

## Roberts not to blame for state's fiscal woes

Be it at the University or cities in general, Oregonians have all gone recall-happy.

Case in point: the recent effort by disenfranchised timber workers to oust Gov. Barbara Roberts out of office.

The Roberts recall campaign is a classic example of misplaced anger. Loggers and their families are angry because the timber industry has been heavily hit by the recession, environmental concerns about the spotted owl, and that taxpayer revolt, Measure 5.

In the face of tough economic times, Roberts has taken an unpopular stance with the thousands of timer-dependent families who fear losing their way of life. She wants the owl protected; the timber industry wants to lose the owl and keep workers on the job.

Even without the spotted owl controversy, the timber industry would still be in a financial crisis. The owl makes for a good scapegoat, and so does Roberts.

The recall effort is a bad idea, and not only as a solution to timber issues. The state is in a fiscal crisis that calls for immediate attention, and for good or bad, Roberts was elected to lead the state through this crisis. A successful recall petition would only prolong action, throwing the state deeper down the chasm of fiscal despair.

Imagine a successful recall effort. The issue is placed on the May or November ballot, or maybe the state is forced to pay for a special election, costing the taxpayer more money. Roberts and legislators are then forced to fight for the governor's political life, leaving no one to tend the store.

Even if the election goes Roberts' way, thereby saving the state government an awkward transition period, state leaders will have their attention turned away from the real issues: living in a economy that will inevitably move away from timber revenues, and living in a post-Measure 5 state.

Like it or not, Roberts does not have much control over protecting the spotted owl. That issue is in the hands of the courts and numerous federal agencies. What Oregonians must focus on are issues she can control, including calling a special session to put Oregon back on the track of fiscal recovery.

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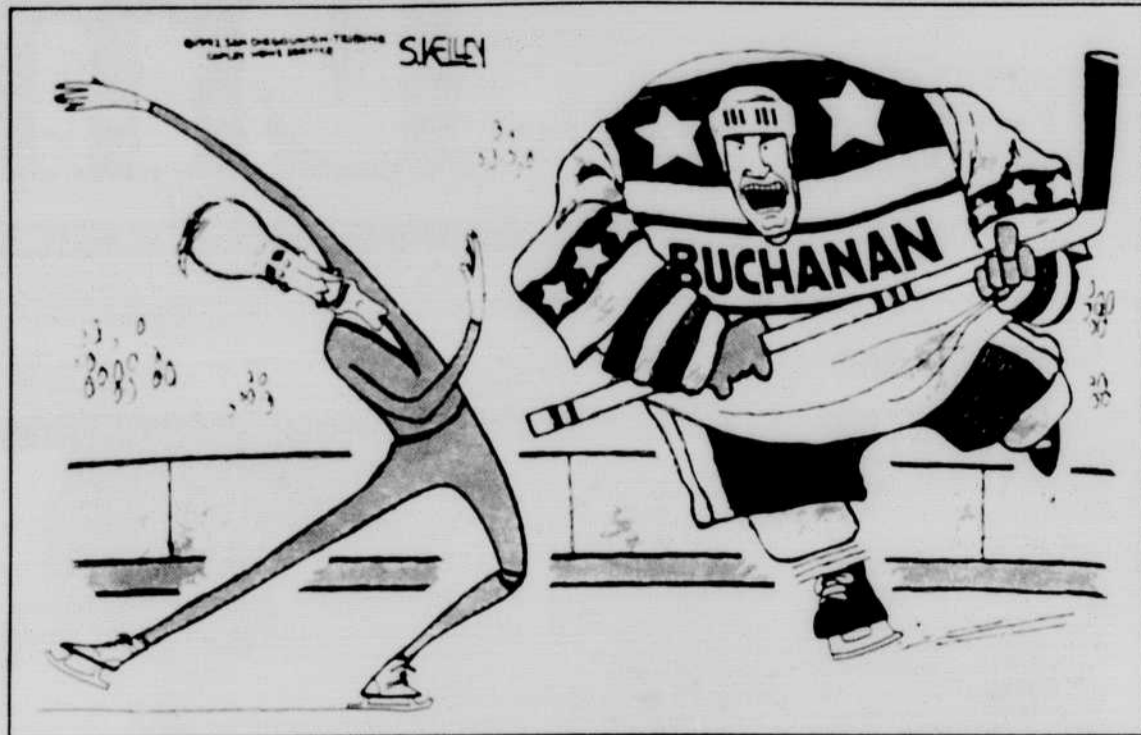
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### COMMENTARY

