

# Privatization is the wrong way to go

Members of the state Board of Higher Education proposed Friday what it deemed "radical" ideas for cutting the state's higher education budget, including privatization of the University.

As the crunch of 1990's Measure 5 continues to erode funding for higher education, cost-cutting ideas that may have once been taboo are now eligible for serious consideration.

Privatization should not be one of these ideas.

The state of Oregon has long prided itself on its commitment to higher education. The only effect Measure 5 should have is to give the state the chance to renew, rather than renege, that commitment.

This is not to say education should be left untouched by the budget-cutter's ax, but it should not be expected to take the brunt of the stroke, as is seemingly going to be the case.

Privatization is simply a bad idea whose time will never come. Though the state may save money by not funding a major university, the loss of access to potential students will result in fewer Oregon residents being able to earn a college degree. Fewer college-educated citizens will simply increase the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

An alternative scenario would have private corporations sponsoring certain departments or schools. Students could study at the Du Pont chemistry department, computer science in the IBM computer lab, or journalism at the Gannett School of Journalism.

Although such endowed departments and schools could offer lower tuition because of their corporate subsidies, an inherent conflict of interest arises as these schools become corporate "minor leagues," training students not to be better citizens, but better employees.

Another proposal that surfaced Friday was to consolidate the higher education system into a single, giant state university where schools would specialize in certain fields, thus eliminating redundancies.

This "radical" idea was first proposed in 1932 by a group of taxpayers who believed creating a single state university, which would have been located in Corvallis, would save the state \$20 million in 20 years.

The Zorn-MacPherson bill, as it was called, would have moved the University's law school to Salem and left nothing but a teachers' college in Eugene. Voters soundly rejected the proposal by a 5-to-1 ratio, and the University was allowed to flourish.

It was a bad idea then, and it's a bad idea now. Legislators are proposing these and other mindless methods of cutting the budget because they are afraid to face the real task at hand — tax reform.

No amount of budget-cutting, no degree of privatization and no rehashing of long-dead debates will help provide a secure fiscal future for the state. Legislators should have more sense than to come up with ideas such as these, and the state Board of Higher Education should have more sense than to entertain them.



## LETTERS

### Same old song

Thanks to 1990's Ballot Measure 5, there is a plan to cut the University's Spanish program by 20 percent next year. This would come on top of other cuts in the Spanish program that have occurred during the past two years. Such a cut would have a devastating effect on the quality of the program and on the number of available Spanish classes.

The Spanish program has already been trimmed to the maximum. Our highly qualified Spanish instructors are terribly underpaid. The department operates on a shoestring. It's the only department in the University that I know of that still uses blue mimeographs for handouts because they can't afford Xeroxes. Instructors often cut paper for handouts into two or three pieces just to save a few pennies.

When I began taking Spanish here three years ago, this University had a truly outstanding program with an excellent selection of classes. But even then there were not enough classes to go around. Many students wanting to study Spanish found themselves out of luck, forced to wait until they had more registration seniority. This year, who knows how many students have been turned away from Spanish classes? I would guess the number is in the hundreds.

Add to this the fact that demand for Spanish classes has been increasing steadily, and it seems likely that any further cuts in the Spanish program will cause hopping-mad students to visit Johnson Hall.

**Eben Fodor**  
Graduate Student  
Environmental Studies

### WHPAAMs unite

Could someone please help me understand something? You see, I am a white heterosexual Protestant American-American male, and sometimes I have difficulty understanding racism and diversity. If "love see no color," and we are all equal regardless of race, religion or

sexual orientation, why is it that minority students are threatening to leave the University unless more professors and staff "of color" are given positions?

Why is the University offering "people of color" higher wages as an incentive to join our diverse University team? Perhaps it is my ignorance, but I usually judge a professor by his or her teaching ability — not skin color.

When our University is facing major cutbacks, should we be offering more money to professors because they happen to have a different pigmentation in their skin? As you can see, it is difficult being a WHPAAM. Any slanderous ad hominem abusive letters would be greatly appreciated by me and all of the other WHPAAMs out there. Thank you.

**Gregory D. Jacobs**  
Pre-Journalism

### Open mind

This is in response to Sean McGrath's letter (ODE, Feb. 25). I also read Leviticus 20:13. My translation read: If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them shall be put to death for their abominable deed. They have forfeited their lives.

Wow. Pretty strong language, eh?

Five years of Catholic school left me with the impression that our God is a loving God (that is if we, in fact, believe in the same God). I think any genuine love between two humans is cool, regardless of gender. I bet God agrees.

If one stops to consider all of the hate and discrimination these folks encounter, why do you think they would choose to be homosexual? Could it be they were created that way ... hmmm? Surely in McGrath's readings of the Bible, he has come across the verses about loving one another and all of God's creatures being sacred? They're pretty strong, too. McGrath might want to look them over.

At any rate, I have a hard time believing that the prejudice he expresses is part of the philoso-

phy of the National Student Exchange. As with Koreans, blacks, Jews or any other minority, homosexuals are people, too; don't hate them just because they are different than you. McGrath and I are obviously different in our beliefs, but I don't hate him because of it. Keep an open mind, it can't hurt.

**Nicole McCullough**  
Theater Arts

### Book of Sean

To all you poor ignorant people who think it is OK to be homophobic, let me say that I am truly sorry. I pray that one day you will know the truth. In the meantime, let me direct you to Sean McGrath, National Student Exchange, Compassion 00:00.

**Robert Ward**  
Eugene

### Right to know

Wednesday, citizens are urged to attend a critical Oregon Senate hearing: It's time to go to Salem to protect our drinking water supplies. We, as Oregonians, rely on groundwater for more than 75 percent of our drinking water, yet cancer-causing agricultural chemicals threaten that supply. Detectable levels of pesticides lace 10 percent of our groundwater wells, according to a federal Environmental Protection Agency study.

Unlike our neighbors in Washington and California, we do not have access to information about pesticide use in Oregon. No "right to know" program exists. This leaves Oregonians in the dark about our most basic resource. To protect Oregon's groundwater and Oregonians' health, we need a Community Right to Know program for agricultural chemicals.

Wednesday, we have the chance to show concern for the issue before the Senate. We can't afford to wait until the next legislative session. Call 346-4377 for more information.

**Karmen Fore**  
**Ryan Deckert**  
and Eight Co-Signers

# Emerald

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