

Ban on classified research not feasible

The University Senate today will consider whether to ban classified research at the proposed Riverfront Research Park.

Although the proposed park will be a beneficial adjunct to the University, it is nonetheless not part of the University — and must operate under different standards. It is not feasible to even have the park with a classified research ban.

Although government classified research will be only a small portion of research at the park, whether companies can undertake this type of research is crucial to their decisions to locate in the park.

The currently planned ban on weapons research will be enforceable with classified research going on; while details of classified research are unobtainable, the general thrust of the research is obtainable. Moreover, any University representative with government clearance could review the research.

Concerns over Star Wars research at the park also are unfounded; much Star Wars research is not, per se, distinguishable from other basic research, including research funded by organizations such as the National Science Foundation.

As much as we oppose Star Wars, the emphasis only can be on the type of research — not that Star Wars sponsors it.

The motion to ban classified research tries to force national defense issues through the University onto the proposed park. Neither place is an appropriate ground for settling national policy disputes.

In any case, the motion undoubtedly will go on to the University Assembly for final resolution, where we hope it will be defeated. Stopping classified research at the park is tantamount to stopping the park itself.

Changing no-pass to 'F' detrimental to students

Effective fall term 1987, the University will begin to compute students' grade-point averages as the primary reference for undergraduates of satisfactory progress toward graduation.

The University Senate today will consider whether the University should grade all no-pass grades, or N's, as F's — rather than as currently planned, that the first 15 hours of N's not be computed in a student's GPA.

Why, then, have pass/no-pass grades at all? Pass/no-pass grading is supposed to be distinct from letter grading, since a pass/no-pass grade does not allow for GPA-boosting A's.

Under the motion's provision, students would not only be penalized by losing credits for courses in which they receive N's, but by damaging their GPA as well — significantly altering the meaning of an N to the detriment of students.

Moreover, students who have been going to school for several years under the current system would suddenly find the meaning of any N's on their transcripts changed drastically — even if they have only one or two.

The motion changes the whole balance provided in the pass/no-pass system. Hopefully, the senate will have some empathy for students and vote the measure down.



Commentary

Top-quality faculty generate grants for research; boost Oregon's economy

When you hire winners, you can count on a payoff as surely as when you buy a winning lottery ticket.

Recently, I saw an analysis that illustrates how hiring and keeping the best college and university faculty can pay off even better than that.

In a nationwide study of university chemistry departments, the 23-member University department ranked 11th in outside research dollars generated per faculty member.

This may surprise you: the University chemistry department won an average of \$185,000 per faculty member in outside research support, more than prestigious schools such as Yale, UCLA, Northwestern, Purdue and UC-Berkeley.

That and other money is being added to the Oregon economy because we hired outstanding faculty with excellent reputations.

But Oregon, long at the top of the salary pack, is struggling

just to stay even.

The need to hire and retain excellent faculty is the reason the Oregon State Board of Higher Education established faculty salaries as its number one general-fund priority in the 1987 Oregon Legislature.

Nearly everyone understands that to attract the best people, we must be competitive. After years of neglect, Oregon is beginning to do that.

By William Davis

In 1985, the Oregon Legislature voted \$400 million for higher-education salaries. This money was used not only for across-the-board raises, but also to recognize top professors and to pay more in highly competitive disciplines such as business and the sciences.

As a result, faculty salaries at Oregon's three major public universities are expected to rise to 76th out of 108 comparable institutions. This is good news for Oregonians who want their public colleges and universities to deliver the best not only in education, research and public service, but also economic recovery.

As recently as last year, faculty salaries at Oregon's research universities were a disgrace, ranking near the bottom among comparable schools.

The State Board has asked for 6.5 percent faculty salary increases to keep up with average raises at colleges and universities across the nation, plus 1.85 percent to move Oregon forward.

The State Board's goal is to pay salaries comparable to those in states of similar size and resources such as Colorado, Kansas, Arizona, Nevada, Iowa and Wyoming.

Reaching this goal will help our public, four-year colleges and universities do even more to stimulate the Oregon economy.

Oregon State University figures probably 50 faculty members on the Corvallis campus bring in \$100,000 or more annually in grants and contracts.

For example, a biochemistry professor brought in an average of \$377,000 a year over a five-year period, while a geophysics professor averaged \$375,000 annually for five years.

At the University, four recently hired science faculty together have attracted more than \$4 million in grants.

Unfortunately, we also have dozens of examples of good people who have left Oregon — and who have refused job offers from Oregon schools — for better salaries elsewhere. At the University, for example, two assistant professors of marketing left to earn \$5,000 and \$6,500 more at the University of Tennessee and University of Alabama. At Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, a computer-systems instructor left a \$25,600 job to earn \$45,000 (with a reduced teaching load) at the University of Iowa.

Top-flight professors attract research dollars to their states, which economists tell us turn over several times more in every sector of the economy. Moreover, first-rate professors deliver excellence in the classroom.

No doubt about it: Attracting the best college and university teachers and researchers into our state colleges and universities is a sure bet for Oregon.

William Davis is chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

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