## Academics first for student athletes

By Clarence Spigner

**W**e continue to hear that student athlete graduation rates at the University are "comparable to those of the student body at large" (President Myles Brand, *The Register-Guard*, Feb. 11, 1992).

This is comparing apples with oranges. When disaggregated by race and gender, the graduation rates tell a far different story; and race and gender specific graduation rates have always been the point in the first place. Moreover, most students do not graduate due to financial difficulties rather than academic shortcomings. Thus, because student athletes are in financial scholarship, one would expect their graduation rates to be higher than they are.

To Brand's credit, he has requested University Senate President Paul Engelking to appoint an ad-hoc committee to reconstitute the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics. This is a welcome step. However, issues such as the scheduling of games that conflict with dead week and final exams, the arrogant defensiveness of the athletic department when questioned about race-specific graduation rates, and the reported feelings by the Black Student Union that some black athletes believe they are valued more as athletes than as students, prompt these suggestions for criticism.

• College administrators should take leadership and publish pro-active, in-depth and well-researched commentaries expressing their views on the academic vs. athletic controversy, with recommendations on how to deal with its well-known contradictions. The present reactionary posturing does little to serve the interest of students.

• In reference to the first point, such articles should be published in popular as well as academic journals to insure wide distribution and critical feedback. Hopefully, the authors will refrain from the pious, self-

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serving rhetoric usually found in alumni magazines and on the six o'clock news.

• Serious consideration should be given to having the athletic department report directly to the president, or relocated under the vice provost for academic affairs. I have yet to hear a reasonable explanation as to why the athletic department is presently located under the vice president for administration, unless counting gate receipts is more important than calculating grade point averages.

• Head coaches should not be put under so much pressure to win. Although their lives within the academy are longer than that of the teaching faculty, like teaching faculty, coaches should be given five- or six-year contracts to prove their worth, with options to move on.

• Student athletes are students first, and should not be segregated from other students either physically (in dorms), pedagogically (in special classes, though tutoring is entirely appropriate), or administratively (within the institutional bureaucracy).

• Service on the Faculty Intercollegiate Committees should be initiated and monitored by the Faculty Senate. The com-

mittee's chairperson should be a senior member of the teaching faculty who will not allow him or herself to be bullied by the athletic enterprise.

• In reference to the sixth point, the shameful lobbying of Faculty Intercollegiate members by the athletic department should not be condoned. In the past, some members have been given choice tickets, close-in parking, free meals and travel to away games. I believe such practices and acceptance of such perks should cease.

• External (institutional) evaluation should be periodically conducted of the athletic department and its academic support services. These evaluations should measure formative, process, summative, impact and outcome variables. Relying solely on personal testimonials, no matter how sincere, is like asking professors to evaluate their own teaching effectiveness. Moreover, these periodic evaluations should put particular emphasis on assessing race- and gender-specific recruitment, advising, matriculation and graduation.

• Students recruited under athletic scholarships should be allowed to keep those scholarships if they choose to discontinue playing sports.

I believe these recommendations are reasonable, feasible and some may already be implemented. I hear the Faculty Athletic Committee has reflected a marked improvement with faculty members Quintard Taylor (history), Jack Clark (sociology) and others. Also, Brand has expressed sincere concerns about these issues — frankly, he's the only administrator who offered to meet with me.

The integrity of academics is the only thing that will save student athletes. And education, after all, is the primary purpose of the University.

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