

EDITORIAL

Task-force findings only the first step

A 113-page report released by a University task force on Friday reaffirms the homophobic problem on campus.

The survey revealed that a majority of the University's gays and lesbians feel unsafe, with many experiencing harassment and threats.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance has done a remarkable job with the resources it has. However, official recognition of the problems by the administration should be accompanied by dollars and resources.

The University administration needs to establish an official gay and lesbian office to handle their concerns. It should be for all University members — students, faculty and staff.

The University can incorporate its policies prohibiting discrimination against people of color and women into its anti-discrimination policies against gays and lesbians.

Being a liberal arts university does not make the University liberal. The University has had an anti-sexual orientation discrimination policy since 1971, but rules and regulations are worthless without stringent enforcement. Severe penalties should be instituted for those found harassing gays and lesbians.

Civil rights belong to gays and lesbians, too. Non-discrimination policies in favor of gays and lesbians need to be included in every affirmative action clause of every University policy.

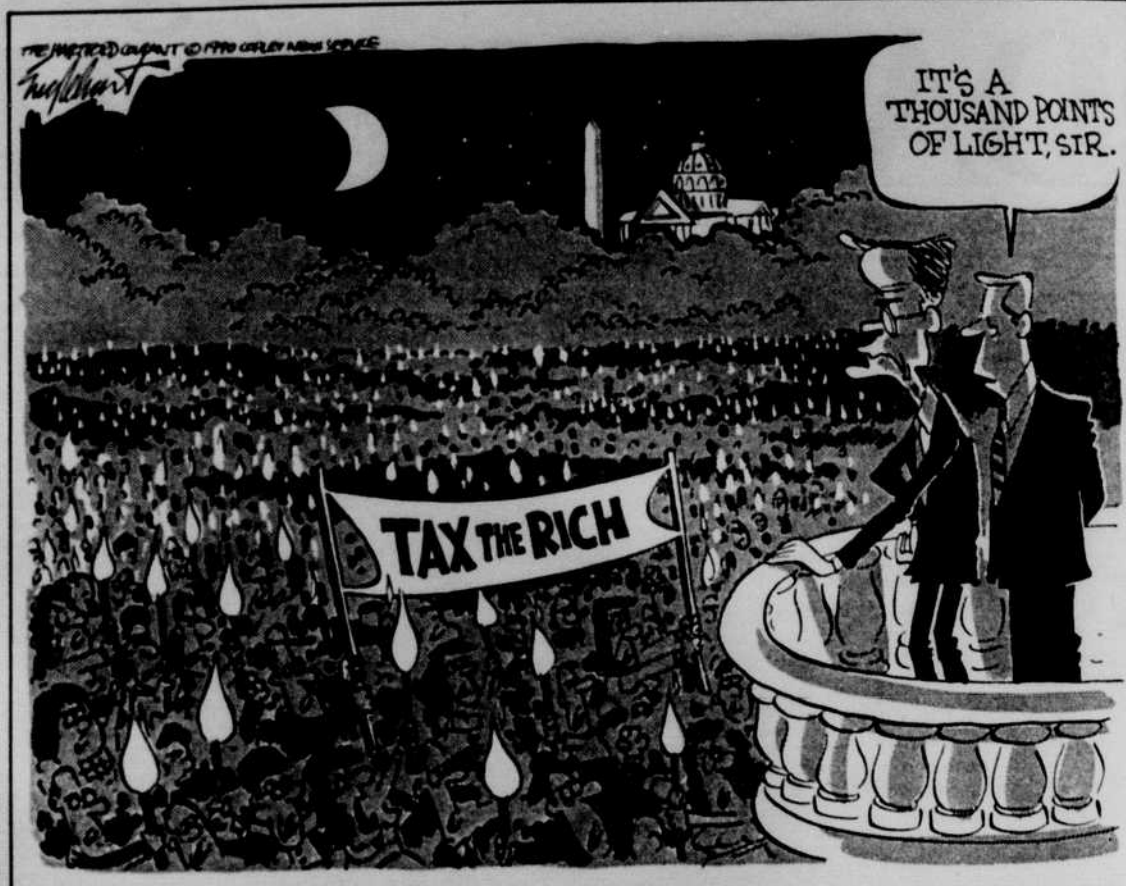
The University needs to include sexual orientation as part of its cultural diversity requirements. Although we salute those instructors who already do this, more workshops or special classes are required.

While it's hard enough to be a college student, it is an even greater struggle for the many gays and lesbians who are still afraid to come out of the closet.

The University, and schools in general, need to focus on social concepts as well as academics. Getting along with others is a prerequisite for any career in life. Too few students never learn that skill.

We live on a planet that is becoming smaller and smaller. The University is a miniature replica of the real world. We either live together or die together.

