

Students' interests not served by IFC

The Malfasant Seven, better known as the Incidental Fee Committee, should be immediately and permanently disbanded for general ineptitude.

Actually, it's already heading in that direction. In the past couple weeks two members have resigned, reducing the group to a Feeble Five. One of the members, Jose Balderas, resigned because he was not registered for classes spring term, but not before invalidating an entire hearing with his mere presence.

The IFC is supposed to allocate student fees in a responsible manner. Its members are elected by the students (the few who bother to vote), and its mission is to ensure fees are used in a manner that provides maximum benefit to the student body.

Unfortunately, the group has so far been controlled by ideologues Steve Masat and Lydia Lerma, who have used their positions to provide favorable funding to groups whose agendas they support, while decreasing funds for those they do not.

For example, groups have been awarded increases because they "have more enthusiasm this year." That's an actual quote from an actual group shortly before receiving an actual increase.

Another group received an increase because, last year, it spent more than it had planned on a karaoke party at the Eugene Hilton. Yet another needed about \$1,000 for Hispanic food. Why \$1,000? Because they were using tortillas that are made from corn grown and ground by a Hispanic woman. Apparently the group's members are too good for the regular, commercial tortillas that the rest of the campus community is suffered to eat.

Most recently, the committee has simply not shown up for its meetings.

Last term, a meeting was canceled in order for people to participate in a rally in Salem. The group was not elected to go to rallies. It was elected to do its job — which it hasn't been doing.

This term, the group has been forced to cancel two meetings for lack of attendance. None of the missing members have yet given a satisfactory explanation. Big surprise.

In a recent meeting, a student who had just witnessed the IFC in all its glory, stood up and told the committee that she was appalled at how it was running the meeting and then left.

At the same meeting, Masat began rambling about how difficult his life was and how he didn't have time to deal with certain issues before the committee. If Masat can't handle the pressure — and judging by his performance, he can't — he should serve the public interest and resign. Other students also have pressures in their lives, yet they manage to at least stay above water.

Students need to regain control of their fees, and the only way to do that is to take it out of the incompetent, special-interest tainted hands of the IFC and turn it over to the ASUO at least until an entirely new committee can be elected.



LETTERS

Good reasoning

March 12, near the end of winter term, a commentary of mine was published under the heading "Academia should test beliefs."

In that essay I dealt with the problem of "cognitive compartmentalization," which results when otherwise clear-thinking people place intellectual brackets around their religious beliefs and act as if those beliefs are somehow immune from the tests of evidence and systematic verification that are generally applied to non-religious knowledge claims.

March 29, in response to my analysis, letters from Kurt Landre and Trey Imfeld expressed reservations about some of my assertions. Landre, for example, wonders whether I am aware of "the implications" of these ideas.

I can assure these two letter writers (and other *Emerald* readers) that the focus of my thinking is quite clear. The same methods or tests of validation that are used in ordinary life and science to evaluate claims to truth are applicable to the claims of religion as well.

If these ideas are still really confusing, perhaps the following comments from Jonathan Rauch, writing in the April 1993 issue of *Reason* magazine, will help make them more understandable: "... if you want to believe the moon is made of green cheese, fine. But if you want your belief recognized as knowledge, there are things you must do. You must run your belief through (systematic tests) for checking And if your belief is a loser, it won't be taken seriously by most respectable intellectuals."

To reiterate, religious beliefs are not "self-authenticating."

Ron Rousseve
Professor
Counseling Psychology

Long-term

I would like to clarify the motives of those people who are fasting in protest of the elimination of the U.S. House Select Committee on Hunger. Fasting is a symbolic action of conviction. It is based on the idea that there are people who are willing

to sacrifice a basic human need to demonstrate the depth of one's concern and commitment for an issue, and in this case, the issue is hunger.

It is important for people to understand that fasting alone only raises awareness. Only when it is in the context of a larger campaign for long term solutions is it effective. I would like to let you all know what our campaign is.

Although it is necessary to concentrate one's energy on short term solutions such as the suggested food and clothing drive, it is of more importance to build long-term solutions in respect to ending hunger.

Right now there is a petition being circulated around our campus, as well as the country, which calls on Congress to "Make Hunger a National Priority."

Second, in conjunction with the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, OSPIRG is organizing the Ninth Annual Hunger Clean-Up for Saturday, April 17. The clean-up is a work-a-thon in which volunteers participate in community service projects and raise funds for the support of international agricultural programs in developing countries as well as local organizations.

We invite everyone to join us by turning concern into action through participation in the hunger clean-up. Please call 346-4377.

Jim Treloar
OSPIRG

Open debate

While reading the April 8 *Register-Guard* (I am forced to for I cannot afford the *New York Times*), I saw on page 1, section C, a photograph of Professor Jacob Beck forcefully holding the clenched fists of Professor Sandra Morgen while engaged in what appears to have been a heated, abusive argument.

This incident took place, according to the *Register-Guard*, after the University Senate's vote on the new multicultural policy and was in reference to said vote.

I wanted to take a few minutes out of my day to publicly thank Professor Morgan and

Professor Beck for illustrating what supporters of multicultural philosophy engaged in an "honest, open, non-threatening discourse" can look like. I feel that their support for the new multicultural policy was illustrated wonderfully by their use of physical threats to each other to express their opinions.

Their example is profound, and I can only hope they are on future committees that are designed to inhibit hate crimes, physical intimidation and abuse on this campus.

Thank you, Professor Morgan and Professor Beck, for being shining public examples of what open academic discussion is like. I am proud to be a student at the University, and even more proud that my \$900 tuition bill is going to pay their salaries and to facilitate further discussions like this.

By the way, so no one will misconstrue this letter, I am being a bit sarcastic in parts. So watch out.

Mark Anthony Jefferis
English
Philosophy

Donations

This is in regard to the article titled "Candidates seek signatures" (*ODE*, April 9).

The Sexual Assault Exam Fund and the multicultural center would be wonderful programs for the University. I don't believe, however, that students should continue to be "nickel and dimed" to death with more and more fees.

Instead, why not ask for donations and grants? Oregon Public Broadcasting does, and they do quite well. I think these programs would also do well with community support. But asking the students to bare more costs is crazy. If you don't think I'm right, examine the outcome of 1990's Ballot Measure 5 more closely.

If someone from the ASUO asks you to sign the petitions, I urge you not to. Instead, go to the ASUO and tell them you wish to see these programs be started on a contribution basis only.

Todd Helton
Humanities

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