

Editorial

Drug-testing program not fair to athletes

The Athletic Department has announced a sweeping drug-testing policy to combat drug usage on all University athletic teams. The policy is a thorough and sincere effort, but it goes against athletes' basic right of privacy.

When police officers raid a drug house, they must first obtain specific permission to do so — a warrant — based on reasonable suspicion of illegal activity. Constitutional restrictions on search and seizure are strict.

An air of suspicion has hung over college athletics since the deaths of Don Rogers and Len Bias, but these deaths, even coupled with horror stories about drug use at other universities, are not reasonable grounds for suspecting University athletes of drug abuse.

The policy of mandatory drug testing amounts to an admission of the guilt of the athletes to be tested. Though they may have done nothing to arouse suspicion, the athletes must pass a drug test to prove that they are innocent of drug usage.

College athletes are the most visible of students, and on the playing field they serve as a university's representatives. They are also the students to whom good health is most critical. This makes them natural targets for drug testing.

Moreover, drugs cause unique problems in the sports world. Some athletes use steroids, pain-killers and other performance-enhancing drugs, marring the integrity of their sport and endangering their health and the health of their opponents. In the extreme, drug usage can lead to theft, point shaving and health problems leading to expulsion from the team or worse.

Mandatory drug testing is but one solution to these problems. Rather than holding all University athletes in suspicion, the University should require drug testing only in specific cases. The penalties could be the same as with the current drug-testing policy, or they could be more severe as a deterrent.

Remember, though it may seem harsh to have an investigative body watching over students waiting to bring down an investigation, it is actually less intrusive. Any drug testing should be guided by procedures that protect students' rights.

As a temporary solution, voluntary drug testing could be very valuable. Athletes who volunteer for testing would improve the image of their team, more so because the testing was voluntary. Peer pressure would encourage students to participate, the goal being 100 percent participation.

After all, one of the most important aspects of sports is team spirit; mandatory drug testing places athletes at odds with their team, regardless of the test results.

There are good aspects to the Athletic Department's drug-testing policy; if an athlete admits to using drugs before taking the test, the penalties for a positive result are less severe. Along with any penalties an athlete suffers from a positive test result there is mandatory drug counseling.

However, any test results become a part of a student's academic record, regardless of whether the result is wrong because of exposure to friends' marijuana smoke. Though the chances of this happening are small, it places an unfair burden on the athlete, and could have severe effects on his academic and athletic life.

The Athletic Department is devoting \$25,000 of an already tight budget to the drug-testing program, so there is no question of its commitment or sincerity. However, it needs to have more regard for its athletes, many of whom are afraid to even speak out against the policy because of the assumption of guilt.

The program asserts the Athletic Department and the University's basic attitude about drug usage — it is indeed a problem that can't be condoned, and can't be ignored. The University is one of the leaders in fighting drugs in college athletics.

However, the University should not get carried away with the enforcement of its anti-drug attitude, and any policy should be aired in public hearings to find the least intrusive means of fighting drug usage on campus.



Letters

Abused dog

In response to your Oct. 2 article, "Owning a pet takes time," the fate of Delta Tau Delta's dog is a good example of why some people shouldn't have pets. "The dog was real hairy, and he shed all over the place, so his owner shaved all his hair off. I think he was real embarrassed to be seen with all his hair gone because he ran away right after his owner shaved him," quoted the article.

I hope that the abused dog has found a better home. I also hope Delta Tau Delta reconsiders their plan to get another dog.

S. Hilton
Eugene

Our house

What I don't understand, Mr. Sliter ("A Comment," Oct. 2), is your rash generalizations concerning the Delta Zeta sorority. Am I to understand that you stand in the doorways of all our weekend functions complete with note pad and stop watch and therefore have valid research for your accusations against the Delta Zetas? Or are you the one male allowed up on our sleeping porch at night for bed checks? Please then, save your gossip and your rumors for your study sessions.

As to our beautiful new house

that we are all so proud of: It speaks for itself. The interior is newly redone with exquisite furnishings, and we would enjoy giving you or anyone expressing an interest a daytime tour. The Delta Zetas paid dearly in money and time for our own house since our installation last spring, and we couldn't be more pleased.

To me, the white of the Delta Zeta house represents the brand new start of the most wonderful sorority on campus.

Julia B. Kelly
Economics

Memorial

A memorial to the war in Vietnam came to Eugene recently, and I speak out in fear and anger that history is being rewritten.

I say they should dig a trench in front of the memorial and construct a lavatory to surround it.

Though it is painful, remember the Vietnam vets who dropped thousands of tons of dioxin on South East Asia. It is justice they are now sharing the effects American chemical warfare inflicted on the Vietnamese. Remember, Viet vets strafed, cluster bombed, napalmed, tortured and murdered Asians for American conglomerates in support of South Vietnamese dictators.

The country of South Vietnam was a fabrication constructed by Western colonial powers. For patriotic Vietnamese there was one Vietnam. You should remember Americans fought a civil war to keep our country whole. All things being equal, Viet vets would have fought for the Confederate States of America and the "just" cause of slavery.

These criminals who decimated Vietnam belong in spirit to Hitler's Germany where people were afraid to speak out and believed in country over humanity, truth and justice.

Viet vets talk of healing and choose to forget war resisters who lived in exile. There can be no wellness when the price of testifying for peace is persecution, prosecution, a criminal record and career suicide. The dependents of those who were wounded or died while working for the peace movement get no GI Bill, health benefits, pensions or memorials.

The Vietnam Memorial is not a sign of healing, rather it is an open festering wound.

This perversion of truth is making new Vietnams possible in South America and all over the world, while in our hearts we know there is a bill for rewriting history which our children inevitably will have to pay.

R.M. Parts
Cottage Grove

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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