

Editorial

Administrator raises not really justified

Last week's revelations that 37 college and university administrators split \$648,000 in pay raises in the last two years illustrates dim foresight and is a textbook example of poor timing.

State Legislatures were irked to learn of the pay hikes and deemed them inappropriate. Increases in administrators' salaries exceeded those of faculty for the years 1985-86 and 1986-87 — administrator pay raises averaged \$17,500 each, roughly one percent more than that of faculty raises.

University administrators justify this discrepancy by citing the case of University Vice President Dan Williams. He was appointed vice president in the middle of the 1983-85 biennial, and at the time the State System of Higher Education lacked funds to increase his pay above his previous housing director salary.

The University quickly set about to correct this problem. In a two-year period the University raised Williams' salary by 33 percent, thereby bringing it up to par with that of his administrative peers.

Although this accounts for the percentage disparity between administrators' and faculty's salaries, the decision to bring Williams' salary in line with those of other vice presidents in such a short time has come back to haunt administrators and faculty alike.

Williams' salary — and other administrators' salaries for that matter — should have been increased at a slower pace. While the state system may have been correct in raising administrators' salaries, it could have done so with less haste. The numbers look conspicuous, and state faculty members have reason to complain.

Higher education officials maintain that professor pay raises are their priority this year. But faculty pay raises should have been their number one priority last year when administrators were getting their salaries boosted.

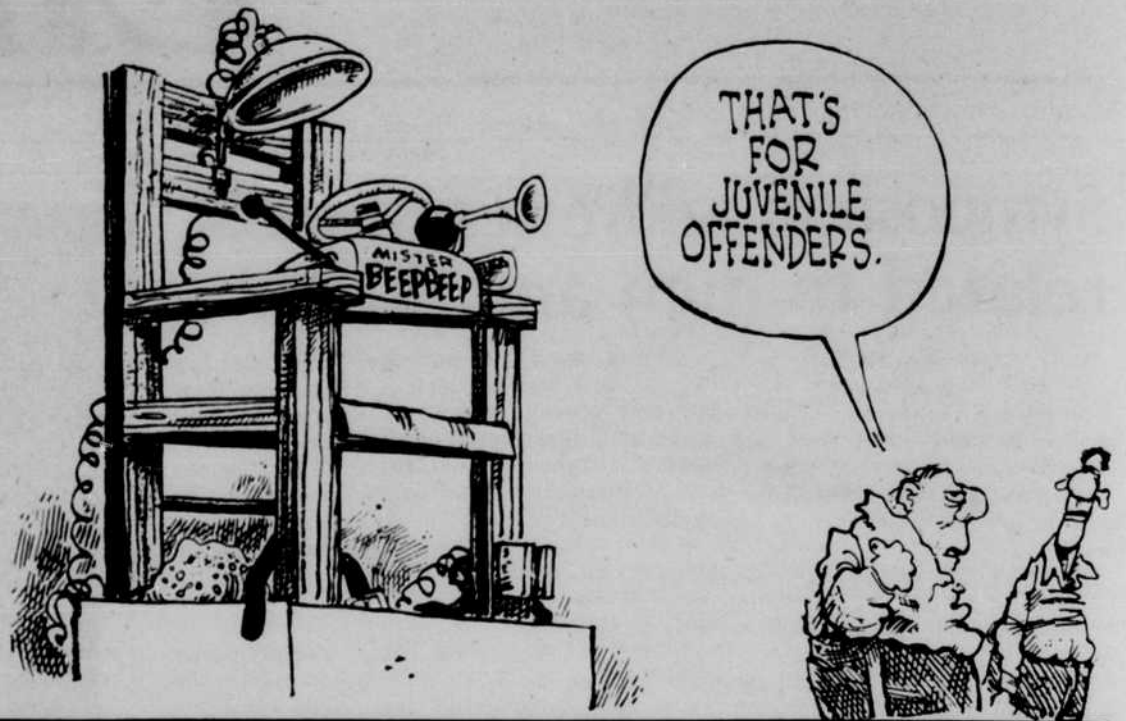
Moreover, it will be harder for the state system to justify faculty pay raises to the Legislature. Many legislators will be asking why faculty pay increases were subordinated to those of administrators, and citing the Williams case may not cut the proverbial mustard.

