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New president to favor research

By Christopher Blair
Emerald News Editor

Myles Brand took over the job of University President from retiring president Paul Olum on July 1. In the following interview, he talks about his stance on issues such as the housing shortage, animal research and the hotly debated Riverfront Research Park.

Please describe for us your impressions so far of the University and the campus community.

I knew the University of Oregon was very good, but I was surprised at how good it is. It really is a superb place. It's a terrific intellectual environment, it's a wonderful place to live. The campus itself is physically very attractive. It's almost idyllic as a college campus. So my impressions have been very good.

University students, faculty, staff and administrators are closely following a number of issues. For example, a new student conduct code has been approved. How well do you believe it will deal with issues such as recent student riots, or incidents of racial or sexual harassment?

This is a concern I have about abuse of alcohol in particular and other drugs as well, and about student decorum. It's not isolated to Eugene or the University of Oregon, it's a national issue, but that doesn't make it any easier for us to deal with. The issues that are of deep concern are I think a real abuse of alcohol in the fraternities, but elsewhere, too. I'm not sure what the right answers to that are, and in a way the University inherits the problem. But it is a problem we must deal with.

I'm not a teatotaler, but I think alcohol should be used responsibly. That's clearly not always the case. . . . A lot of instigation from the so-called riot came from alcohol abuse. That's something we're going to have to get a handle on.

I'm also very concerned about issues of sexual harassment and homophobia. I think the campus must be a place in which everyone's identity is respected and everyone's preferences are understood. It's not a place where we can tolerate prejudices of any sort, that goes for racial prejudice as well as gender and sexual orientation prejudice. I will come down very hard without exception when those incidents occur.

The main point I want to make is that in the university experience that a student has, it's not just what goes on in the classroom that counts. It's the growing experience for the four or five years that they're here. What kind of person emerges



Myles Brand

from that experience is the kind of person that'll be there for the rest of that individual's life.

So the University has a real obligation to work with the student body in creating an environment that makes for well-rounded citizens. For that reason and for no other we just cannot tolerate sexual, homophobic or any kind of prejudicial attitudes or actions. That's one I feel very strongly about.

Several fraternities and one co-op have recently been closed. This will add more strain to an already serious housing situation. How are you

going to attempt to deal with the University's current housing shortage?

First of all, the fire marshal found fault with several fraternities and a co-op. Those houses do not belong to the University and are not under our control. But the fire marshal's order has to be obeyed, and I want those to be safe housing dwellings. It's a good thing, although not everyone agrees, that they were identified as a problem areas in the summer, so when fall comes around in most cases I hope the problems will be fixed.

We faced a particularly severe housing problem this past fall because our enrollment was way up. With a slight decrease in enrollment, I think there will be some relief there. It's not clear to me that this will solve our long term problems. We are particularly stressed in the area of family housing. More and more of our students are non-traditional students, that is they are returning students with families with single parents, and we need to look towards means of providing housing for them. So that will be an area we will be looking at.

How committed are you to the proposed Riverfront Research Park, and what will the University be doing in the next year or so to continue its development?

I think the Riverfront Research Park is an appropriate project for the University to undertake, and if we did not have one under way, I would seek to develop one. We need, however, to get expectations in line with what's possible. We're not going to create a "research triangle" in downtown Eugene or a Silicon Valley in downtown Eugene.

But we will over time, in a decade or two, create a situation in which appropriate academic-related facilities will be located near the University, so that faculty members and student interns will have the advantage of working directly with the industry as they choose.

It will not be a place that will do secret military research. We will move slowly and we will insure that everything built in the research park has an academic relationship, but we will move forward.

One of the more divisive issues on campus in the past few years has been research using animals at the University. What position will this administration take on this issue?

I think it's immoral not to use animals for research. The overall good to human kind, as well as to animals of all species, through research on animals is immeasurably greater than the unfortunate consequences of animal research. Just to give some obvious examples, research on AIDS, on cancer would come to a dead stop without animal research, and we can't afford to do that.

Now having said that, I must immediately add the following qualifications. We should be very humane in our treatment of animals in research, very cognizant of the painful aspects of that. We should minimize, however possible, the use of animals in research. That doesn't mean stopping research, it means using a minimal number.



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