The University appears ready to confront the seriousness of gay-bashing. But a report is only a first step.



Be proud of Oregon reps for NEA vote

Opponents of censorship have chalked up another victory. This week's vote by the House to rebuff conservatives' demands for strict anti-obscenity curbs on the National Endowment for the Arts is a sign that Congress is learning to respect the average American's belief in freedom of expression.

In the past, representatives have bowed to the conservatives' claims that Americans were sick of obscenity and what they called the moral decay of the nation. Representatives were fearing a political thrashing for opposing this conservative-created "grass roots" movement. But now these representatives have begun to respect and give credit to the citizens' understanding of the First Amendment's basic philosophy — we can tolerate the views and opinions of those with whom we may not agree.

The compromise passed by the House would put the decision of whether something is or is not obscene in the hands of the courts. Artists will not face any penalties from the NEA, unless their work is deemed

obscene after going through a trial.

Conservative forces had wanted to deny funding to artists who would not sign a statement saying they would not create any obscene art. Conservatives also wanted funding denied and penalties placed on any artist who portrayed sexually explicit conduct, sexually exploited children, attacked religion, defiled the American flag or included an actual human embryo or fetus in their art.

If conservatives had succeeded, any work containing any of the above elements would have been banned without consideration of artistic merit — one of the guidelines the courts use for judging obscenity.

Oregonians should be proud of their representatives for supporting the bipartisan compromise. Democrats Les AuCoin, Peter DeFazio and Ron Wyden were joined by Republican Denny Smith in voting for the legislation. Republican Bob Smith was the only Oregon member of the House who sided with the conservative censors.

LETTERS

Tax breaks

You have a great opportunity in November to help all of us — even here in Florida.

Vote "yes" to give tax credits for tuition payments to private schools, parochial schools or for home schooling.

Where I live in Florida, the school drop-out rate is 50 percent! Something is definitely wrong with a system that cannot graduate more than half of its students.

Please help us to change that system. You can show the way to our lawmakers, politicians and educators.

Your "yes" vote is a vote for lower taxes. In this county the two private schools charge an annual tuition of \$1,900. The public school costs \$6,500 annually per child, and that does not include bonds for new buildings!

If Oregon shows a resounding desire for responsibility in education, the rest of the United States will sit up and listen, too.

Please, Oregon, start the ball rolling.

Julie Maglio
Brooksville, Fla.

Responsibility

Gary Braun writes in a letter (ODE, Sept. 27) that, "in Minnesota during the time there has been a parental consent law in effect, teen births have increased dramatically and so have deaths of those seeking illegal abortions." I challenge Braun to produce documentation for his assertions.

Between 1980 (the last full year before the parental notification law went into effect) and 1984 (the last year that statistics were made available by the Minnesota Department of Health), abortions among teenagers under 18 dropped from 2,327 in 1980 to 1,395 in 1984 — a decrease of 41 percent. Births among the same age group decreased by 19 percent, and the total number of pregnancies among teens decreased by 30 percent.

The reality behind these statistics (which represent individual human lives, in all their complexity) appears obvious —

in Minnesota, as in many other states with similar laws, parental involvement in the abortion decision has been accompanied by fewer abortions, fewer births to teenagers and fewer teen pregnancies over all. There is every reason to expect the same result in Oregon.

In reply to those who so vehemently oppose a parental notification or consent requirement, I point out that these parents have legal, financial and moral responsibility for their minor children. To deny them an opportunity to advise and support their daughters in such an emotionally traumatic situation is to violate a fundamental right of parents to be involved in decisions that affect their children's well being, as well as to remove a crucial protection from the children themselves.

William Moore
History

Free press

I am thoroughly disgusted and disheartened by the recent firing of Jean Ownbey, the Ore-

gon Daily Emerald's assistant to the publisher (a.k.a., Board of Directors) and controller.

As an erstwhile Emerald employee, I was proud of the paper's status as an independent, student-run publication; and I was proud of Ownbey's constant struggle with the board and the journalism school to maintain this independence.

Ownbey's determination, however, now places the freedom of our student press in jeopardy. Because a portion of our student fees pays for our subscription to the Emerald, I think anyone who reads the paper should be willing to fight this petty play of corporate power and control.

I believe the board should be restructured to include more students who understand the significance of a free student

press. Apparently, the current representatives failed to consider the grave consequences likely to result from the firing of Ownbey. Moreover, I believe the bylaws should change so more than four warm bodies constitute a quorum.

I would have never had the opportunity to work for an international publishing company last year if I had not had prior experience — which I gained at the Emerald. I would like to think that any student, regardless of college major, could acquire the same invaluable experience. But if the Emerald becomes a toy of the board and the journalism school, this hope could be dashed.

I will fight for a free student press. Will you?

Paula A. Green
English

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.