

Allow SHIC, Clark to make suggestions

You can credit ASUO President Andy Clark and the Student Health Insurance Committee for sticking to what they believe is right.

Despite the apparent public discontent with SHIC's call for mandatory student participation in the ASUO's health insurance plan, and the University administration's subsequent nixing of that call, Clark and the committee came right back with a similar proposal, this time moving for mandatory participation with limited right of waiver. SHIC claims mandatory participation is necessary to ensure the continued existence of ASUO health insurance.

That determination to save student health insurance may come at some loss to Clark, however. On Jan. 25, Phil Nebergall and 14 other students submitted a letter to Clark stating they intended to recall him from office for his handling of SHIC's decisions. The recall drive was later suspended after Nebergall and Clark agreed to go into mediation. Currently, Nebergall wants the students to vote on the mandatory insurance proposal, and he wants the SHIC to be bound by the decision of the students.

A thrilling exercise in student democracy? Hardly. This is political pressure at its ugliest. And whether you're for or against mandatory student health insurance, you should abhor strong-arm tactics to dictate the opinions of elected leaders with the threat of running them out of office.

On the dormant recall movement first: Nebergall's threat of recall is preposterous and ill-founded. You recall an elected leader for corruption, or dishonesty, or incompetence. Clark's crimes in the SHIC matter, if any, don't measure up to these standards. Nebergall reaches for justification: he claims that Clark's summer employment as a State Farm Insurance Co. intern has led to a conflict of interest, despite that it is The Prudential Co. that underwrites the ASUO plan.

You don't recall a leader for simply voicing an unpopular suggestion. Elected leaders must be given some latitude for entertaining proposals, of all sorts, without being threatened by the immediate consternation of the constituency. Otherwise, you face the same sort of toadying to popularity polls that's the current vogue in the White House.

Also, recalling Clark will accomplish nothing. He is but one member on the SHIC, which would presumably go about its business even without its most vocal member. Recalling Clark on the insurance matter alone ignores and insults the success of his work in ASUO.

Of course, this is all slightly moot, as Nebergall has curtailed the recall movement — provided the students vote on the SHIC proposal. But here too, Nebergall is making a lot of unwarranted noise.

The problem in contention here is time. If a special election is held this month, as Nebergall originally wanted, it will cost about \$8,000 in incidental fee money our student government doesn't have. The ridiculous attempt to remove Clark then becomes an expensive, harmful one. And if the election is held in April, with the general elections, Nebergall's threat of recalling Clark is worthless.

Given all this, one begins to wonder what the point of Nebergall's election would be. First of all, to our minds, the student body's resolve on this matter already seems overwhelmingly clear to us. The vast majority of *Emerald* letter writers have said they hate the idea of mandatory insurance. If what's already apparent is confirmed by vote, what of it?

Nebergall wants the student vote to forcibly dictate what SHIC's recommendation should be. Well then, why have SHIC? Like an elected leader, that body should be allowed to make whatever recommendations it feels are best for the students. Advisory committees such as SHIC exist to explore and propose policy. If students don't want to hear and consider what SHIC recommends, they short-circuit the whole reason for the committee's existence.

Remember that, in the end, it will be the University administration that decides to decline or adopt SHIC's proposal. There is the students' final relief, and efforts to fulfill or stop mandatory insurance should be directed there.

It does appear that the administration is leaning toward accepting the mandatory-with-limited-right-of-waiver plan. But there is still time for students to voice their own opinion, either way, in our letters column and at public forums such as the one at 2:30 today in EMU Century Room A.



Letters

Bandwagon

As a die-hard Anaheim Rams fan, I have nothing but congratulations for the San Francisco 49ers as they "poured it on" in their final two games by a score of 85-13.

Although I expected many true 49er fans to exult in victory and be good winners, what I saw was a population explosion of "poser" 49er fans. "Dude, I've been a 'Niner fan ever since I could stand."

