

Ivory tower or just day care? Lost in intelligentsia

"This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead nor tolerate error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

— Thomas Jefferson

Posted above EMU Fir Room

By Owen Brennan Rounds

Last week was the annual Meeting of the Minds, and I didn't receive an invitation. Having recently recovered from losing my mind at Guido's, I realized my input to this meeting would be important. I harassed my drinking buddy to RSVP for me, and he did.

The meeting was basically a free dinner for "student leaders" and administration folks, paid for with your tuition (thank you, by the way). The usual suspects were there and after dinner the group adjourned to a roundtable discussion in the EMU Fir Room. That is where the fun began.

A representative from the philosophy department began with the acute observation that the state of Oregon doesn't really give a damn about higher education, so it's time we start looking out for ourselves.

He outlined a plan that would call for increased tuition and increased enrollment: more people paying more money would help offset Measure 5 budget cuts. What he said next made even more sense.

He discussed the creation of a surcharge. This surcharge, about \$40 a term, would stay on campus and help create freshman programs and senior research or practicum programs. These new

programs would encourage students to stay at the University instead of transferring or dropping out.

The gentleman said this is a crucial step for the University, stating increased program cuts would essentially create a downward spiral toward oblivion. He also hinted at the fact that our tuition goes into a big pot at the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, and when it gets doled back out, we don't get as much money as we put in. A \$40 per-student, per-term surcharge that gets spent on this campus could help keep students at the University.

With all this intellectual discussion about the future of the University, I actually believed there might be hope for us in the near future — that dream was immediately shot down by representatives of various victims' clubs.

Eve, a pleasant and articulate young lady, began discussing how she and her friends were disempowered on this campus. Imagine that, disempowered student leaders, what a wet dream for administrators.

She cried out because there weren't enough books in the library sympathetic to her plight. She added that 20 of her friends had left the University because they felt they didn't fit in.

One insightful gentleman asked her how she felt about her relationships with her professors.

"As an African-American lesbian with one leg and silly glasses, how can I expect you, a straight (looking) white male to understand my existence," she

burst out.

I spent too much time scribbling in my notebook and she caught me when I rolled my eyes at this insane statement.

"I don't agree with you at all," I said. "If only straight white males could understand straight white males, African-American lesbians with one leg and silly glasses understand African-American lesbians with one leg and silly glasses, and so on ad insomnia, the world would be a really strange place."

At this point I hesitated; I wanted to point out that at least one historic leader would agree completely with her point of view, but any time you mention Hitler in an argument people tend to forget what they were discussing and begin calling each other names.

Instead I stated that the goals of any university were to create better problem solvers and better communicators. If the administration pandered to the pleas of every bitch-and-moan artist, it would have a day care, not a university.

"The University is in the middle of a little budgetary problem and if it tries to appease every non-traditional student on campus, there won't be a university for any students," I said.

Tito, chairman of the Mariachi Band support group, rang in with his point of view.

"My people may be in the minority, but soon we will become the majority and white people will be the minority. If you don't recognize the importance of my people and our history now, we will take out our anger and self-hatred upon you when we are the majority," Tito

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decreed.

I don't know if I was off-base, but I interpreted that statement as a threat. He declared that we must legitimize Mariachi bands within academia or suffer the slings and arrows of assault guitars when they rule the top 40. Cowering to such a threat would be a disgrace to this University — look for the Mariachi minor in next fall's schedule of classes.

An administrative vice president of something chose to speak up.

"I think we are all in agreement that we all agree that something needs to be done," he said thoughtfully.

"You're dead wrong, pal," my drinking buddy interjected. "We don't agree about anything on this campus; most of us couldn't give a shit less."

"No. You're wrong buddy," chimed in little Timmy Doolittle of the victims' support network. "We are victims, hear us roar," he belted out, and then demanded the University create special classes for victims' studies.

I asked him if he felt victimized by his own last name. Doolittle began to cry.

This campus's student leaders are fighting to be recognized as victims and they want the University to take care of them. Well, they're in for a surprise, the University can't.

This institution managed to find hundreds of thousands of

dollars necessary to fund multiple multiculturalist agendas, and it is now suffering the consequences. There are students in many courses who can't write a complete sentence or complete a simple algebraic equation. Ask your professors how the University is doing in respect to teaching communication and problem solving and they will tell you exactly what kind of crisis this University is really in.

The administration had the sense to realize that the state will no longer bankroll the University. It looks like the administration also has the intestinal fortitude to raise its head and begin taking care of itself instead of expecting the system to take care of it.

It is probably too much to expect a victim-bound student body to do the same. As I walked out of the Fir Room I looked up — Jefferson's quote was still there.

Owen Brennan Rounds is publisher of the Oregon Commentator.

LETTERS

Trillions\$

The following shows what could have been purchased with the \$3 trillion spent from 1981 to 1992 on the military:

- \$20 billion could've funded 40,000 drug enforcement officials at \$50,000 a year for 10 years.

- \$40 billion could've built 800 new \$50 million hospitals and medical research centers around the country.

- \$40 billion could've provided sufficient help for the 1992 hurricanes, the 1993 Midwest floods, and several other disasters.

- \$100 billion could've significantly reduced cancer, heart disease, AIDS, and many other medical problems.

- \$200 billion could've built four million \$50,000 tractors to improve agriculture and life in third-world countries.

- \$200 billion could've built

four million \$50,000 houses for homeless and poor Americans.

- \$300 billion could've eliminated the 1992 national deficit, thereby reducing taxes for everyone in the country.

- \$500 billion could've funded two million school and many other needed public service jobs at \$25,000 a year for 10 years.

- \$1.5 trillion could've been used to double all of the above, abolish most taxes, or for other miscellaneous expenses. A tiny fraction of the miscellaneous expenses would include national defense, as the 192 warheads on one essentially invulnerable U.S. submarine can destroy any country on earth.

From 1993 to 1996, the Clinton administration proposes to spend an additional \$1 trillion on defense spending, despite the end of the Cold War. This is only an 8 percent decrease in defense spending beyond that proposed by the Bush administration.

tration.

Mary Olsen
Las Vegas

Hypocrisy

The attention of the media is totally focused on Bosnia. However, there are events that have occurred and are occurring in the southern part of Africa that are every bit as bad, if not worse, than those occurring in Bosnia.

The death toll in Angola and Mozambique is estimated at between one and two million people — much greater than the death toll in Bosnia. There has been torture, mutilations and gross human rights violations in both countries. Why, then, don't we see heart-rending scenes on TV every night from Angola or Mozambique as we do from Bosnia?

Is it because these people are black? Is it because the U.S. government and the CIA played a

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The "Safe Zone Symbol", a pink triangle with a green circle, indicates that a person or service is one that will be understanding if a gay, lesbian, or bisexual student, colleague, or ally needs help.
Look for the Safe Zone table Nov. 16 in the EMU.

