

Editorial

The quarter system shouldn't be abolished

Although the wheels already have been set in motion to convert Oregon's public four-year institutions to the semester system, some legislators are voicing concern about the wisdom of such a plan. We agree with these lawmakers and reiterate our position that the change is not only unnecessary, but it may do more harm than good.

Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-Portland, has reintroduced a bill (HB 2913) that would retain the current quarter system. We support this bill, and we hope that it is given serious consideration when it goes into hearing April 14.

The State Board of Higher Education enthusiastically supports the conversion. It maintains that students would benefit academically from the two 15-week semesters because teachers could provide more depth to their courses. This argument is moot, however, when it is remembered many courses are offered sequentially, and course depth can be achieved by taking three terms of a certain subject.

Moreover, the quarter system preserves scholastic flexibility. Students now are offered a broad range of courses — if they want to specialize, again, they can take sequential courses. Similarly, students can enter and exit universities more frequently under the current system. This is especially important for non-traditional students who appreciate the extra enrollment opportunity.

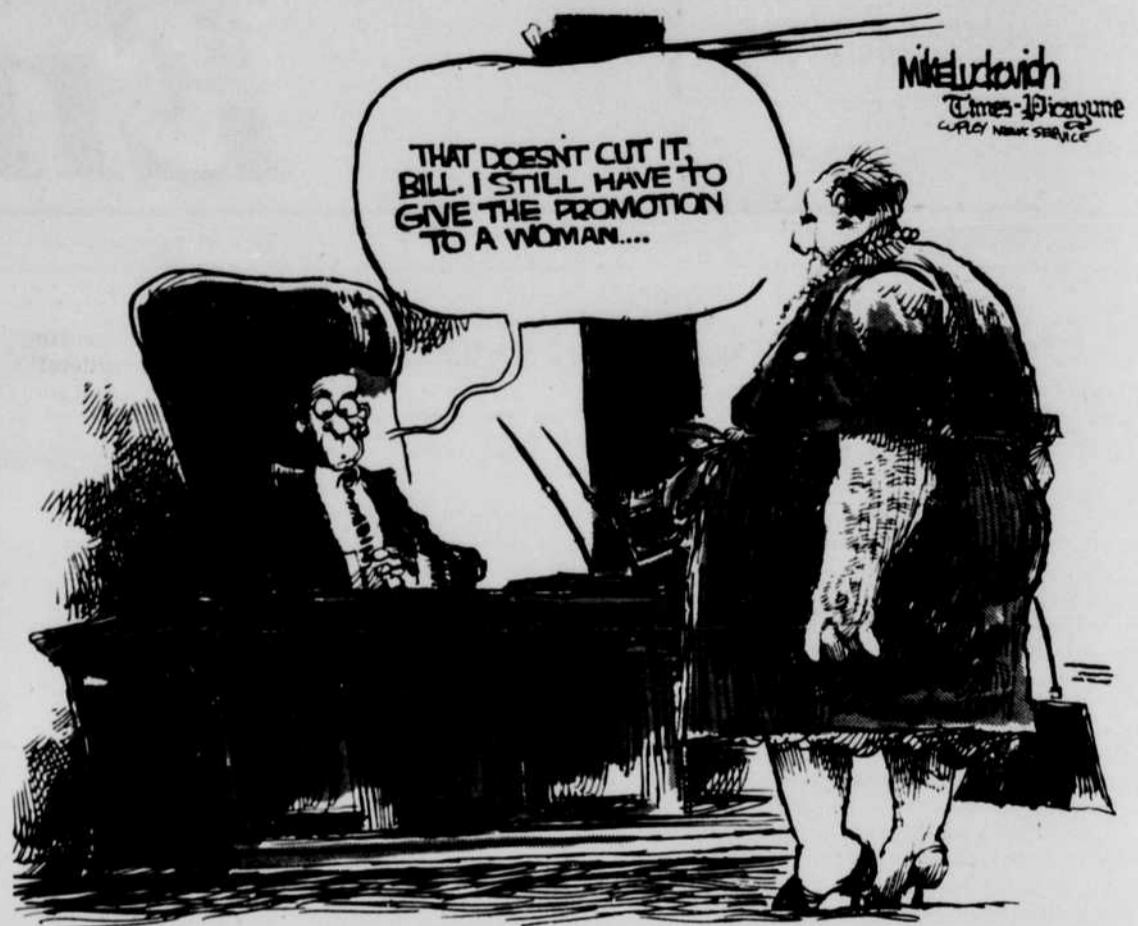
Supporters of the semester conversion have failed to adequately address other concerns as well. One of these is the effect converting to the semester system would have on student enrollment patterns. For example, a study published by the director of institutional research at the University of Central Florida in Orlando cited that out of nine universities that switched to the semester system, all but one faced an increase in students withdrawing from classes.

