

Multicultural debate gets downright ugly

The spirited, often-times heated debate that has taken place during the past few weeks concerning revisions to the multicultural curriculum requirement sunk to an all-time low last Tuesday.

The *Student Insurgent* published a special May 11 edition dedicated solely to the University Assembly's vote to reconsider the revised requirement. The gist of the special issue was that all opposed to the revisions were racists, and although that may not be true, the *Insurgent* is entitled to its opinion.

However, on the last page of the special issue is a full-page display labeling five University professors as racists. At the top of the page is headline that says, "Are they RACISTS?!? ... Ask them." Immediately below that reads, "Faculty in Opposition to the Requirement." And below that are the names, offices and phone numbers and class schedules of five professors.

Aside from the fact that the five opposed the revisions, not the requirement (which already exists), and that 205 other faculty also voted to reconsider the revisions, the *Insurgent* went beyond mere factual error by labeling the five professors as racists.

Insurgent editors claim the page merely poses a question and does not label the professors as racists. However, given the overall tone of the issue, including an *Insurgent* editor accusing one of the five professors of having a "white supremacist agenda," it is patently obvious the back-page headline is intended as a label, not a question.

Although other ideological-bound publications have name-called movements and groups on campus, picking out five specific opponents and labelling them moves from expressing opinion to personal attacks.

Juvenile antics of the *Insurgent* editors aside, the issue raises the larger questions of how the University (and, for that matter, society) enacts change.

Every person who spoke in opposition to the revision did so for one of three reasons: Costs, academic freedom or breadth of the requirement. Not a single person suggested revoking the race, gender and non-European requirement.

Those questioning costs have valid points. Can the University afford another requirement while enduring Measure 5-mandated budget cuts? This is a legitimate question and worthy of rational evaluation and further debate.

Others wanted the requirement to encompass more than the four racial groups mentioned in the revision. This is also a valid concern. What message does it send to various ethnic groups when the University votes that, although they have suffered oppression, they have not suffered enough or the right kind of oppression to be part of the club.

At first, those who raised concerns of academic freedom were accused of complaining merely about a "politically correct" requirement. But with the *Insurgent's* ugly name calling, the question is given new life. If the *Insurgent* is any indicator, what kind of freedom can professors enjoy when they must remain silent for fear of being labeled a racist?

What if the debate dealt with expanding courses in Russian history? Would the *Insurgent* have published a headline exclaiming, "Are they COMMUNISTS?!? ... Ask them?" Probably not. And if it had, it would immediately be condemned by the University community — which has remained curiously silent so far.



COMMENTARY

Celibacy is valid lifestyle choice

By Bob Weigel

During the past few months, I have been discussing my disgust over the publishing of a very brief letter to the editor. I tried to reason with all of those involved but found no one able to hear. Perhaps the students and faculty who read this will demand the *Emerald* editors be held accountable for disregarding their own policies and playing games with the money they are allocated.

For those who don't know, the *Emerald* does not normally publish letters that are direct attacks on persons or group lifestyles. For example, if I were to write a letter in which I said "Oh come on, (name of a gay person), you aren't really gay, are you?" and that letter got published under the title "You can't be serious," what do you think would have happened?

After all, if I were to say "I was just amazed that he said he was gay," that might excuse my action, but it doesn't excuse the editor who is supposed to be aware of the fact that many people are gay, and that such a letter would be held as a direct attack on that individual and his or her lifestyle.

Well, people, that is analogous to what happened months ago, and not one of you screamed for my defense. My lifestyle is celibacy before marriage. Andrew O'Connell, in response to my letter (*ODE*, Jan. 27), said "Come on Bob, no sex?" (*ODE*, Jan. 29). The *Emerald* printed it and titled it "You can't be serious." Why isn't anyone on campus speaking up for me?

Are people really surprised that someone is abstaining from sex here in this society? I can see where a person might be surrounded by people who give their bodies away to others who have no real commitment to them, but they really think there actually is no one who is abstinent?

But an editor? Is that the awareness of the *Emerald's* editing staff? Are they really that ignorant of the diversity of lifestyles that actually exist here in Eugene? I doubt it. But as I spoke with the person responsible for letting Andrew's letter be printed, all he could say was "I think he was just surprised that you said that (no sex)." Isn't that amazing? Any of you super intel-

lects see a fallacy here?

So how about this? Is it OK with everybody if people openly make fun of celibacy, as was done on full-page ads in the back of the *Emerald* before the election last year.

(For those who may have missed it, the ad prompted pro-choice people to vote so they could have abortion on demand, rather than being responsible with their sexual urges. The last line said "... of course, there's always celibacy!")

What poor person wrote that? They openly make fun of my lifestyle as though it is inferior to theirs. Meanwhile, they encourage people to vote so they can kill the results of their uncontrolled lust.

Rather than having sex, I show people love by helping take care of their needs like food, shelter, spiritual and physical well-being. It is something that changes their life for the better. I get financially poorer for doing it, and oddly enough, it doesn't find me all that many real friends (in comparison to the number of people who try to misuse the help I offer).

How dare any of you compare a lifestyle whose very focus is fruitless self-gratification with a lifestyle of celibacy. Yet which one are people defending? How strange. Did I hear someone say, "But it's you, Bob, who have been bringing hatred against gay people for years"?

Well, I say, "You bigot." You don't even know the personal sacrifices I have made for people who are/were gay and the absolute lack of persecution I have offered. Now you pre-judge me and classify me according to my lifestyle, rather than getting to know me. Anyone who has hated another for prejudice and now has judged me in this manner must hate themselves also.

Above Andrew's silly letter was one that basically said, "If

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people are not a potentially productive member of society, they'd might as well be killed because we have enough quantity." What most of us today have forgotten is that many will never achieve because there was not one person to show them love.

I certainly haven't felt very loved these eight years as I walk down sidewalks and hear women say things like "I hate men" in response to the seldom-returned smile I try to give everyone, regardless of gender, race or the initial look he or she gives me.

Bigotry is very prevalent, isn't it? It's not the evil that changes, it's just the group that is subject to it. And all of the time it's the same ignorance at the root - an ignorance that makes me and others "guilty" for the sins of my race, family, sex and religion. What a sad people we have become, a people without a vision, without discernment.

Instead of responding with a worthless sarcastic response, why doesn't someone try directly reasoning with people they disagree with? Or do my opponents not have the same hope and love for me that I have for them? (As though I haven't felt the cold shoulder that would freeze my tears should I cry on it long enough to know that answer already.)

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