

Editorial

Limited tenure would help improve ASUO

With the ASUO elections looming over the horizon, it is time for students to take a careful look at the future of student government and the kind of leadership needed to make the ASUO an effective tool.

One thing that needs to be examined is the "professional" student leader. These are the government junkies who serve in one student-elected office after another. The dangerous aspect of such leadership lies in that students can spend their entire student careers campaigning, thus narrowing their thinking to winning elections, rather than effectively leading the student body.

We propose an amendment to the ASUO Constitution stating that students who serve in an elected capacity for two years must take a year off from elected office before running for another position. This would include positions in the ASUO Executive, the EMU Board of Directors, the Incidental Fee Committee, the Student Senate and other elected offices.

The benefit of such an amendment is manifold. Not only is the professional student leader kept from constantly campaigning, but students with fresh ideas are encouraged to enter into the world of student politics.

Most importantly, such an amendment would prevent students from using a current position to gain points toward winning another position. An example of such would be a member of the IFC using his or her position to buy votes by giving larger-than-necessary increases to groups that could be politically beneficial to befriend.

This proposal does not exclude students from government. During the year off, it is plausible and practical for a student to work in an appointed capacity, be it on a body like the Constitution Court or within the ASUO Executive as a coordinator.

This amendment is a way to achieve a balance between the experienced leaders and new student politicians. This blending of the old and the new will be an effective way to enhance the ASUO, thus increasing its ability to serve students.

Diversified studies needed for humanities curriculum

Stanford University has academic change on its mind. Its required Western civilization curriculum is not threatened with elimination — only the emphasis of materials studied in the course.

Perhaps in response to charges of promoting a "European-Western and male bias," or "sexist and racist stereotypes," Stanford is likely to eliminate its Western culture course in the upcoming weeks.

In its place would be a new year-long requirement called "cultures, ideas and values" that would include studies of at least one non-Western culture, as well as works by "women, minorities and persons of culture."

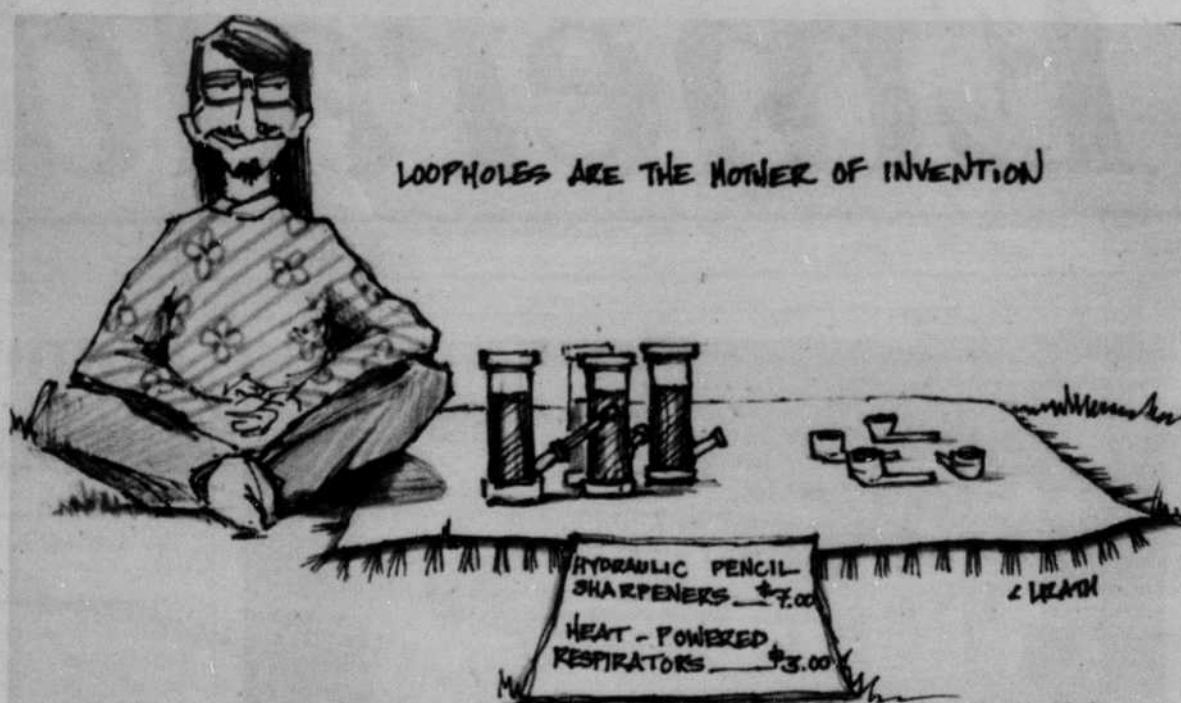
The idea deserves support, provided the new curriculum does not leave students without an understanding of the classics of Western culture. It is a fallacy to believe that the integrated culture of the United States was shaped solely from a Western perspective.

