

EDITORIAL

University Housing should start building

By now you are well aware of the shortage of housing offered to University students. If you didn't have a place reserved by mid-summer you are either out of luck or several miles from campus.

University Housing is currently working to remedy the situation. A committee set up to study the situation has been meeting almost weekly since June 1989.

George Ramey, director of University Housing, said the very earliest that construction on a new structure could begin is next spring.

The delays can be attributed to a long process that includes getting any plan approved by the University president and the State Board of Higher Education. Only then can the bidding process for the architect begin.

The problem is that University Housing does not even have a plan at this point. The slow moving wheels of the process have barely begun to move. Ramey attributes this to the unpredictable nature of the housing market. The concern is that if the University does build new housing, students would not be able to afford to live in it.

The money to build new housing would come from the sale of \$10 million worth of Oregon F1-11 bonds. These bonds would have to be payed back to the state by the University. The money to pay back the bonds would come from the rent paid by students living in the structures, therefore increasing the amount of rent charged.

Ramey estimated that a conservatively built two-bedroom apartment would cost from \$350 to \$500 per month. Therefore, the University is worried that there would be no market for the housing, and units would remain empty, which would cause the rent charged on the occupied apartments to go up even further.

Anyone who has had to look for an apartment in the area knows that the University would have no problem renting these apartments. Quads in the area are currently renting for \$225 to \$250. This is about what two roommates would each pay to share one of the new apartments — even if the rent came in on the high end of Ramey's estimates.

University Housing should get off the fence and get the ball rolling. The housing problem is not going to solve itself. The Legislature approved the \$10 million bonds so that housing could be built. Why not use it? Worries that the housing would not be used and, therefore, not pay for itself are unfounded.



Juniors also deserve firsts at registration

Every year at registration it's the same old story. If you don't have the right social security number, Mac Court seems like purgatory.

It's bad enough that students are herded like cows through the waiting process. But those filled classes hurt worse than a cattle prod.

It's frustrating for juniors, who have suffered through the registration process for years, when they realize that some freshmen get all their classes, and they don't.

What happened to the seniority system? If it's good enough for civil service, it's good enough for the University.

Juniors and freshmen should not be taking the same classes. So let's reward perseverance and give credit where credits are due. Give upperclassmen a break.

There must be a better way to handle registration. At Lane Community College students can register by phone.

If the University used the money spent on conversion to a semester system, it could have telephone registration in place right now. At least students could get frustrated in their homes. The ones that have homes, anyway.

Why is registration only two days before classes start? Some students spend the first week of classes standing in line at the Bookstore, at Kinko's, at Smith Family, and at the Copy Shop.

The University does a good job with what it has, but the system is vastly outdated. Put some of that research money into developing a simple, easy, inexpensive and cheerful way of registering.

If registration were to start a week earlier, it would give students who don't get their classes a chance to land a job for a term. Those students should then get first choice of classes the following term.

There's got to be a way.

FORUM

Life dichotomy demands cultural 'branching'

By Stefan C. Pasti

The issues that affect the voters in America are too complicated for the majority of voters to be democratically involved.

Commentary

How can we sell weapons, bury radioactive waste, spray herbicides, mechanize farms, spew hazardous waste into rivers, clean almost everything with water, attempt to isolate the causes of cancer, vote for people we have never met, be taxed for projects we don't understand, be analyzed by people who have never lived where we are living, be alienated by 25 religions for every one religion we are associated with, be expected to believe we now know how nature is supposed to work and, finally, have any idea how all of this is going to turn out?

Which experts know how all of this is going to turn out?

There are limits to how much anyone can say they know for sure. If the "experts" do not really know that all these com-

plicated projects, with both their benefits and potentially hazardous by-products, can blend together without causing "unacceptable risks," we all ought to be making our decisions based on such an understanding.

Our decisions would then be based on a responsible understanding of our situation. Can we say this now? No. We must admit that issues are in many ways decided undemocratically by the "experts," and these decisions are often lost amid a chaotic mass of information provided by television, newspapers, radios and just about everything else.

One consequence of all this that we can be sure of is that it represents an abuse of human rights all around — ironically, even the "experts'" own rights — as economic, ecological and social systems become unstable and create understandable anxiety. Is anyone responsible for what is going on anymore?

More education is not the answer. We already unknowingly

acquiesce to many significant decisions that effect us because we are overwhelmed by the chaotic mass of information we are now expected to swallow.

We need simpler economic and ecological systems. We need to be closer to where our basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter are produced. We cannot hope to re-establish a healthy environment of honesty integrity — and therefore, stability — without simplifying our economic and ecological systems enough so that we are all, once again, democratically involved.

However, it must be that the possibility of voters in America reaching such an agreement together, without a split, seems extremely unlikely. Even as individuals we seem to be torn, yearning for a simpler life and a secret wish that the many advertised wonders of science can be had for a price which is not too high to pay.

In other words, it does seem that these desires are mutually exclusive; that is, they are impossible for people to resolve in

their own lives, in the world as we know it.

Based on this observation, I have to wonder why we do not suggest a "branching" of American culture. Why do we not plan as if that part of us that yearns for a simpler life has as "legitimate" a desire as that part of us which is curious to discover all there is to discover?

The way I see it, both wishes represent real desires — no matter what is legitimate or verifiable — and both wishes have proven benefits behind them and unknown risks ahead. This is the best that can

be said about any prospects on Earth.

If we plan for a "branching" of American culture, then both instincts can be satisfied — and recognized from the beginning as mutually supportive — and both environments will be available in case people want to switch affiliation from time to time.

When the time comes to decide between "I know" or "I don't know for sure," honesty is the best policy. As Mark Twain said: "When in doubt, tell the truth."

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COMMENTARY POLICY

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Commentaries should be between 750 and 1,000 words, legible and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified upon submission. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for grammar, style and length if necessary.