

Editorial

El Salvador project fails if grandstand

The Sister University Project, established formally by the University Senate in January, maintains ties with and provides academic support to the University of El Salvador.

The project will be asking the Incidental Fee Committee for \$750 of student fees to present slide shows, films and brochures about the conditions at the sister university.

The project deserves the support of student fees, although we do have some reservations.

The main reservation is the project's focus — is it a political platform from which to attack U.S. foreign policy, or is it a sincere effort to help students at the sister university?

So far it has elements of both; the project worked with other schools in the Northwest, and collected school supplies and over 6,000 textbooks to donate to the sister university.

At the same time, the organizers of the project, notably ASUO President Steve Nelson, make great issue of U.S. military aid to the El Salvadorian government, which they say helps in the oppression of the university.

Congress approved that aid two years ago to help newly-elected President Napoleon Duarte fight communist guerillas and quell the ongoing civil war. Opponents of this aid, in congress and on campus, claim that the aid should be domestic, not military, encouraging the combatants to negotiate a settlement.

The sister university was reopened in 1984, after the Salvadorian military occupied it in 1980. Faculty and students still fear abduction, torture and death from government forces.

However, when ASUO President Steve Nelson travelled to El Salvador to formalize relations and to participate in an annual march, he may have crossed the bounds of responsible representation of students. For example, speaking to a crowd of about 2,000 Salvadorian students, he said that "we must face the reality that it is our own government financing your oppressors."

He then marched with the crowd to the U.S. Embassy, where the Salvadorians burned Uncle Sam in effigy and spray-painted anti-American slogans on the embassy walls.

Some students will feel that this is a just tribute to U.S. intervention in El Salvador; others will be upset at the anti-American sentiments aroused.

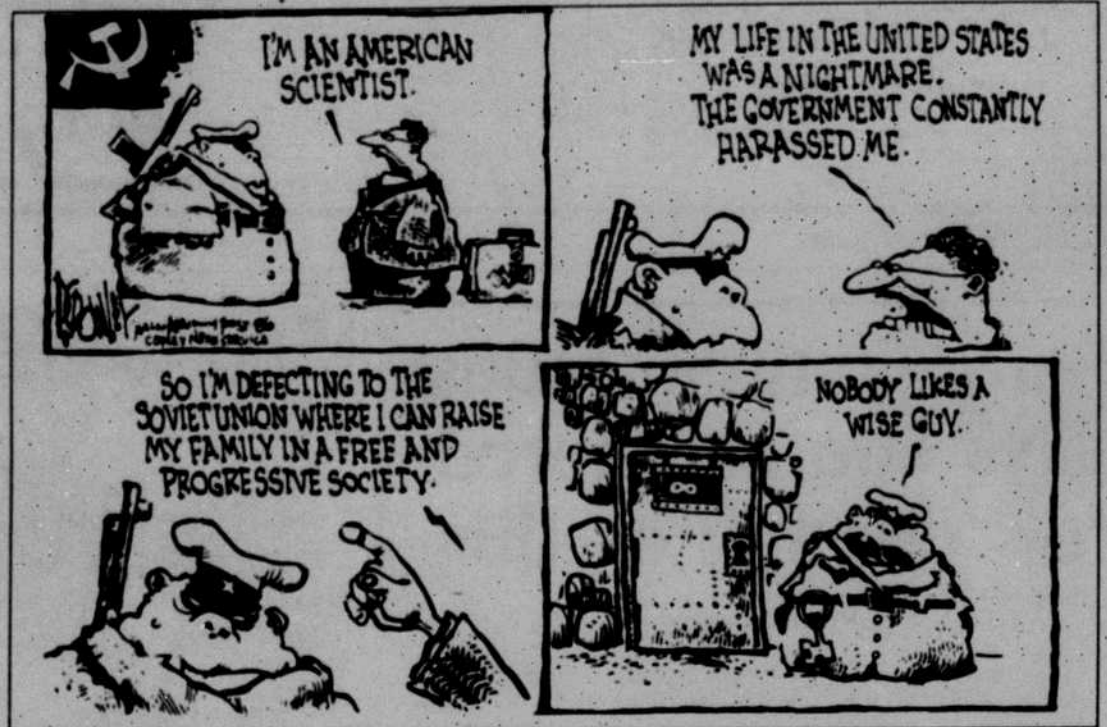
The sister university project is by nature political; because of the state of affairs in El Salvador, it cannot be purely a cultural and educational exchange.

