

## Do-it-yourself budget just a political sham

Somebody down at City Hall has lost it.

Gov. Barbara Roberts started off this new round of participatory democracy with her "Conversations with Oregon" speeches. But somebody deep down in the dark recesses of the Eugene City Hall has come up with a doozy:

Instead of spending long, arduous hours on a budget, how about letting the *people* decide what to do with their own money?

Before you could say "recall election," the City Council sent off 66,000 do-it-yourself budgets for all the households in Eugene. The idea is for citizens to drop their crossword puzzles and rush to the mailbox to retrieve this 12-page extravaganza, then sit patiently for hours deciding whether to raise police officers' salaries or create a Eugene slush fund.

Some say the budget looks like an income tax form — just the type of thing local residents want to see. Anybody who has ever spent the entire spring trying to figure out a 1040 form is really going to want to buckle down and fill out this budget. Yeah, right.

Now that's a great idea. Give unprepared, unexperienced citizens the right to shape the economic future of the city — pretty much the same thing that happens every year in the City Council.

The price tag for this little excursion? Try \$12,600. For a city running an estimated \$8 million in the red for 1994, wantonly spending these kind of bucks on a "get-the-people-involved" sham is just about as bad as wasting \$31,000 to remove a statue.

If city leaders are really looking to trim unneeded costs from the budget, scrapping this kind of thing is a good place to start.

It's true Eugene citizens do need to get more involved in city politics, but force-feeding democracy to unwilling participants is an entirely different issue. If residents want to know about the budget, they can go to council meetings or get copies of the proposed plans. Citizens could even run for office.

Any one of these alternatives would be desirable to the \$12,600 boondoggle currently floating around the local postal system. Shelling out bucks to find out how to save money is the very essence of a "mixed message."

Here's a compromise: Eugene residents promise to get more involved in the political process, while the city government resolves never to spend hard-earned tax dollars on pet projects again.

Everyone agreed?

**Now that's a great idea. Give unprepared, unexperienced citizens the right to shape the economic future of the city — pretty much the same thing that happens every year in the City Council.**



## LETTERS

### Three pointer

I think it is Myles Brand who has overstepped his boundaries and not the EMU Board of Directors.

My first point is I do not see where the local recruiters need any more public space to advertise their vocation. There are several buildings in and around the Eugene/Springfield area where any student can go in and talk with them ... if they are interested.

Moreover, those buildings are not open to me to go in and recruit for much of anything. Why do they have to be in the EMU when they already have buildings allotted to them, all at taxpayers' expense?

My second point is the military recruiters weren't being penalized (prohibited from the EMU) because of what they're saying. No one was restricting them from saying anything. What they were penalized for was their stance against individual rights. It seems to me that if Brand were to pay attention to the reality of the situation, he would see the issue was the military's rules against homosexuals entering the armed services and not the military's freedom of speech.

My final point is if Brand is simply going to summarily overrule the EMU board, then why allow the board to exist? In effect, Brand has said the board may decide whatever they want as long as it coincides with his view. Brand has removed their effectiveness by his veto.

I hope that the EMU board overrides the veto.

Scott Shea  
Student

remarks at myself. Hoop also attempts to use the issue of racism to condone the actions of Jo Sonja Watson, our ASUO vice president.

Well Hoop, I don't take kindly to your racial attack. I find it very interesting that you would try to drag me into this event. I didn't initiate this petition to recall Watson. The College Republicans initiated this petition to recall Watson. I'm not a Republican, and I've never attended a College Republican meeting. I'm not the issue here. I didn't shoplift or fail to appear in court. No one forced Watson to shoplift or avoid the court — she did this all on her own.

The important issue is Watson was indicted, tried and convicted of two misdemeanor counts in a state court. Because of these convictions by an impartial court, Watson's ethics, poor judgment and willingness to cover up the affair are the real issues those of you reading this letter need to consider when you decide whether or not to sign the petition. The issue of a person's color, sex and politics are irrelevant here.

Michael Colson  
Political Science

### Zombies

Let me get this straight. The military discriminates, so the coalition of opposed students is going to stop this discrimination by kicking the military out. Perhaps it's only called discrimination if it's against the majority.

Bo Adan in the press conference said, "... to say that (Brand) is opposed to discrimination, and then, when others take the initiative to veto their efforts, is no less an act of hypocrisy and ... moral cowardice."

Does this mean that Brand would not be a hypocrite if he opposed discrimination and then agreed to boot an organization off campus just because of how they think? Does this mean that only the moral or politically correct can be discrimi-

nated against?

Every human being discriminates to some degree, though this doesn't necessarily make discrimination right. Unless we all turn into zombies who can't think for ourselves, then I think it's here to stay.

The essence of our lives as humans revolves around the need to think freely. We should not be forced to think in any particular way.

Just as the Ku Klux Klan discriminates, it is against the law for them, or anyone, to kill someone because of how they feel about them, but no one can make a law as to how people think.

We cannot ban the military and promote free thinking at the same time.

Allen James  
Student

### Buy it

Regarding Ryan Blackletter's letter of Nov. 5: Blackletter, since you're an English major I'm surprised you were never taught that satire (even sarcasm) to be truly effective should be used with a light touch. It should be a stiletto, not a club.

You're hunting mosquitoes with a howitzer. Furthermore, what prompts you to heap so much scorn on such a piteous caricature? While there are many laughable and absurd aspects to the PC debate (presumably the intended target of your vitriolic outpouring — look it up, OK), I think you protest too much.

Why are you so threatened Blackletter? Oh, and while I hope this doesn't offend your deep-seated convictions concerning your true Wittiness, go buy a sense of humor.

David Dodds  
History

# Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3158, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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