A diversified basis of study is a necessity. California more than any other state reflects this necessity, as nearly a third of the population is non-white.

Likewise, it would be foolish to abandon the great classics on the basis of white-male authorship. The ideas and themes of great works transcend ethnic borders in universal truths and can be a basis of a unified culture.

Conservative educational critics, such as professor Allan Bloom and Secretary of Education William Bennett, contend the failure of American students today lies with an ignorance of the great Western works, an accusation only partially true. A diversified perspective of both Western and non-Western culture will provide students a needed understanding for a well-rounded education.

Undoubtedly, Stanford's decision concerning its view of Western civilization will set a precedent for other liberal arts schools to follow. A medium is needed to reap the benefits of both curricula.



Letters

Disinformation

In response to our prospective lawyer, David Shayne, it seems that there is a lot of disinformation going around these days concerning Middle East issues. You criticized the Muslim Student Union's comparison between Auschwitz and Sabra and Shatila camps as "bad" and "obscene" (ODE, Jan. 15). Here is where your disinformation lies.

You approximate 460 people were slaughtered in the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Yet, when Jonathan C. Randal asked one of the massacre executors how many Palestinians were murdered, he replied, "You'll find out if they ever build a subway in Beirut." Leaving no doubts there were many, many more victims than listed in any of the official accounts, which in some reports exceeded 15,000 victims.

You claim the murderers of the massacre to be "Lebanese Christians, not Israelis." But the Israeli Kahan commission established in its investigation that the Israeli commanders and troops surrounded the two camps, allowing the Lebanese Christian Militia in to execute the massacre and in no way took actions to stop it. And where were you when Israel itself condemned then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon for masterminding the massacres. Don't you think

that for a people who have lived through Nazi war crimes the main concern should be the elimination of any such reoccurrences!

To further correct your assumptions, the crux of the Israeli-Palestinian issue is neither negotiation nor recognition. Since the 1917 Balfour Declaration, for every migrating Jew into Palestine, a Palestinian was forced out, which in fact gave birth to the problem. Today, Israel wonders how to restore peace and "tranquility" in the occupied territories, ignoring the mere fact that its presence is the cause of the unrest.

As a future lawyer, Mr. Shayne, you must realize that your profession cannot afford the use of biased assumption as facts.

Ghada Ramahi
Hanah Ramahi
Eugene

South Africa

The parallels drawn recently between the repressive actions of the Israeli government and the South African government on the evening news of a national television network are largely accurate, except for one completely misleading statement: it was stated that blacks within the so-called "homelands" in South Africa

are now able to obtain South African passports, and that they are no longer subject to the de-meaning pass laws.

True, the laws have been abolished, but they have been replaced by modifications to laws relating to immigration and to squatters. These laws effectively ensure that those people who have not been working outside of the homelands for some time are permanently consigned to those areas. Citizens of the homelands may only receive travel documents that substitute for passports from those nominally independent countries, which are not recognized by any country in the world.

Black people in South Africa are not free to move when and where they will, to settle in areas of their choice — because the Group Areas Act forbids access to any decent place of abode, because their exploitation by capitalists of every flavor guarantees their poverty, and their total lack of political expression concretizes the status quo.

South Africa is not free, and the government is not bent on a course of reform — they merely seek to paper over the cracks in the tottering edifice of apartheid.

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