick glimpse of recreational vehicle cities, which sprout up every summer like wild flowers in early May. Most were near boat landings and possessed names such as Blaztag Stump Mobile Park and Lazy Days Mobile Park. From a distance, they appeared to offer many of the amenities found in populated areas, thus providing a home-away-from-home for all the semi-rugged campers present.

Observations from the bus

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

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