

Editorial

Board's arguments need substantiation

State Board of Higher Education members have failed to justify reasons for the early retirement of University President Paul Olum; both the public and Olum deserve a right to know why his extension request has been denied.

During its Friday meeting, the state board completely avoided debating with those who support Olum, and failed to rebut the arguments for retaining his services until 1992. In fact, the state board virtually has offered no sound academic or economic reason for its decision to retire Olum prematurely in June 1989.

However, board member Janet Nelson of Coos Bay charged that during Olum's administration the University has devalued undergraduate programs at the expense of emphasizing graduate programs.

With this remark, the state board finally found an expedient criticism of Olum. Nelson's remark is becoming, in effect, the reason for the early dismissal of Olum.

Furthermore, State Board President James Peterson reiterated Nelson's claim during a post-meeting interview with an Emerald editor.

Peterson inappropriately places the responsibility for this alleged discrepancy of undergraduate quality on Olum. However, even if the charge is true, Olum is not to fault. Rather, it's the inability of the University to afford enough professors to teach all undergraduate level classes — a situation that has led to an overreliance on GTFs, according to a recent University accreditation review.

Moreover, the inability of the University to pay professors a salary commensurate with their responsibilities has led Olum to campaign for higher faculty salaries — a request Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, who appoints state board members, opposes.

Therefore, the real responsibility for this alleged devaluation of undergraduate programs at the expense of emphasizing graduate programs rests on the shoulders of those opposed to appropriating more money to raise the salaries of University professors.

The claim, however, that there is a qualitative discrepancy between undergraduate and graduate level programs has yet to be substantiated by the board with evidence. And even if it were true, it would not outweigh the academic benefits of retaining Olum. If Olum is forced out prematurely by the board, the quality of the entire University will decline.

But Nelson's charge also raises questions about the criteria the state board is using to evaluate Olum's performance and effectiveness.

Peterson, for example, stated in an interview that the board's decision was "a matter of judgment." What kind of judgment? A judgment based on the economic and academic facts supported by empirical evidence or a judgment based on the politically motivated concerns of the state board?

The state board has not demonstrated a clear argument to support its decision, which lends credence to the theory that the decision is politically motivated.

This theory, which is supported by the board's failure to articulate a clear reason for its decision, holds that the state board wants to consolidate its control over the University's internal affairs. The only way the board can influence the internal affairs of the University is through an externally appointed president who will adhere to the board's demands.

Furthermore, the board seems to have made a preemptive decision to retire Olum before hearing many of the arguments in favor of retaining him until 1992. This is evidenced by the the apparent indifference by board members to arguments supporting Olum, and by the board's timid decision to hold a telephone conference call Wednesday to make its final decision regarding Olum's retirement.

However, kudos does go to ASUO President and state board member Kasey Brooks who commendably voted against the telephone vote.

If the state board acted with regard to objective economic and academic concerns, rather than subjective political ones, the Olum proceedings could end in a win-win situation by letting Olum continue as University president until 1992.

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.



Letters

Fact of life

On Thursday, Oct. 29, the Guardians of American Morality were scheduled to appear at Max's Tavern. Advertisements for the band's performance were in the form of obscene flyers. The flyers depicted a photo of a nude, unidentified woman, and the caption underneath made reference to her genitals.

In addition, several of the Guardians' songs make reference to violence against women — a song by the name of "Polaroid Spread Shots," and another song with the phrase, "go home and beat the wife and kids."

Due to public outcry, the performance at Max's Tavern was canceled. Taylor's Tavern quickly rescheduled the Guardians to play at its establishment. The Women's Resource and Referral Center, Men Against Rape, Rape Crisis Network and other groups formed a protest outside of Taylor's.

The following day, Taylor's

— in apparent response to this protest — rescheduled the Guardians for another performance. We feel that Taylor's support of the Guardians of American Morality's victimization of women is contemptible and merits a boycott and continued protest.

Obviously, the Guardians are only a minute part of the problem. Everyday we see real and imagined violence against women in the media (the movie "Blue Velvet" was shown at the University on Friday, Oct. 30) and on the streets (Eugene's four topless bars). It has become a fact of life.

Women's Resource and Referral Center abhors all pornography that we find violent or degrading to women. We believe it important to protest the existence of this type of pornography, and protest the fact that a huge amount of money is made by objectifying, degrading and dehumanizing women, children, and men.

We consider violence against women to be a violation of our

personhood, mental or physical integrity and freedom of movement, and it includes all the ways our society objectifies and oppresses women.

**Rush Abrams
Bonnie Plant
Women's Resource
and Referral Center**

Amazed

I was truly amazed at the article about the mission people (ODE, Oct. 26). Maybe I'm naive, but my heart felt the loneliness and pain of that 53-year-old woman having to sleep outside when I saw her leaning against her bedroll.

As an animal lover and believer that animals help to comfort the lonely, I hope the mission will reconsider its ban on animals and give people like her a place of refuge from the cold.

I'm glad you've run such a powerful essay and pictures.

**Janet Edingburg
Business**

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