

# Editorial

## Newspaper firing at PSU unwarranted

Portland State University President Natale Sicuro terminated the PSU student newspaper faculty advisor last week. The action was not only unwarranted but also an apparent politically motivated move to gain editorial control of the newspaper.

Sicuro announced the change in the faculty newsletter, but gave no formal reason for the dismissal of Jerry Penk, Vanguard advisor since 1982.

Fired was Penk without a formal evaluation of his performance, without the consultation of the students working for the newspaper and without a formal explanation.

Supposedly, an informal review of Penk's performance was conducted; however, none of the newspaper's staff, members of the university's publication board, or Penk's colleagues had been consulted regarding his performance and effectiveness.

One must question how an informal review was conducted and what criteria were used to evaluate Penk's performance fairly. Penk at the least deserves a full explanation from the president as to why he was terminated from his advisory role.

Superficially, Penk's termination seems arbitrary. If the PSU president's decision is examined more closely, however, it becomes apparent that the action may be politically motivated, reflecting a decision comparable to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education's quest in the retirement of University President Paul Olum in 1989.

The Vanguard has done a number of stories that have irritated the administration. For example, the newspaper questioned the remodeling cost of Sicuro's state-owned home and how Sicuro dealt with problems of racism on campus. The paper also has attacked the university's proposed move to Division I football and criticized how the university handles media questions.

A certain amount of tension has been developing between the Vanguard and the administration as a result of these stories, and Penk's termination appears to be the manifestation of the administration's frustrations with the paper.

Sicuro's letter of termination, for instance, was written "because of the loose and uninformed expressions on this campus." However, Vanguard editor Bennett Hall contends the newspaper has printed nothing but the facts. "We're reporting the news," Hall said.

Because the advisor is appointed by the president and because the faculty advisor to the newspaper ultimately has control over what copy sees print, the new advisor will be able to censor articles that politically offend the administration.

Furthermore, working in the wake of a fired advisor, the replacement might believe that he or she must act conservatively to retain the position.

Thus the new advisor will be pressured by the administration to transform the Vanguard into a public relations medium for PSU. And, according to some students working on the Vanguard, this is precisely what Sicuro seeks to do.

On Nov. 2, the PSU Faculty Senate unanimously passed a resolution supporting a free campus press — it is time the president resolves to free it.



## Letters

### Scooter advice

The Planning Department has developed a new motorcycle/motor scooter parking area on the parking lot at East 14th and Kincaid Street. Unfortunately, I don't feel that a great deal of thought was given to either the location or the design.

The section is about 8-feet deep and runs the entire length of the present parking lot. It is bordered on the west by cars and on the east by a sidewalk.

Parking slots have not been designated for placement of vehicles; consequently the riders, especially motor scooter riders, have a tendency to park their vehicles at any angle they please. This works to the detriment of all of us in that it cuts down on the number of vehicles that can use the area.

In addition, pedestrians are at risk every time a motorcycle/scooter enters or leaves the area.

I propose that a Motorcycle Advisory Board be appointed to work on the Planning Department. This Board would help to locate and design parking areas on campus for motorcycles and scooters. Items such as ac-

cessibility, maneuverability and security are issues best addressed by such a board.

Said board could be composed of three riders, the head of the Planning Department, a member of the ASUO and possibly a member of the administration staff.

If any riders are interested in forming an advisory board, please call me at 686-1804. We have to speak up and now is the time to do it.

Nancy A. Cheffings  
Senior, anthropology

### State the facts

The article in the ODE on Nov. 3 titled "Video presents AIDS precautions" was one of the better treatments of this very important issue that I have yet to find in the mass media. As was stated, "Eugene health care workers believe there is an ongoing need for AIDS education for both medical personnel and the general public."

While it is commendable that this information is being made available to medical personnel, the dissemination of information to the general public has, in my view, been horrendous. Instead of the needed educational facts surrounding the disease, the media have presented the public primarily with emotional reactions (that have led to fear and homophobia) and the advice (albeit sound) to use condoms when engaging in sexual relations.

Even on this point, however, our state's two major newspapers have opted not to publish public advertisements aimed at preventing the spread of AIDS. Are they afraid of offending their readers by dealing with explicit material? Or do they just not give a damn?

AIDS is an explicit disease. People are dying from it while newspaper editors quibble over details of morality, and the public continues to be underinformed.

I would challenge the Emerald to allow space for a qualified person to put in print some of the more basic facts

about the disease, like the distinction between "high-risk" and "low-risk" body fluids. While this information is going to be included in the seminars for medical personnel, I doubt that many students are clear on the issue.

It seems to me that in life-and-death questions it is worth running the risk of offending a few people. I hope that your editors will avoid the footsteps of the Oregonian and the Register Guard and do your part to provide this community with information rather than fear.

Joshua Hamill  
Student

### Conscious effort

War is imminent if the U.S. continues its role in Central America and the Persian Gulf. Do you want to die? Or would you prefer to kill someone else?

The article on draft registration in Nov. 3 Emerald does not state how you can become a conscientious objector. Starting a file is quite simple. You simply document your beliefs and describe any action you have taken to affirm life or oppose killing. This could be as easy as copying donation receipts to anti-war organizations and writing a couple paragraphs on an experience such as volunteering your time at a convalescent home.

Don't wait to start a conscientious objector file! If you can show that you have opposed war for a long time, your chances of being deferred is much better.

It's best to talk with someone knowledgeable about the process. The Student Campaign for Disarmament (Suite 1, EMU) will gladly help anyone who seeks to become a conscientious objector.

Kim Sargent  
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for Disarmament  
Allen Hancock  
Student Campaign for  
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