

Watch candidates on higher ed issues

At a University faculty conference Saturday, Oregon State System of Higher Education Chancellor Thomas Bartlett said funding of higher education has now reached crisis level.

Hardly news. Experts have been saying that for at least the last decade.

But Bartlett's message does have some significance. In the past few years, there has been a move toward cooperation between students, faculty and administrators in the higher education system. These three diverse groups are coming together to save OSSHE, and revamp state funding.

OSSHE suffers from many of ailments. However, it all comes down to insufficient funding — both on the state and national level. The problem has manifested itself in a number of places. Program cuts and soaring tuition costs are but two. The major problem thus far has been inadequate faculty salaries.

Oregon as a state ranks somewhere in the middle in total revenue produced. But Oregon as a higher education employer has dropped to a point which demands immediate change. Getting a diploma from an OSSHE school is not yet an embarrassment, but if funding continues at its present level, that won't be far behind.

The money issue aside, there are other reasons for the general deterioration in OSSHE faculties. The University has a fine teaching staff at the moment, but what about in the next 10 years? How about in 20? The present faculty will have to be replaced someday, and if the University cannot offer at least a competitive salary, the best teacher candidates will take their knowledge elsewhere. Couple this with an ever-smaller field of quality teachers and you see how OSSHE cannot hope to compete with bigger, better funded schools.

Back in the early 1950s, right after the end of World War II, there was a big push on the national and state levels to increase higher education funding, to take the burden off of the students. Since then, the system has gone back to the prewar era of college exclusivism. A diploma is now a necessity in the business world, not a luxury. Higher ed once again needs a large infusion of more money.

Students and concerned community members can help by paying close attention to *all* the candidates, local, state or federal. Watch how they stand on funding of higher education. Lobby present lawmakers to become higher ed advocates. Write letters to congressmen, senators and representatives. Make sure they know how important higher education is to you.

The upcoming elections (May 15) are a good place to start. Participate by going to the polls prepared, and making intelligent choices for the future of Oregon higher education.



Nuclear free zone hits one more obstacle

Last week, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Bush administration in its suit against the city of Oakland, declaring its nuclear free zone unconstitutional.

Eugene mayor Jeff Miller is elated.

Miller is hoping the ruling will knock the wind out of support for the proposed ballot measure 20-01 that would create a more stringent NFZ within the Eugene city limits.

The city won't know for another two weeks whether the Oakland ruling is applicable to the Eugene ballot measure. However, Oakland's NFZ was one of the broadest in the country. Under the law, the city was prohibited from doing business with companies that have nuclear weapons contracts.

In practice, this meant the city could not buy light bulbs from Westinghouse or typewriters from IBM. It also meant the Navy shipyards as well as the Department of Energy office would have to be closed within two years.

But the NFZ proposed for Eugene's May 15 election is much different from Oakland's. The charter amendment to the existing statute would only prohibit manufacturing, storing or testing nuclear weapons, their delivery systems and communications systems. It would also ban work on nuclear

weapons defense systems and on components of any of those systems.

Miller says this will impede diversification of the local economy and will prevent new business from creating jobs to take the place of lost timber jobs. He also claims the amendment will cost the city thousands of dollars in lawsuits and legal fees.

But bringing in businesses banned by the NFZ is not exactly a sound investment. The defense industry is facing massive budget cuts in the wake of the Cold War thaw. Constantly plagued by waste, fraud and mismanagement, the nuclear weapons industry spends billions of dollars on products that can rarely be sold, and (hopefully) will never be consumed.

Stock prices for defense contractors have declined significantly in the last year, and places like Rocky Flats and Hanford are facing billions of dollars in clean-up costs for toxic waste. In the long run, nuclear weapons production may cost cities more than they contribute.

In the last two elections, voters approved the NFZ by 59 percent. Eugene voters should not let Miller's presumptions about the Oakland ruling dissuade them from passing the NFZ amendment for the third time around.

Letters

In your face

Deborah Wyss' criticism of the "mess" on campus (*ODE*, April 20) completely missed the point. I assume she was talking about the "composted Cadillac," though she fails to state that clearly — just what are they teaching them over there in J-school anyway?

Wyss attacks the Youth Greens for "adding even more garbage to this planet." Oh, really? Think again: every gram of non-organic matter in the display was garbage — or destined to become garbage — long before it showed up in the EMU courtyard. So what she's really protesting is not garbage, per se, by garbage getting in her face.

Awful ugly, isn't it? But that's the reality of our throw-away society. And until we get reality in our faces, most of us — obtuse creatures that we are — will continue to ignore the problem.

Did the Cadillac do any

good? I don't know, but I'd much rather see a controlled garbage display that might turn a few heads than wait for an accidental, East-coast-style display of syringes on the beach and cadmium in the tap water.

Let's be honest with ourselves: Is any of us doing enough to reduce our garbage production? When we can answer this question "yes," then we can freely criticize the tactics of those who are sounding the alarm.

Matt Gushee
Eugene

We are moral

I have a response to Maureen Burke's statement, "Who are they to tell us we're not a family?" (*ODE*, April 23). We are moral, God-loving society. I'm not sure what you are.

You and your partner, and the other gays like you, are leading a life that is disgusting to the rest of us, and personal-

ly, I'm sick and tired of hearing you complain about how unfair we're being. I think it is unfair of you to shove your psychological and sexual problems down our throats — in the streets, in the media and just about everywhere else I turn.

You have rights. You have the right to every privilege given to you in the Constitution. You even have the right to scream your head off about your disgusting sex life, although, once again, I beg you not to. You do not, however, have the right, nor does anyone else on this earth, have the right to sleep with members of the same sex. You never have and I pray to God you never will.

As for your hopes of a "family," must you destroy the life of a child as well as your own? Please, I beg you, in the name of all that is good and decent, don't take others with you to your hell. Having children would only breed others with psychological problems like

yourselves, as is evident in the case of Robin Madell and her mother. What is the world coming to?

Kelsey Fisher
Psychology

Credit

Permit me to add one item to your coverage of the Ducks-on-a-Roll Wheelchair Basketball event Thursday evening, April 19.

It is true that the Lowriders defeated the Oregon varsity basketball team. But you did not mention the Campus All-Stars (Mike Petersen, Mike Belotti, Andy Clark, Elaine Green, Elwin Heiny, and I) defended the honor of the campus by soundly defeating the City Celebrities (media and business types). The score was 6 to 3, with the result never in doubt.

Seriously, Tiana Tozer and her associates deserve much credit for organizing this event, which several hundred fans en-

joyed tremendously. The varsity players showed that they are good sports as well as fine athletes and students, the Lowriders are amazing and taught us all some lessons about what handicapped people can do, and the other participants had a great time. It was a wonderful occasion for a fine cause: supporting rehabilitation service programs.

Paul Holbo
Vice provost

Correction

In Jackie Corday's April 27 letter, the last paragraph should have read, "In the long run, these responsible measures, not cutting down the last of the old growth or blaming owls, will best serve the interests of all Oregon citizens." The *Emerald* regrets the error.