

Trading summers for productivity

Oh, those lazy, hazy days of summer. As we brave the miserable rain and wind of a typical Oregon winter, it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone that people — especially students — are letting their minds wander to those warmer months of the mid-year, when the days are longer and the skies are bluer. When the sun is out and — best of all — so is school.

Don't let yourself get too carried away by these fantasies, however. There may be clouds on the horizon, casting a shadow on your summer and the summers of years to come, and it's not just Oregon's usual late spring showers. It's "productivity."

It seems that some of the powers that be at the University have begun to consider whether it would be a good idea to force students to attend classes during the summer at least once before obtaining a degree. The idea is still being debated; there is no guarantee that mandatory summer school will become official University policy, either now or anytime soon. But it has been discussed.

In an attempt to deal with the budget-constricting effects of 1990's Measure 5, as well as a steep rise in enrollment expected to take place in the next few years, the University has begun to examine ways of increasing its productivity. What this means, in simple terms, is that the University wants more students earning more degrees in less time.

Let's put aside the more sentimental reasons for opposing a mandatory summer session: the need to relax, to visit friends and family, to goof off. It's not that these reasons aren't valid; it's just that they're obvious. There are other, less apparent justifications for axing the mandatory summer school idea.

First of all, many working students need the summer months to earn the money that pays their tuition, room and board. If their summers are filled with school, they may not be able to afford a degree (especially when tuition goes up, which is another part of the productivity plan).

Besides that, there are ways to encourage summer school attendance without making it mandatory. Three suggestions recorded by the Summer Session Productivity Group, which met twice during the fall of 1993, are worth looking into. The first of these is so-called "plateau pricing," in which a student can take 18 credits for the same price as 12. Second, the difference between resident and non-resident fees could be made lower during the summer, giving more out-of-state students an incentive to stay here rather than go home. And third, students in summer session could be given first shot at registering for desirable classes during the rest of the year.

There's nothing wrong with trying to improve productivity — on the contrary. If the University hopes to survive into the next century, some such improvement will be absolutely necessary. But there are better, less coercive ways to do it than by stealing students' summers. Let's hope the administrators and faculty members who are considering this possibility will reach the same conclusion.



OPINION

Warm kisses and cold showers



ROBBIE REEVES

Bob Packwood is back in Oregon, and this time he wants to be taken seriously.

Good luck, Bob.

Oregon's embattled junior senator has been hopscoching the state talking about timber and health care — typical things for a senator to discuss.

However, Bob Packwood isn't exactly a typical senator.

Packwood has answered precious few questions during this trip about his relations with women, especially about the 29 women who claim he sexually harassed them.

Packwood doesn't like talking about these allegations to reporters a lot, so when he wanted to reveal his side of the controversy, he went to talk to a lunchtime crowd at the Albany Area Rotary Club.

Instead of the usual speech in which Packwood advocates cutting down all of Oregon's trees to prop up the timber industry, Packwood treated the Rotarians to a lively speech about French kissing.

Truly titillating, Bob.

It could be called the Great Kissing Controversy. The news about Packwood the past few days has revolved around his relations with Gena Hutton, a former volunteer chairwoman for his campaign in Lane County.

Hutton came forward as one of the 29 women accusing Packwood of wrongdoing. She also revealed that the senator French kissed her.

Packwood confirmed Wednesday that he had French-kissed Hutton in 1980 when Packwood was still married.

Packwood also said she kissed him the next day, and that after that, they had a "warm relationship," in a business sort of way. Hutton said she did not recall having kissed Bob again. I don't blame her.

This relationship came to an end when, allegedly, Hutton asked Packwood to invest in her business, and Packwood didn't buy. Hutton denied this as well. She then admitted that she might have kissed Packwood again the next day, but that it was a simple peck on the cheek. End of story.

Well, maybe not. Packwood said this was not a kiss on the cheek, but "a warm kiss."

If Packwood gave some of these speeches on C-SPAN, the viewership for the channel would probably skyrocket.

And so the story goes.

Oregonians have been showing up to some of Packwood's traveling kissing tutorials during his 10-day visit, which is at the halfway point now.

There have been some protesters at these gatherings, with some people supporting Bob and others against him. However, it seems that his supporters are the ones who have the most humorous remarks — reasons why Bob should continue to be a senator.

One of the more amusing protesters was shown in a picture in the Thursday edition of the *Emerald* showing a sign that read "If it's OK to KILL (unborn) women ... Why isn't it OK to KISS women?" That's got to be the oddest defense of Packwood up to now.

This man was then quoted as saying that Packwood and his troubles represent a problem in society regarding the way that women are treated.

The man is exactly right, for exactly the wrong reasons. Packwood is not in trouble because he, like most other Oregonians, is pro-choice. Packwood is having problems in most cases because he can't keep his hands, or his lips, to himself.

Another Packwood defender said Packwood didn't "rape or molest anyone" unlike, as this man said, John Kennedy or Bill Clinton.

I don't recall either of those two men being convicted of either rape or molestation. At least 29 women are accusing Packwood of varying degrees of molestation. Gennifer Flowers was pretty much discredited.

The defender said further that "his hormones got the better of

him ... (the women) turned him down, and he took a cold shower."

With 29 women turning down Packwood, one could imagine that it was probably a pretty long cold shower.

And if all of the controversy hasn't already taken a big enough toll on Bob, a picture in the *Oregonian* Thursday shows Packwood on the floor of a Roseburg restaurant after he fell while entering. He apparently slipped on the floor after he failed to wipe his feet.

Poor Bob.

I could almost feel sorry for Bob Packwood. He wants to put his past behind him and serve Oregonians by working on the issues that matter to people in Oregon, such as health care and timber.

However, what Bob fails to realize is that what he did to 29 women, if true (and this is all still "alleged"), was wrong.

The idea that he might have harassed 29 women also, whether it is true or not, adversely affects the credibility and clout that Packwood has in the Senate. This changes the way that Packwood might have been able to serve Oregonians.

Packwood said this week he has no plans to resign, even if the subpoena to get his diaries is lifted.

That is too bad. While Packwood does — and should, constitutionally — have the right to a fair hearing, the fact remains that Packwood can only serve Oregon in a drastically diminished way now. Barring a major miracle — or his resignation — Packwood will only warm a seat in the Senate until his term ends in January 1999.

OK, so maybe I can't really feel sorry for Bob. I have more sympathy toward those who accuse the senator.

If Packwood has any sense at all, he will resign from the Senate, take his pension and publish his diaries as part of a multimillion dollar book deal.

Welcome home, Sen. Packwood. You should come home more often.

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