It is critical that the University support academics at the sister university; besides supplies sent, the mere thought of the support of the University and others like it helps the sister university as it regains its academic and administrative standing.

Any debate inspired by the program or its political overtones will only benefit the University; it is important that students see what is happening in Central America.

However, any benefit from the program will be lost if it degrades into a platform for political grandstanding. Very serious issues are being raised in Central America, and large numbers of students and Americans support arguments for and against U.S. intervention.

Even with this consideration, the project should go forward, with the support of incidental fees, though student government should make an effort to sound the opinion of all students, and maintain a responsible presentation of what is happening in El Salvador.



Letters

Parking

I feel a desperate need to respond to the Oct. 10 editorial about the University's parking problem. There are many valid reasons for using a personal automobile to and from the campus; for example, transportation to and from child care centers, another off-campus job, working irregular hours, family emergencies, etc.

Each of these is a valid reason for driving to campus, and those who drive have the right to do so.

The editorial suggested that we should all be able to find alternative means of transportation. Hitchhiking was suggested as an alternative, but we must consider that the reason more people do not hitchhike (especially women) is because of the number of rapes and murders related to this activity. Bicycles provide a fine form of transportation unless you live far from campus, must come to or leave the campus when it's dark, or must transport others or large loads. Bus schedules and routes are not always convenient or adequate.

No one seems to be able to provide a quick solution to this problem. Public Safety sells twice as many parking permits as there are spaces to park, then has our wages or our general fees garnished for each time we, in desperation, must leave our cars in a restricted zone for a

few moments while we tell our bosses or professors or students that we'll be a little late because we are looking for a place to park.

It is obvious by now that our parking problem is not going away, so we must take steps to solve it. It affects University students, staff and faculty as well as members of the local community who utilize campus resources such as the libraries and outreach programs or patronize campus businesses and restaurants.

Please take a stand in favor of finding immediate solutions to this problem by attending the next meeting of the Parking Committee at 5:15, Tuesday, Oct. 21 in Room 101 Friendly Hall.

Molly L. Drahn and Gail Eyman
UO Science Library

El Salvador

In the last seven years the United States government has sent over one billion dollars to the El Salvadoran government to finance and maintain an unjust war that has already claimed the lives of over 60,000 civilians and displaced one million people.

Friday, Oct. 10, this tiny country was rocked by an earthquake, leaving 1,000 dead and 100,000 homeless. The Reagan administration's response — \$300,000 for earthquake relief.

This Band-Aid can't come close to healing the wounds caused by U.S. foreign policy in El Salvador; these wounds which are now compounded by a devastating earthquake. The Reagan administration's response to this disaster is further proof of the priorities of the United States in El Salvador; military aid before medical aid.

Robyn Braverman
Eugene

Flag-waver

Well, that was quite an all-star military ad issue of the Emerald last week. Nice to see my tax dollars at work on behalf of the Marines, Army, and the CIA (ODE Oct. 15).

You know, somehow it was fitting that the Emerald editorial commentary, in the same issue,

should advocate the State Board "watching over" the ASUO.

Let's see if I got it straight. James Young, formerly of the Commentator, now Emerald editorial writer, is telling us that our student incidental fees really belong to the state. Oh.

As far as I can tell, all the state does is to take our money, invest it (you know where), keep the interest, and then give it back so that we can fund student activities.

And commentator Young is telling us that representative democratic control of those funds should be terminated because he doesn't like some of those activities. Oh.

I wish there was some way I could put the military-mad, deficit-driven Reagan government into receivership.

Commentator Young's last argument is that student government is invalid because a minority of students bother to vote. Therefore, the State Board (in the person of Bill Lemman?) should pay us our money like an allowance — if we behave. Oh.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected by 26 percent of the registered U.S. voters. Not eligible; registered.

Looks like Young's ideal of student government is one of passive flag-wavers, singing Pat Boone songs, waiting breathlessly for the next game. Or the next war.

Roscoe Caron
Education

Roscoe Caron is a current member of the ASUO Constitution Court, and former student senator.

Editor's note: Student incidental fees, paid by each student at registration to support student activities, are considered state taxes, as determined by the opinion of the Attorney General. The Oregon State Board of Higher Education gives the student Incidental Fee Committee the power to recommend how the fees should be allocated, and usually abides by this recommendation.

All editorials represent the opinion of the entire six-member editorial board.

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