

Administrators respond to scholarship debate

By Bob Waite
Emerald Reporter

When Assistant Secretary of Education Michael Williams said last month that public institutions' minority scholarships were inappropriate, at least two presidents immediately disagreed.

President George Bush and University President Myles Brand issued statements condemning Williams' December threat to crack down on institutions that receive federal money if they offer minority scholarships.

Bush, Brand and others became involved when media sources revealed a Dec. 4 letter from Williams to Fiesta Bowl football organizers in Tempe, Ariz., according to the Los Angeles Times.

Organizers were trying to establish a scholarship in King's name in an attempt to reverse the negative attention that resulted when a state-wide referendum to establish a Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was defeated in November.

Williams wrote to them and said schools receiving federal money could

not legally award such scholarships.

Bush learned of the controversy through media reports. Still recovering from criticism over his veto of civil rights legislation last year, Bush said he was a supporter of the United Negro College Fund and ordered his staff to

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— Larry Large

find a way to reverse the scholarship policy, according to the New York Times.

Brand responded, in a press release, by saying that the University participates in the Oregon State System of Higher Education's Minority Achieve-

ment Scholarship Program, which grants tuition waivers to qualified members of under-represented racial groups.

"The University of Oregon enthusiastically supports this program because it is an affirmative step properly targeted at assuring that people of all races in this country have the opportunity to attend college and move into the professional ranks of society," Brand said.

Assistant Secretary Williams' statements would seem to put this important component of the state system's scholarship program at risk.

"The Oregon State System of Higher Education is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action," said Larry Large, OSSHE vice chancellor for public affairs.

"Current OSSHE policy is based on historical and statistical evidence which shows that certain minority groups are underrepresented in Oregon's state colleges and universities," Large said.

"There is no question that this is not over," John Scully, counsel for the Washington Legal Foundation, told the Los Angeles Times after Williams' an-

nouncement. It was Scully's complaint about scholarships for blacks that sparked Williams' initial reaction.

"They are just caving in to political pressure," he said.

During the next four years, so that no current scholarships are jeopardized, the Department of Education will take no action, but will investigate any complaints, such as Scully's, while seeking to interpret Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Scholarships for minorities may continue, if specified by people who give the gifts, but college funds could not be used for racially exclusive scholarships.

"I am pleased that Williams' decision has been reversed," said Marshall Saucedo, University director of cultural affairs. "But there is still some ambiguity. This is typical of the Bush administration. They're saying, 'Our decision to react is to not do anything.' It still leaves the issue in limbo."

Problems faced by inner-city minorities are problems shared by all of society, Saucedo said, adding minority scholarships help to solve these problems.

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Local crisis lines available to help University students

The sudden closure of Rape Crisis Network has brought concern that victims of sexual assault or abuse will be unable to receive confidential crisis assistance.

Members of the Unwanted Sexual Behavior Task Force, at a Wednesday meeting, determined several numbers where immediate phone crisis counseling can be obtained.

• Coos County Counseling Center — 1-800-448-8125 (24 hours)

• University Counseling Center — 346-3227 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

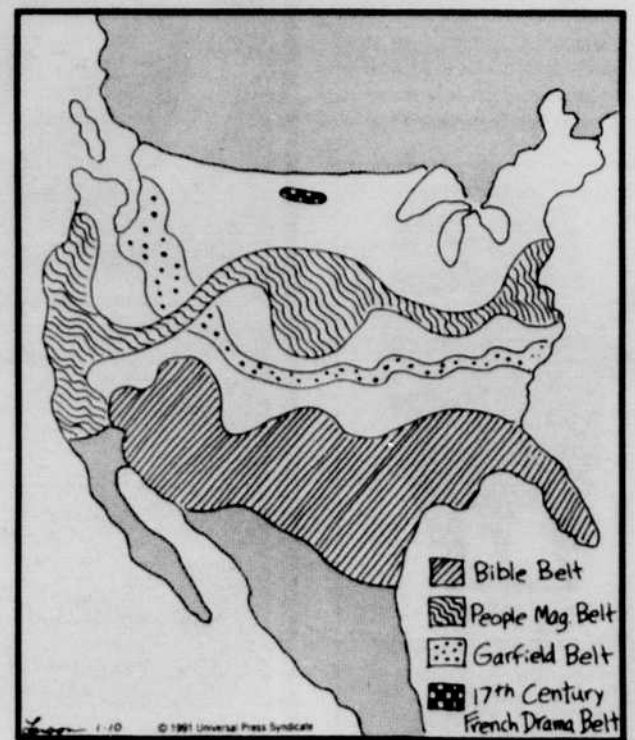
• University Crisisline — 346-4488 (5 p.m. to 8 a.m.)

• 911 (24 hours)

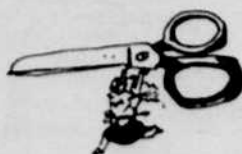
The University Counseling Center and Crisisline numbers are available for University students only. The other numbers are available for everyone. 911 is not staffed by police officers, and does not require that an assault be reported, or the caller's name given.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



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