

Step back and rework Amazon

The University is upset with the architect, the architect is upset with the University and the students are upset with everyone. The Amazon student housing project is spinning, in an uncontrollable path, out to sea.

There is a great deal of money at stake, let alone people's homes. The people living at Amazon have created an environment that is very livable to them, and they should be incorporated in the refurbishment of Amazon. The availability of low-cost student housing makes higher education easier to attain for low-income families. Indeed, it is one of the few ways for low-income students to afford a higher education.

The objective of the University is to provide a similar living environment but in a refurbished setting. This idea has been overwhelmed with politics and bad communication since the project began. Costs are rising drastically, and if they continue to increase they will ultimately be passed onto the residents. These residents are already living on a low income, with half of their budget going to rent in some cases. Any rent increase could eliminate their potential to attain a degree.

The lines of communication have become clogged, the intended goal of the University has been lost in politics, and the tenants just want an affordable place to live. It is definitely time to take a step back and re-evaluate. The students are asking for a moratorium on the immediate demolition and rebuilding of Amazon until a clear public policy regarding the importance of low-cost housing has been established. Furthermore, they would like to have this policy approved by the Amazon tenants.

Engineers from a local architecture firm have stated that the current structures can be safely occupied until June 1996. The more students the University continues to evacuate before that date, the higher the loss in revenue. So far, 37 units are empty, resulting in the loss of roughly \$7,000 dollars a month. Time is not of complete essence, and the benefits of restructuring could be extremely positive to the entire project.

The relationship with the architect, Christopher Alexander, and his firm CES/TE, must also be reworked. It seems the working relationship between the University, the students and the architect has been severely damaged. The student group that was created to achieve this relationship was disbanded in the spring of 1992 after a confrontation erupted between Alexander and the students. Nothing can be achieved until there is a possibility of working together.

Although an immediate moratorium will further delay the intended completion date of the project, it may benefit everyone in the long run. The plan, as it exists now, can't continue and be called a success. There have been too many mixed signals and inflated costs. Amazon housing provides a service to the students and the students provide a service to the community. One can not exist without the other.



COMMENTARY

Police try to educate bicyclists

By Dennis Baker

I would like to respond to an article in the Oct. 18 edition of the *Emerald*: "Bicyclists must obey traffic rules." I believe the article was well written and is an excellent tool for continuing the education process at the University, as it relates to bicycle safety and the enforcement of traffic violations.

I read several times in the article that bicyclists were unaware of the Oregon laws regarding the rules of the road. When I came to the University nearly two years ago, I attended several meetings where University students were targeted and "picked on" when it came to such enforcement. I listened to stories and examples of incidents where Eugene police officers issued citations to students who were out-of-state or from large cities where bicycle enforcement was all but non-existent.

I believed then, as I do now, that ignorance of the law is no excuse. However, I believed the students brought up some very good points. I believe the law enforcement community also has some responsibility to educate the greater community, particularly when concerns are raised about perceived negative impacts on it.

I decided to do what I could to inform students at the University about bicycle issues. The campus police officers and I developed several ways to go about it. First, campus police officers developed several pamphlets relating to bicycle safety, security and enforcement. A wallet-size card was also developed with the help of local west University businesses. This card is kept by the bicycle owner in case his or her bicycle is stolen, so all of the necessary information about the bike is available

for the police. Thus the chances of recovering the bicycle are increased.

I believed that just handing out more pamphlets for students to possibly throw away was not enough. The officers began an aggressive campaign to further educate students. We were present at the summer IntroDUCKtions, where parents and new students attended and where the topic of bicycles was discussed. I also gave presentations at the new student orientations. Police officers explained bicycle laws at Greek meetings, housing orientations and several Campus Community Relations Task Force meetings. We had a booth at the Street Faire called "Ask a Cop," which was staffed by police officers who have made hundreds of contacts relating to bicycles on campus. Last year, as well as this year, members of the Eugene Police Traffic Unit spent the entire first week of school issuing verbal warnings to bicycle riders who violated traffic laws on or near campus. Hundreds of warnings were given to students.

It is also noteworthy to mention that the Office of Public Safety at the University has worked closely with the Eugene police in this process of educating the public about bicycle safety.

Campus security officers register student bicycles and also staff tables around campus at the beginning of each term for this purpose. While registering bicycles, campus security officers talk to students about theft prevention and campus regulations concerning bicycles. In addition, they inform students about the importance of obeying the traffic laws of this state. They also stress the fact that bicycle violations are enforced in Eugene, and explain why.

If some of the public resents traffic enforcement as a means of protecting people from injury and death, I cannot apologize for that.

The whole purpose of this effort is to address student concerns and diminish the "Us vs. Them" attitude that always seems to prevail when police officers do enforce the laws (as in the letter to editor, "Bikers vs. EPD," *ODE*, Oct. 20.)

I know that no matter how hard the police attempt to educate the public, not all of the public will be reached. I believe it is important that the students at the University know that the police officers out there are not there to destroy our relationship with the community, but be part of it. If some of the public resents traffic enforcement as a means of protecting people from injury and death, I cannot apologize for that. The Eugene police will remain committed to providing the University community with a full range of services including education, prevention and, yes, enforcement.

I encourage students to feel free to approach the police officers they see on campus and ask any questions they have regarding this matter. Even if it is not a bicycle question, feel free to talk with those officers or call me at the Office of Public Safety, 346-2905.

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