

EDITORIAL

Militant bicyclists have wrong idea

The Alliance for Critical Mass is making a critical ass of itself.

The Alliance is an organization of militant bicyclists who are trying to make automobile drivers recognize the bicycle as a practical alternative to driving. Alliance members ride in groups of 30 to 50 people twice a month, traveling the main thoroughfares of the city during the evening rush hour.

By making themselves impossible to ignore, they hope to break motorists of the automobile habit.

But they're the ones likely to get broken.

Their goals are noble. People need to reduce their dependency on automobiles. Doing so would keep the air cleaner and would help to keep the streets less crowded and in better repair. As gas prices rise and parking gets more scarce, more and more people are going to see the bicycle as a viable alternative to the car.

But the Alliance is going about it all wrong. Its members are not going to make this city any more bicycle-friendly by deliberately annoying auto drivers. There is already an uneasy relationship between the two groups.

Eugene is unusually bicycle-friendly, as cities go. That isn't to say that bicyclists don't have their enemies here, because they do. But Eugene is trying harder than most cities to accommodate alternative forms of transportation. It may be a slow process, but it is happening.

For the transition to non-automotive transport to be a smooth one, however, opposing sides can't be threatening to run each other over or make each other late for dinner.

There needs to be meaningful discussion between the two groups, and that's more than can be accomplished by simply shouting angry words at each other across a busy intersection. Four-letter words are not the best medium for productive dialogue.

Motorists are not always tolerant or respectful of bicyclists. This is ironic, considering that many bicyclists choose to ride instead of drive for an altruistic reason: to protect the environment that both motorists and bicyclists enjoy. But even those who ride for selfish reasons, such as health or personal convenience, deserve some consideration.

Many bicyclists try their best to obey the rules of the road. They stay in bike lanes when they're available, they give signals when turning and they intelligently avoid streets which aren't safe for bicyclists.

Even though the Alliance makes up only a tiny fraction of the bicyclists in Eugene, its tactics will only make drivers hostile to everyone on two wheels — even those who follow the rules. There's a time to be antagonistic, and that time is *not* when your opponent is encased in a 3000-pound exoskeleton of steel.

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OPINION

University will undergo many changes



MYLES BRAND

(As a regular feature to Emerald readers, several times each term we will offer University President Myles Brand a question from our readers and we will run his complete response. We encourage Emerald readers to submit questions for our consideration.)

Question: What is meant by "increased productivity" and can we do this while improving undergraduate education at the University?

Brand: There's no doubt that the University is facing some significant challenges this term, and part of that includes finding ways to increase productivity — a phrase that has become common in higher education nationwide.

"Increased productivity" means having faculty teach smarter — a fundamental shift to include changes such as making better use of faculty's time through innovative teaching methods and the use of new technology. What it does not mean is simply having faculty teach more courses.

Nationwide, higher education is undergoing a profound change, and Oregon is little different. What worked well for us in the past, in the classroom and throughout our campus, may need to be reconsidered in this radically new environment. Our future will be built on a very successful foundation at the University, but change now appears inevitable.

First and foremost, however, we must remember that the University is a research-oriented liberal arts and sciences institution with complementary professional schools and colleges. We have multiple, compatible missions, including creative new knowledge and art works, and applying this knowledge to real-world

problems. That mission will not change.

As the University's resources diminish because of state budget cuts due to 1990's Ballot Measure 5, some have questioned if we can increase productivity and continue to improve the quality of education without diluting our fundamental mission. The answer is: We can, we will, and here is how we are going to do it.

First, faculty are now finding ways to teach more effectively, while staff are creating means for more efficient administration and support. Meeting this challenge successfully will involve not only faculty and staff, but also students.

Since the fall quarter, more than 100 faculty members organized in nine teams have been working to find new, creative ways to increase productivity and improve the quality of undergraduate education.

Undergraduate students have already benefited by some of the changes faculty have made in the curriculum. Many departments are changing courses from three to four credits, thereby enabling students to focus on fewer subjects at one time and study each in more depth. The cluster system, which added substantial complexity to the curriculum, has been eliminated. And the credit minimum for graduation has been reduced from 186 to 180 to reflect the elimination of the health and physical education requirement of several years ago.

The faculty teams are considering additional changes. There are plans to enhance student advising, to make better use of technology to assist instruction and to make more readily available opportunities for students to test out of required courses. There is discussion about offering a wider array to courses during the summer session, including general education courses, so that students will have the opportunity to make more rapid progress to their degree. Contrary to a recent Emerald editorial, there is no consideration to making summer enrollment mandatory.

Research has shown that one

important factor in retention and successful completion of a degree is the connections students make in their freshman year with faculty and other students. Hence, plans are under way to enhance opportunities in freshman seminars, Freshman Interest Groups, the Honors College and the International College. As a research-oriented university, we can provide undergraduates with hands-on experience in making new discoveries and creating new art. Some advanced undergraduates are taking advantage of this opportunity now; in the future, more will be able to do so.

Meanwhile, staff members are engaged in a year-long study, called the Board Administrative Review, to find ways to be more cost efficient in administration and in supporting the University's teaching mission. The results in this study will be made public in the near future. Net savings in administration will be redirected toward instruction and improving the quality of education.

To succeed in increasing productivity and improving undergraduate education, students will have a critical role to play. Students will need to become more actively involved in the learning process. For example, more team projects and increased independent learning to supplement classroom instruction can be expected. On another occasion, I want to discuss this essential shift to active learning from passive information in-take.

As these few examples illustrate, there are continuing qualitative improvements in education being considered, and some now under way, at our university. There is no single, sweeping solution, but rather many small improvements that will improve education, despite the loss of state funds.

We can all take pride in the University as faculty, staff and students rise to the occasion of becoming better, even as the state causes us to rely more and more on our own resources.

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