The governor has recommended slashing more than half the \$47 million proposed by the board of higher education for faculty pay raises. Higher education officials will have a tough time convincing the education subcommittee to approve the \$47 million, and the increase in administrators' salaries will only hamper these efforts.

In light of this, administrative pay raises appear to have been politically imprudent. More thought should have gone into assessing the ramifications of increasing administrators' salaries. Clearly, the timing and tact of the raises could have been handled better.

Part of the duties of being an administrator entail sacrifice — sacrifice of time, labor, and yes, money. It would have served the faculty of this University better had administration officials placed professor needs above their own. It also would have behooved administrators themselves, for now they have to contend with the political fallout in the Legislature and faculty animosity here on campus.

RON KOPPEL
COPPEL NEWS SERVICE



Letters

Who's in charge

Has the Obie administration engaged in back-room deals over the Riverfront Research Park? If so, the news should surprise no one. The story of Eugene city government is a story of foregone conclusions.

Remember fall 1982? The City Council met informally over a dinner whose price tag discouraged open attendance. Suddenly, the new Eugene Performing Arts Center was no more; out of a \$3 million contribution, the Hult Center was born.

Or how about the last mayoral election? It's a mystery to me why the press consigned serious contenders with innovative ideas to the lunatic fringe along with wheatgerm. Maybe they just didn't have enough money. Meet the mayor: a smooth-talking businessman who owns half the town.

And today? Obie proclaims he is committed to expanding the airport regardless of the cost to other city programs. He has nothing to say about Battelle Corporation's finding that the airport is big enough already. Meanwhile, the Downtown Commission, despite opposi-

tion and lack of supporting evidence, makes our pedestrian mall the scapegoat for downtown Eugene's economic failure.

So who's really running the show? In theory, Eugeneans are blessed with an unusually accessible city government. But broad participation can become a curse: the opposition is free to destroy itself in factional warfare.

And — paradoxically — a shrewd City Hall, because it diligently goes through the motion of democracy, feels justified in doing whatever it pleases. The result: While we quibble over every threatened tree trunk, Obie and The Pavers are revving up their bulldozers.

Matt Gushee
History

Let it be

I am tired and offended on behalf of my religious friends, of reading haughty letters such as the one published Feb. 25 from Sandra Francisconi. Religion has been a prominent part of almost every culture the world has ever known, at least until communist societies began eradicating it at the point of a gun. Hallucinogenic drugs, to which Sandra compares religion, have no such record of success.

Religion has succeeded over the millennia in dramatically different cultures for the only possible reason: it satisfies fundamental, universal human needs — needs from which Sandra Francisconi — and Stan VerNooy — are not exempt.

Religion has given meaning, value and direction to many lives which would have otherwise been empty and aimless. Only religion is capable of producing a Mother Teresa.

The letters of William Moore breathe with a passionate decency which is notably absent from the self-centered, greedy, my-rights-are-the-only-ones-which-count attitudes of his opponents. That passionate decency is entirely a product of Mr. Moore's religion. Ms. Francisconi's letter is only a confes-

sion of ignorance of life, religion, and saddest of all, of herself.

Me? I used to be a very religious person. Then I decided that religion promotes views of God, people, and the world which are too narrow and illogical for me to accept. Now I am an optimistic agnostic. Am I better for having made the change? I don't think so. But one can only believe what one believes.

Stan VerNooy
GTF, Math

Living dead

The CBS evening news recently speculated that the millions of fish and many birds that have died at Carson Sink were "the result of separate acts of man and nature combined to create a unique slaughter."

Well, we know that man can't do anything right, i.e., guns, bombs, Star Wars and females' pants; but why bring God down to our level? But He won't let us forget Him, so He gives us UFOs, beached whales and Ronald Reagan.

I submit that God has a big job keeping all the naturally curious people busy trying to figure out nature, and we shouldn't impugn Him for worrying us. Didn't He free the seals in Alaska which were trapped by an ice floe after man couldn't?

But I'm surprised that the Sink tragedy isn't heralded as a sign from God that the End of Hell is at hand.

Remember when two atom bombs were dropped on Japanese civilians? That was to study the long-term effects of radiation on all ages. The sex and violence of the media is another long-term scientific study of mental breakdown.

But Judgment must begin at the house of God. That's where people show off their wealth, you know, and where children are trained to give money to God, and to lie and say they're saved or born-again. But one must first die to be born again.

Wayne L. Johnson
San Diego

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