

Community colleges need greater voice

House Bill 2530 would be an effective way to promote the interests of community colleges at the state level. It would also increase their visibility at the state Legislature, thereby upgrading the quality of the colleges.

Currently, community colleges are in the same jurisdiction as kindergarten through grade 12 programs. Supporters of the bill, headed by the Oregon Community College Association (OCCA), argue placing community colleges on an equal level with primary and secondary education forces the colleges to compete for funds.

Four-year colleges and universities are represented by the State Board of Higher Education and remain separate from community colleges and lower education. Because of this, four-year institutions do not have to compete for legislative attention. Their problems are addressed directly to the state.

HB 2530 would divide the community colleges from K-12 education and provide a chancellor to head a new board established specifically for the community colleges with their interests in mind.

The process of reporting to the State Board of Education would remain the same, and the community colleges would still be on the same level as lower education. However, the two programs will not have to compete for attention in the state Legislature for funding.

Opponents of the bill say there would be increased costs for a new agency and fear the state would take over community colleges, originally created by and for local citizens. The argument goes that a state chancellor would destroy community college autonomy.

A compromise bill has been proposed to relieve some of the representation problems of community colleges and eliminates some of the fears of state control. The bill would require the state to consider community college issues at least six times a year. But this does not adequately deal with the problem. It only acts to pacify the OCCA.

The concerns surrounding bill 2530 are unfounded. Almost no new costs would be incurred because personnel representing the state's 15 community colleges already work for the superintendent of Public Instruction. No new funds would have to be allocated for this new office — the money would come from the existing community college budget.

Community colleges were created to provide higher education at the local level. A new agency created to promote colleges' ideas and interest would not take away this concept. The chancellor would be hired to represent the community colleges. This office would not wield broad, unchecked powers, but simply would act as a centralized mouthpiece for community college concerns.

Community colleges are integral to the wider concept of education. As four-year colleges and universities become more expensive to attend, community colleges become a more popular outlet for students to begin their education. Letting this outlet to the community deteriorate is a greater risk than the unfounded fears of state control of the program.

The bill promotes community colleges and recognizes their importance. It moves the colleges away from the level of lower education and equates them with four-year institutions. The local citizens can only benefit from this bill. It has the propensity to provide a powerful voice for community colleges.



"Am I supposed to get mad at somebody now?..."

Letters

An old flame

Last month Surgeon General Koop called for practical prophylactics, as being the most effective precaution against the spread of AIDS... "next to abstinence."

AMA president Dr. John Coury assented to this medical wisdom. But he likewise pleaded for the application of "a little more morality" in combating the disease. Old words — abstinence, morality. Like virtue, continence, courtesy: discarded notions.

But virtue, like morality, is not just an unfashionable concept; not a farce, thrown into caricature by the posturing of the self-righteous... Falwell, Oral Roberts. Virtue. It is our own abandoned ideal. It is our own lost vision. Where is it?

St. John foresaw a day when love would wax cold. Bruce Springsteen laments:

Now young faces grown sad and old

And hearts of fire grow cold.

And (not to put words in his mouth) it seems "even the youth utterly fail and faint."

The young surrender to self-indulgence, trading away their ideals for a few scattered moments of pleasure. Vanishing moments. And somewhere in the midst of all the pleasure love dies.

Yes indeed, condoms... if we are resigned; if we are that

weak. But further indulgence of the same excess — substituting a latex prophylactic for spine and self-control — won't slow the spread of moral and psychological contagions.

Protect yourself; protect the one you think you could love: practice continence, as foremost medical authorities recommend. Not only is this medically "safe sex," it just might preserve a spark of your heart of fire...to be rekindled.

Roch Steinbach
Law

Lighten up

Blake Louis Sliter, you're beginning to get on my nerves (ODE, Feb. 25). Your obsession with the greek system has overstepped the bounds of common sense.

I think it is very clear to everyone that the only people who actively admire the greek system are already members of it. "Beer sluts" and swimming pools will not lure unsuspecting students into the greeks.

Yes, the greeks are "cliquey"; yes, the system perpetuates sexual stereotypes; yes, they react xenophobically to any criticism; yes, they can even be drunk, obnoxious and belligerent. So what?

It is their system. No one is forced to join. Those that do, do so because they like the system the way it is. You can't change them, so you might as well leave them alone.

They can sit, smugly confident that they are envied by non-greeks, while the rest of us sit, confident that Charles Manson with a flamethrower couldn't force us to join.

Mr. Sliter, last year I admired

your stand. This year you've progressed from grudge to neurosis. Everyone has the right to go to hell in their own fashion. Leave them theirs, and they'll leave you yours. After all, they haven't bothered mine.

Tom Jeffries
Journalism

Motherhood

I just completed reading the first in the series on surrogate motherhood (ODE, Feb. 24). It is most interesting if not provocative. I was particularly drawn to the comments by much maligned Jenny Cassem who, upon being identified as a high-class hooker, remarked, "...Mary was a surrogate mother and she got into heaven all right."

It appears, historically, at least, that Jenny is only half-right. In the late '40's, the Pope celebrating the Marian Year, did declare that the Virgin Mary ascended bodily into heaven; certainly an indisputable dictum. But surrogate mother, Mary was not. She kept the boy and it appears that no one objected.

In the instance cited, the Holy Ghost was the surrogate father. The difference then and now is that now, the surrogate mother and the hopeful parents-to-be are well aware of what the plan is. Then, Joseph was not, initially, taken into the partnership as to who would do the seed planting. In fact, there is some reason to believe that he was somewhat irritated about the whole affair.

R.N. Lowe
Counseling Psychology

Letters Policy

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

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