Supporters also gaffe when they say the conversion will not cost anything. This is patently false. Although it may be true no new personnel will have to be hired to ease the transition, instructors will have to devote time to reshaping course curriculums. The old adage "time is money" applies here.

While no dollar figure can be fixed to the final cost of the conversion, evidence proves that it will, indeed, be costly. The University of Tennessee recorded a cost of \$326,000 for converting to the semester system. Closer to home, Washington State University's conversion totaled \$170,000. Oregon's switch to the semester system conceivably would be much greater because the conversion would apply to all public, four-year colleges and universities, except the Oregon Health Sciences University.

This is bad news considering the budget-cutting mood permeating the state. The legislature has ordered the State Board to cut \$10 million from its budget. It is odd that the State Board would attempt to implement a costly program in light of this budget-slashing mandate.

The State Board also has voiced objections to legislators interfering with educational affairs. This is nothing more than shrill tirading. If legislators did not raise these valid concerns, then who would? Frankly, it is comforting to know that a few in state government care enough to question an unwise program when they see it.



Letters

Pure bunk

Where does the irresponsibility of the so-called Christian letter writers end? In the Friday, March 13 issue of the Emerald there were two more letters of pure bunk.

In Lloyd Lovell's letter "Without religion," the all-too-common arrogance of the self-righteous factions of moral and religious judges has once again shown that the addiction of egotistical desires is greater than humble virtues of true spiritual, religious behavior.

Mr. Lovell ended his letter by writing, "He (Professor Rousseve) is now a post-agnostic atheist." I guess this kind behavior by Mr. Lovell is just his way of showing us all how the love of Jesus has inspired him.

Then the laughable defense of the "Reverend" (not in Webster's definition) Oral Roberts added insanity to the letters page.

In Dan Goulet's letter "Oral defense," he compared Oral Roberts with Bob Geldof. This comparison recklessly overlooks the fact that Roberts' methods of getting his money in

effect make him an extortionist.

And the sad part is, his naive followers suck it all up and believe anything this financially gluttonous man tells them. Roberts, like the rest of his constituents, is a liability to the Christian faith.

Geldof, on the other hand, is in the truest sense of the word a sincerely humble person. He does not claim to speak with God and certainly doesn't live the disgustingly gluttonous lifestyle that Roberts lives.

Patrick Clancy
Eugene

What you want

We wish to correct any misconceptions about the Counseling Center that may have been caused by the article "Counselors' lack of perspective hurts minorities..." (ODE, Mar. 16).

It is true that our center would be greatly enriched by having more minority counselors — to this end we work hard to recruit qualified minority candidates. However, it would be a mistake to assume that our staff is not striving to meet minority students' needs for counseling.

Several of our staff have extensive training and experience in working with minority students. All of those who interview for our positions are questioned about their training, experience and sensitivity to minority students' needs.

Further, good counseling is characterized by a counselors' willingness to form a relationship with a student that is based on openness and readiness to explore that student's world.

Sensitivity is always required when the counselors' world differs from that of the student's — this is also true in the case of other populations such as students who are physically impaired, who have a different sexual orientation from that of their counselors, or drug and alcohol problems, or bulimia, for example.

Two variables may add to satisfaction with counseling: 1) having a counselor who can understand because he or she has experienced the student's own situation, and 2) having a counselor who can understand because of sensitivity to the feelings being expressed as well as training and experience in the area.

In the case of minority students' needs, we shall continue our efforts on both counts.

Suzanne Gascoyne
Marc Taylor
Mark Evans
Saul Toobert
Counseling Center

Back up

I find it unbelievable that Patrick Clancy would resort to the tactics used in his latest letter (ODE, Mar. 13). Since he listed no source to substantiate his claim about Victor Perevedentsev (contained in his last paragraph) I suspect it wasn't accurate in the least.

But if it wasn't just a complete fabrication (designed to unfairly discredit a source) then I challenge Mr. Clancy to prove what he said.

It's one thing to attack a person's point of view with sound reasoning. It's another thing to substitute reason with... well, let's just say it's best to back up your arguments, Mr. Clancy. I'll just leave it at that.

Also, I'm so sorry that Victor Perevedentsev's name sounds so exotic to you. But it would be rather difficult to quote a Soviet source on demographics without finding a Russian name attached to it.

By the way, what's wrong with quoting such a gentleman? I hope you're not being ethnocentric or xenophobic. After all, sometimes we can learn valuable lessons from other cultures, Mr. Clancy.

Michael Cross
Political science, history
Friday, April 3, 1987

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