

Death penalty needs serious thought

Whether one agrees with the death penalty or not, it's clear Tuesday's charade involving Robert Alton Harris was bogus.

Harris was sentenced in 1979 to die after killing two 16-year-old boys so he could use their car in a bank robbery; the teenagers were on their way to a lake for an afternoon fishing trip.

After a decade of appeals wound their way through state and federal courts, the man was executed Tuesday, the first in 25 years for California. The decision came after an emotional tennis game of four reprieves throughout the night, ending with the U.S. Supreme Court's ultimate conclusion to execute.

One of the scary aspects of the scenario was the court's final block of any additional appeals from lower courts. No doubt in an effort to end the confusing tug-of-war, the court slammed the lid on its smaller of kin. After a six-hour delay, they did their duty and gave the go-ahead, no more questions asked.

Was this the best move? That's debatable. Any time one power unquestionably overrides another, there's danger. The checks and balances are gone, leaving free reign to the larger powers that be.

But the court had to put a stop to the ridiculous disorder of it all, didn't they? Considering the court is now attempting to streamline capital cases by limiting defendants' appeal and delay power, the confusion couldn't have come at a better time. Now, lo and behold, there's a strong shred of support for their simplifying argument. Unfortunately, to do so would take the necessary individual element out of case consideration, but that's another editorial.

The gas chamber method of executing Harris is now being discussed among death penalty observers since its extraordinarily painful process could constitute illegal cruel and unusual punishment. Should states continue to execute, this consideration is a valid one. Lethal injection is the most reasonable of execution measures in our book.

Alternatives to the death penalty include several options, the most noted being life imprisonment with no chance for parole. Expensive. Just like executions. Since the money will ultimately be spent anyway, why not use it to address criminal behavior in its beginning stages? As in preventative measures? By examining the parallels drawn between this behavior and environment, there exists the possibility of heading off potential criminals.

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COMMENTARY

Fee-cutting debate misses target

By Brian Hoop

I have watched student debate rage over the allocation of \$4.7 million in student incidental fees. In light of Measure 5, reducing student fees is imperative. But the current debate over cutting fees misses the main target and is harmful to student interests regardless of progressive or conservative political motivations.

While Don King argues about cutting 10 percent from student fees, the inaction of the state Legislature on tax reform places higher education in peril and risks possibly allowing tuition to skyrocket an additional \$900 within two years.

Last year, student government lobbied the Legislature to contain tuition increases to \$600, saving every student \$210 from the original proposals. This year, student government and Allied Arts students to stop a proposed professional fee of \$150 per year on AAA students. That's \$260 in savings compared to King's \$10 in peanuts.

Students must register to vote, educate themselves on tax reform options, and demand that Oregon House leadership under Rep. Larry Campbell stop stonewalling progress on progressive tax reform which would preserve affordable, accessible and quality higher education for everyone.

Also at stake is the delegation of fee allocation authority from the Oregon State Board of Higher Education and the University administration. Students control fees and determine what groups and services promote the "cultural and physical development" of the student body, not the administration. Oregon students maintain one of the most empowering fee structures in the nation, and we take it for granted.

A letter from Allen James (ODE, Feb. 18) exemplifies misconceptions about where our fees are going. James' labeling of student fees as funding only "special interest groups" is a fallacy. So-called political spe-

cial interest groups, in actuality, make up a small fraction of total spending, while athletics and the EMU make up more than 65 percent.

Why are student fees paying for essential services such as athletics and student unions, which should be funded by state taxes and tuition as in most states?

For the same reason, past University student bodies have had the foresight to fund child care, legal services, ethnic student unions, free bus rides, a Women's Center, etc. We are concerned and care about providing quality programs and services that a chronically underfunded university system and Legislature has refused to fund.

It is paramount that students recognize how unique and precarious this privilege is. The administration would like to turn EMU and athletic fee funding over to administrative control such as the \$46 Health Center fee and \$15 building maintenance fee. Students would have no authority over the EMU or athletics, but end up paying for them through tuition anyway.

Allen asks why University students pay \$103 fees when University of Michigan students pay \$7 a term. Michigan, having 45,000 students, is much larger, enabling them to spread fees and services across more students. Student-controlled fees, according to Colleen Tighe, administrative coordinator for the Michigan Student Assembly, are limited to student government and student groups alone. They also have an \$80 health center fee and \$50 building fee.

If Michigan students had to fund the total ASUO program budget, (excluding athletics, LTD and EMU), their fees would be \$15 per student. Not much different than the \$28 per quarter University students pay for \$1.4 million in ASUO programs.

Of the \$4.7 million 1991-92 IFC allocation, the vast majority of funds go directly to the athletic department and EMU

administration. Athletic programs; providing free tickets, a marching band, and intramural sports, receive \$1,252,000. For a student population of 16,100, that's \$22 a term.

The EMU receives \$1,925,266, \$40 per quarter so you can enjoy Cultural Forum events, Outdoor Program trips, shoot pool in the Recreation Center, use the Craft Center, have officers for student groups, and find a place to study.

Special interest groups only account for \$350,000. That's \$7.26 per quarter for Women's Center, Interfraternity Council, OSPIRG and some 45 other-odd special interest groups.

A further breakdown of IFC funding ensures students have legal representation and advocacy. Counseling and media services amounts to \$174,000, \$3.60 per quarter. For mainstream media such as the *Emerald* and campus radio, we pay \$159,872, \$3.30 per quarter.

You're paying \$238,500, \$5 per quarter for an ASUO executive, Student Senate, Constitutional Court, IFC, the Oregon Student Lobby, and USSA to ensure student control over fees, preservation of student rights, and lobbying for financial aid and lower tuition.

Child care for student-parents through the ASUO Child Care and Amazon Childcare Co-op, costs about \$221,076, \$4.60 per quarter. An environmental fee funds free LTD bus service and expanded campus recycling, which costs \$286,300, \$6 per student. An academic fee amounting to \$75,000, \$1.55 per quarter, funds about 20 professional student groups such as Student Bar Association.

The attacks on the IFC this year are misdirected. We are talking pennies when compared to the task at hand with tax reform in the Legislature. Let's get our priorities straight.

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