

Editorial

Waivers emphasize sports funding

The athletic tuition waivers approved by the State Board of Higher Education July 25 have created a myriad of questions regarding the age-old controversy of academics vs. athletics.

The State Board allocated \$1 million in tuition waivers to be divided between the seven state colleges and universities in Oregon. The University is authorized to waive \$350,000 in tuitions.

Because this money is designated for tuitions, it allows the money already allocated for scholarships to be used for other programs. The Board hopes to promote the lower athletic programs and improve Oregon's Pacific-10 Conference status with the extra money.

Currently, basketball and football generate most of the funds to operate the other athletic programs. Donations and student fees also cover expenses.

Associate Athletic Director Chris Volez described the tuition waivers as a "shot in the arm" for the athletic program. "It emphasizes sports with other academics," she added.

Oregon had been the only state in the West that did not provide some form of state support for athletics. Both the University and Oregon State University rank eighth in athletic budgets among the Pac-10 schools.

The Athletic Department believes a strong budget is the key to strong teams, and the tuition waivers will help the University's Pac-10 standing in the long run.

The football and men's basketball programs at the University have not been competitive, but the State Board has taken a stance that athletics are an important aspect of education and University culture. By approving the tuition waivers, the State Board is putting a 12-year-old policy into action.

But if the state is serious about putting athletics in Oregon back on its feet, more action must be taken.

According to Athletic Director Bill Byrne the waivers are only "a reduction of expenses." The University already issues \$600,000 in tuition scholarships — NCAA regulations limit the amount of scholarship money a college gives. The \$350,000 from the State Board will allow money allocated for scholarships to be spent on programs and other debts.

However, the state should seek to reduce the student's cost of funding athletics. Last spring students approved a 43 percent increase in Athletic Department incidental fees, raising the cost to \$24.18 per student per term. If the increase hadn't been accepted, the athletic department risked cutting more sports from its program and losing its Pac-10 status.

More state support would not be shifting the burden of finance from the students to the taxpayers. It would be sharing the responsibilities. The community benefits economically every time a sporting event attracts visitors.

With time and money the University can establish a successful and prominent athletic program. But the benefits will only be seen in the future. The state must decide now if it is willing to take the effort necessary to create such a program. If it is not going to follow through with support, then the money would be better spent on education.

The State Board has agreed that sports are inherent in academics. But if the University cannot afford athletics then the emphasis must be shifted to academics.

The tuition waivers are a needed gesture to boost Oregon athletics. The state should not stop with the waivers, however, or the gesture will become meaningless.



Commentary

Fatalities raise traffic concern

The tragic deaths of three pedestrians killed while walking on Franklin Boulevard on Sunday serve as a stark reminder of the frailty of the human body — and the destructive force of the automobile.

Commentary by
Stanley Nelson

On the University campus, cloaked behind the regulation of no motorized vehicles, students walk East 13th Avenue from University to Kincaid streets without regard for, and seemingly unaware of, service and Campus Safety vehicles that are allowed on East 13th.

Emergency vehicles also are allowed on East 13th Avenue when needed, but they are expected to use the fire lane.

Also without apparent regard, many of the vehicles operating on East 13th appear to assume that the responsibility to get out of the way of oncoming vehicles lies with the pedestrian.

In this lackadaisical environment, the potential exists for serious injury to both pedestrians and bicyclists.

It took more than 40 years of effort by the University and its

student body to close East 13th to motorized traffic. With the exception of emergency vehicles and the timely and coordinated need for service vehicles, the University would do best to further restrict the use of motorized vehicles on that stretch of campus.

In addition, decreasing the University's dependence on motorized Campus Safety patrols would likewise do much to reduce the risk of accident and increase the safety of the school's students and guests.

Ellis Lawrence, a prominent University architecture professor in the 1920s, designed a traffic pattern that would have rerouted East 13th at Alder Street to 11th Avenue, thereby eliminating motorized traffic in the area. Lawrence's proposal was never approved following protests by University-area merchants.

The University kept its protests for closing the section of the avenue alive in the 1960s, and the city began to listen. Stop lights were installed at the intersections of 13th Avenue at Kincaid and University streets. The lights were programmed to remain red during normal breaks between traffic, which led to much vehicle congestion.

During this time, parking on both sides of 13th Avenue was allowed, and loaded logging trucks whisked through the campus among the other traffic. Exhaust pervaded the classrooms along with the sounds from the avenue, but because of the furor over the delay the lights caused, the lights were removed.

Architecture students upset over the decision barricaded both ends of the avenue in May of 1970, which was taken over by the anti-Vietnam protestors the next day. A short time later the University and city negotiated a deal to close the section, with the University to be responsible for maintaining a fire lane.

The recent construction of the Earl A. Chiles Business Center significantly increased the traffic of service vehicles that must frequent that section of campus.

Now it appears it has become an accepted practice for service vehicles to drive on East 13th — even between class breaks when there is the greatest amount of pedestrian traffic on the street.

There were five service vehicles parked in the section of East 13th between 2:20 and 2:30 p.m. on Monday, and three of the five left during that 10-minute period.

There is no reason why a grounds maintenance vehicle should drive down the north sidewalk of East 13th outside Fenton Hall, which also occurred during the 10-minute break between classes. The responsibility fell entirely on the pedestrians to move out of the path of the oncoming cart.

The University has an adequate campus mail delivery service, yet United Parcel Service vehicles, as well as U.S. Postal Service vehicles can occasionally be seen driving in the restricted section of East 13th.

Those on campus in the evening can witness Campus Safety vehicles on patrol in the avenue, operating in the dark with only their parking lights on.

The benefits of motorized patrols may be seen when an officer is able to stop an occasional moped or motorcycle driver from operating in the restricted section, but I fail to see the effectiveness of motorized patrols to deter classroom break-ins or assaults on campus.

The pedestrian has precedence, and that always should be remembered by the few authorized to drive on East 13th, not only for safety's sake but to spare the community from another unnecessary tragedy.

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