Wrong. These people have been 49er fans ever since they started to win. These posers are the same people who were the big Dallas fans in grade school. Remember them?

Although football allegiances have little worth in the game of life, I simply ask some people to quit being so damn trendy and cheer for a team you have liked all of your life. If this team is the 49ers, congratulations; the agony of the '70s is gone but should never be forgotten.

I know it is very easy to cheer for a team that always wins, but show some character and worth and get off the 49er bandwagon. Poser 49er fans suck.

Mark Hartley
Political science/history

Abstinence

Anti-abortionists such as Chris Kelso (*ODE*, Jan. 31) mention the "plethora of birth control available." Unfortunately, all methods of birth control other than abstinence are less than 100 percent effective, including surgery.

Some methods have side effects. The pill, for example, can cause heart disease, emotional disturbance, a weakened immune system and more. Some of the safer methods are less effective than the pill. So contraception is not that simple.

Being abstinent until one is ready for the responsibility of parenthood is not easy. Many people are never ready for parenthood. That is the reason so many adults can't remember their childhood enough to relate to children — it was so painful as a result of the inexcusable way that children are

viewed and treated.

And being abstinent until menopause is difficult, especially when one's self esteem has been lowered by this adult-chauvinistic society that allows children to be given the message that they are not OK people.

It is hard for some people not to turn to sex when their natural talents, creativity and energy, have been disciplined out of them.

What about adoption? Create a childbearing that does not cause intense pain or put the mother at risk of death (always a risk), bladder damage, postpartum syndrome, aggravated pre-menstrual syndrome, etc., and then talk about adoption.

Meanwhile, let's not increase late-stage abortions by dragging pregnant women through court with unworkable, restrictive abortion laws.

Alice Berry
Eugene

Examination

The abortion debate is extremely emotional and is becoming more so all the time. It's disgraceful that children who are too young to comprehend the issue are being used by the anti-choice groups to further emotionalize and cloud the emotional aspects of the problem.

There were many children present at the "Mobilize for Women's Lives" rally in November, brought by their parents who held bloody-looking, dismembered plastic dolls and yelling "murderers" at the pro-choice marchers.

Those children appeared terrified and were crying; it's no wonder they were upset by such a confusing and volatile situation which was created by the behavior of the right-to-lifers. I suspect the reason for the larger turnout at the recent anti-choice rally was simply the fact that so many children were present.

Many right-to-lifers have personal agendas that narrowly define "moral" behavior and infuse the abortion debate with shades of racism, sexism and homophobia. They consistently attack the character of women

who for a variety of reasons find themselves in the unfortunate circumstance of having to consider ending a pregnancy.

A group that needs to bolster their ranks by manipulating young children and using them to skew rational discussion, in addition to imposing their religious-based moral judgments on others, deserves nothing but distrust.

I suggest everyone involved with the right-to-life movement closely examine some of the other baggage being piled on to the basic question of a woman's right to control her own body.

Kristen Brandt
Eugene

Discover

Although I am reasonably sure some of my former instructors would be distressed to read this, I admit to the ignorance of not knowing which year the Magna Carta was signed, or even, alas, which countries signed it. I am exceedingly proud, therefore, to claim knowledge of the dates of the Civil War and names of each of the 50 states.

So what?, you may well ask.

Well, there is (was and always shall be) a group of civic-minded individuals testing college students the length and breadth of this country on these very subjects. On the basis of these tests, they claim a frightening amount of ignorance in these important matters.

Well, College students of today seem to be inundated with other trivial matters such as computer operation and languages, the complexities of socio-economic reform, and AIDS. My father has bachelor degrees in science and architecture and politely requests my assistance for Microsoft Word.

Although I do feel that it is admirable of these individuals to feel they must propel our education back to the basics, I strongly assert that these basics — which they were forced to learn — should be left to us to seek out and discover.

Erica Lerch
Psychology