

Take chamber report under consideration

The newest victims of the budget ax could be Eugene city employees.

Last fall, as part of the Eugene Decisions program, City Manager Mike Gleason approached the Eugene Chamber of Commerce and asked them to review the efficiency of city programs and administration. Late last week, the chamber returned its verdict — lower wages, do independent reviews and simplify the budget.

As can be expected, the chamber's findings kicked over an ant hill that won't begin to be resolved until the full report is submitted to the City Council later this month.

The Eugene Decisions program, which brings people from the private sector into public planning to find ways to streamline city costs, is a good one. Eugene is looking at an \$8 million budget shortfall. Any and all help should be sought and accepted. What better place to go than the private sector, where fiscal responsibility is much more important than it is in government.

Although the chamber's report should be welcomed on its merits, it should be scrutinized carefully.

Businesspeople's opinion is valuable, but running a private business is not the same as running a city government, and vice versa. A city has a myriad of financial problems that do not relate to the private sector. Some of what the chamber reported makes sense, but other considerations must also be examined.

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First off, although lowering city wages would be beneficial to the bottom line, the impact on the families could offset any gains. Cutting wages and benefits just for a temporary adjustment in the budget deficit is shortsighted, misleading and dangerous.

In addition, the chamber suggested the city would still be OK, even while giving less services. Eugene citizens enjoy the various offered programs, and it would be a shame to seem them all disappear in a blot of red ink. However, the cutting of services might just be necessary if a path out of the budget morass is not found.

The chamber's findings should receive due consideration, but the City Council should be very careful about which parts of the report are adopted.



LETTERS

Endorsement

Students for Diversity, Access and Renewal in Education announces the formation of a broad-based student coalition committed to building a progressive University student government. We are organizing to insure that candidates claiming to run as progressives in the upcoming ASUO election are held accountable to promises of representing and empowering students.

We advocate a strong multicultural liberal arts curriculum and promotion of respect and tolerance for differences in our community. We are dedicated to preserving access to higher education through progressive tax reform and keeping tuition from rising. Access means ensuring the safety of women on campus, human rights for gays and lesbians, child care for student parents, disabled access, recruitment and retention programs for students and faculty of color.

We take seriously the responsibility of student government to maintain student control over student run services and programs. Student empowerment embodies a renewal of attitudes recognizing hard-won successes of past student movements should not be taken for granted. We must continue to actively organize and assert our needs and rights as students.

An endorsement committee of student leaders has been organized representing the interests of women, international students, students of color, student parents, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, and graduate students. Like you, we are average students who care about lower tuition and quality education.

Endorsement hearings are

April 2 and 6 at 7:30 p.m. in EMU Century Room A. A general interest meeting is Thursday, April 9, 7:30 p.m., EMU Walnut Room. All candidates are welcome to seek endorsement.

**Brian Hoop
Steven Masat
Students**

No wait

My neighbor, Mike Wieber, created a garden on our East Campus alley, a place that used to be hard-packed clay soil covered with grass. Wieber transformed those 2,700 square feet into a beautiful, organic, raised-bed garden. It was a labor of love. I saw the hundred of hours of back-breaking work he put in.

Unfortunately, Wieber had to move. The garden lay fallow all winter, waiting for a new tender. Yesterday, I heard a tractor and went out to find Courtney Lorange from the University maintenance crew about to destroy Wieber's garden. "But wait," I said, "someone else might want to use it." I thought of the University pre-school and day care centers just half a block away and how those kids would enjoy walking her to plant some seeds and watch them grow.

I thought of the dorm students packed into their high-rise concrete cubicles only half a block away, and how they might welcome a chance to get out here and garden. I thought of the homeless people standing on the street corner just half a block away with a sign reading: "Hungry, will work for food." Here, they could work for food directly, at no cost to anyone.

But why grow food when you can grow grass? "I need to level

it so I can mow it," Lorange insisted. And the plowing tractor went to work so that mowing tractors could return on a regular basis. Our tax dollars at work.

In one afternoon, the University destroyed Wieber's gift to our community. They just couldn't wait.

**Sharon Teague
Eugene**

Thanks

To the University faculty, staff and administration:

We wanted to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation for your involvement in helping to create a rape-free environment on our campus.

We recently returned from the First Annual Student Conference on Campus Sexual Assault at the University of Pennsylvania. At this conference, we learned most campus administrations continue to hide information from students and deny the problem of rape on campus. Not many University students realize the extent of administrative involvement and support for our programs.

Students can be quick to criticize instead of valuing and recognizing what already exists. As students working extensively to educate the campus and community about issues of rape and sexual assault, we have been privileged to work with you and have personally witnessed your contributions.

We are proud of the programs at the University. They serve as models for campuses across the nation of cooperation between students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Sadly, our campus is still not completely safe for all students, but together, with your ongoing support, we will strive to create a rape-free environment for our campus.

**William Brotzman
Sean Foxley
Erin McCarthy
Students**

LETTERS POLICY

The 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.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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