

Sexual harassment review a necessity

The Status of Women Committee took a belated and necessary step forward Thursday with its overview of sexual harassment at the University, and we commend the action as a forum for needed change.

The first-degree rape and sexual-abuse charge convictions of University religious studies Professor Stephen Reynolds, coupled with alleged sexual harassment charges against Reynolds by at least six women during a 14-year period at the University, illustrate how an offender could circumvent the normal channels that deal with sexual harassment.

Following the Reynolds harassment disclosure, University President Paul Olum asked the Status of Women Committee in November 1986 whether a review of the University's policy of sexual harassment was necessary. It subsequently found need for review, with its results first being aired May 21.

Sexual harassment is markedly different from other forms of discrimination and should be governed by procedures that are different from those for discrimination as well as other academic and employment grievances. More privacy during the investigation and decision process is necessary.

We agree a grievance hearing officer would do much to bring definite accountability in terms of action taken as a result of a sexual harassment complaint. We encourage the counselor to take an advocate role, rather than advisory, to assist the grievant in formulating and following up the complaint and to represent the grievant in any capacity.

The grievance officer also should be independent of the Office of Affirmative Action. We wish to see joint University/student incidental fee-funded implementation of the program so the service would be available not only to students but faculty and staff as well.

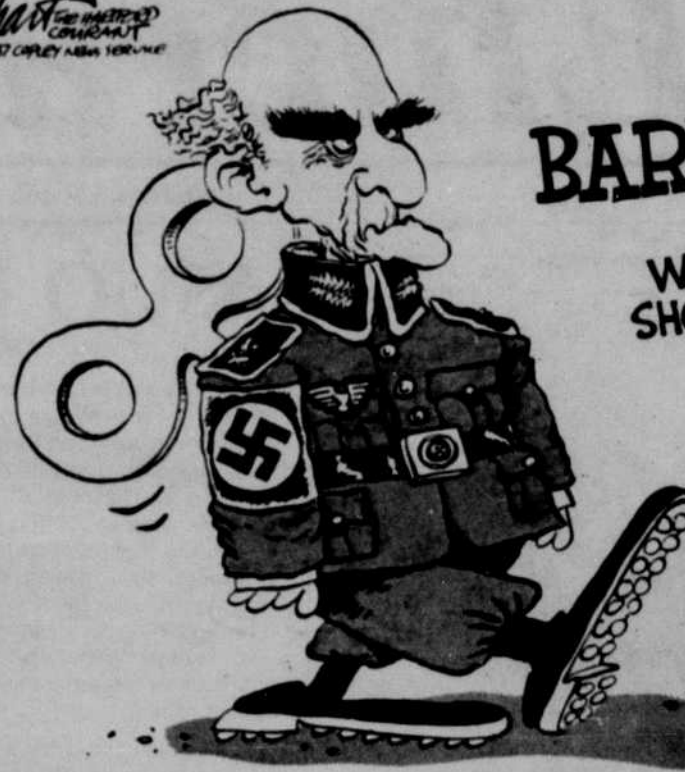
The present sexual harassment definition is inadequate, and we salute the committee's effort for a more detailed definition of the problem. Victims of sexual harassment often are unsure whether their complaints are valid. A clear definition of harassment would do much to end the ambiguity of questionable actions.

We question the present system of handling complaints and encourage greater statistical record keeping of grievances. With both informal and formal complaints, the complainant does not know what action, if any, has been taken as a result, and no permanent record of the complaint is kept by the University. This will allow the complainant to decide if he or she is satisfied or wishes to appeal the decision.

Indefinite records should be kept to monitor repeat offenders, and statistical summaries of sexual-harassment complaints should be circulated to draw attention to the situation. The present three-year period for keeping formal sexual-harassment records remains inadequate because the University cannot plot long-term problem areas. Informal complaints deserve the same status; they presently are not filed.

The Status of Women Committee open forum was a needed step in addressing the long-term problem and often unspoken issue of sexual harassment. Identifying the problems shows initiative; solving the problem will show commitment. We hope the Status of Women Committee, in conjunction with the University and the ASUO, can cure one of the campus' overlooked and too readily accepted ailments.

Laugh at the HARASSMENT COMRADES
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Letters

ATO apology

To whom it may concern:
I would like to apologize on behalf of my fraternity for its actions during the Greek Week Variety Show.

Unable to attend the function, I unfortunately heard about the incident well after it happened.

The comments made to other fraternities and sororities were definitely uncalled for, not to mention the choice of language used.

I personally extend an apology to parents, faculty, alumni and to the rest of the University for creating an embarrassing situation.

Franklin W. Bender
President, Alpha Tau Omega

SPA pranks

Old ideologies die hard. A plea for women-only drivers for Safaride in the May/June Record stated "it is impossible to develop criteria" to distinguish between men who would or wouldn't rape.

Furthermore, The Record has an impassioned plea for a last-minute sale of the anti-apartheid posters since "rumor has it" that the Executive suite

would be cleansed of some of the politically "correct" art we've suffered for years.

Should anyone really be surprised?

Ask Laura Romano, Adam Apalategui and Jim Randall who suffered vicious smears from the SPA for deviating from ideological purity.

As SPA ideology degenerates into the politics of special-interest corruption, the SPA will continue to use intimidation and harassment to enforce party discipline.

This will lead to more bizarre SPA propaganda and more ideological defectors.

Andrew Beckwith
Graduate, physics

In-born quality

Recent letters have presented the argument that homosexuality is not a natural, in-born quality. I disagree.

Homosexuality runs in families! I have many friends who could vouch for this, but in my case, for example, we are five for five. Like me, my four sisters and brothers are gay and my parents are very androgynous people.

When science becomes sophisticated enough to measure extremely complex hormonal balances between estrogen, progesterone and testosterone, we will be able to test this special difference.

It's true that a gay person can live a heterosexual lifestyle just the way a naturally left-handed person can be forced to live a right-handed lifestyle.

But society has come to recognize that trying to change

left-handedness was oppressive and damaging. I hope society will soon realize the same thing about trying to change the natural quality of homosexuality.

The genetic basis for gay people's androgyny is not determined by one single gene, but by many interacting genes, as with the genetic basis for intelligence.

All women and men have the potential, through genetic recombination, to produce a gay child. If the mother is very estrogen-laden ("macho") there will be less than a 10 percent probability that their child is gay, while if both parents are androgynous, the probability will be greater than 10 percent.

The delicate hormonal balance underlying homosexuality is cherished by nature and will always come back, generation after generation, according to a 10 percent probability.

Laura Desertrain, Ph.D.
Eugene

Housing woes

As a current dormitory resident, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the housing department for its efficient and neutral housing selection policy.

After waiting 26 hours to choose a room, it was a blessing to start the selection process at 5:30 instead of the specified 5.

To compound my delight, however, was the lack of responsible and knowledgeable housing personnel.

No one knew exactly what the proper procedures were, or how to implement them. Not only did they segregate the returning residents by desired housing complex, but neglected to process the line in the honored and equitable first-come, first-served basis.

In the future, I must consider the terms housing department and efficient mutually exclusive.

Kurt Heppler
Political science

Tuesday, May 26, 1987

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