

EDITORIAL

MEChA's message: Intimidation works

Operating under a charge of "insensitivity," the Incidental Fee Committee decided last week to grant a 16 percent increase to the budget of MEChA, the Chicano/Latino student union. It was the full amount of the organization's request.

More than 40 MEChA members attended the March 3 meeting, when the IFC reconsidered the student union's 1994-95 budget request. The IFC had already approved the increased budget at a meeting on Feb. 18, but later voted 5-1-1 to reconsider the budget, concerned that some IFC members — particularly Kris Cornwell — felt "bullied" and "intimidated" when they initially voted in favor of MEChA's request.

Cornwell was called "very insensitive" by MEChA member Andres Montoya when she questioned whether the student union deserved a 16 percent increase, and few, if any, of the other MEChA members present at the meeting disagreed with Montoya's choice of words.

Whether MEChA was entitled to a 16 percent increase is a matter for debate, but it is not the issue here. The issue is whether it was appropriate for Cornwell, or any IFC member, to be accused of insensitivity, merely for questioning a budget increase.

The IFC began this year with a pledge to not raise incidental fees. It will probably renege on that promise, but in the meantime, any and all increases that are proposed to the committee should be seriously questioned. For this reason, it was not unreasonable for the IFC to vote to reconsider the MEChA budget. It doesn't matter how entitled the MEChA supporters feel to additional funds. What matters is whether the IFC members made a decision based on logic and facts, or one based on intimidation and charges of "insensitivity."

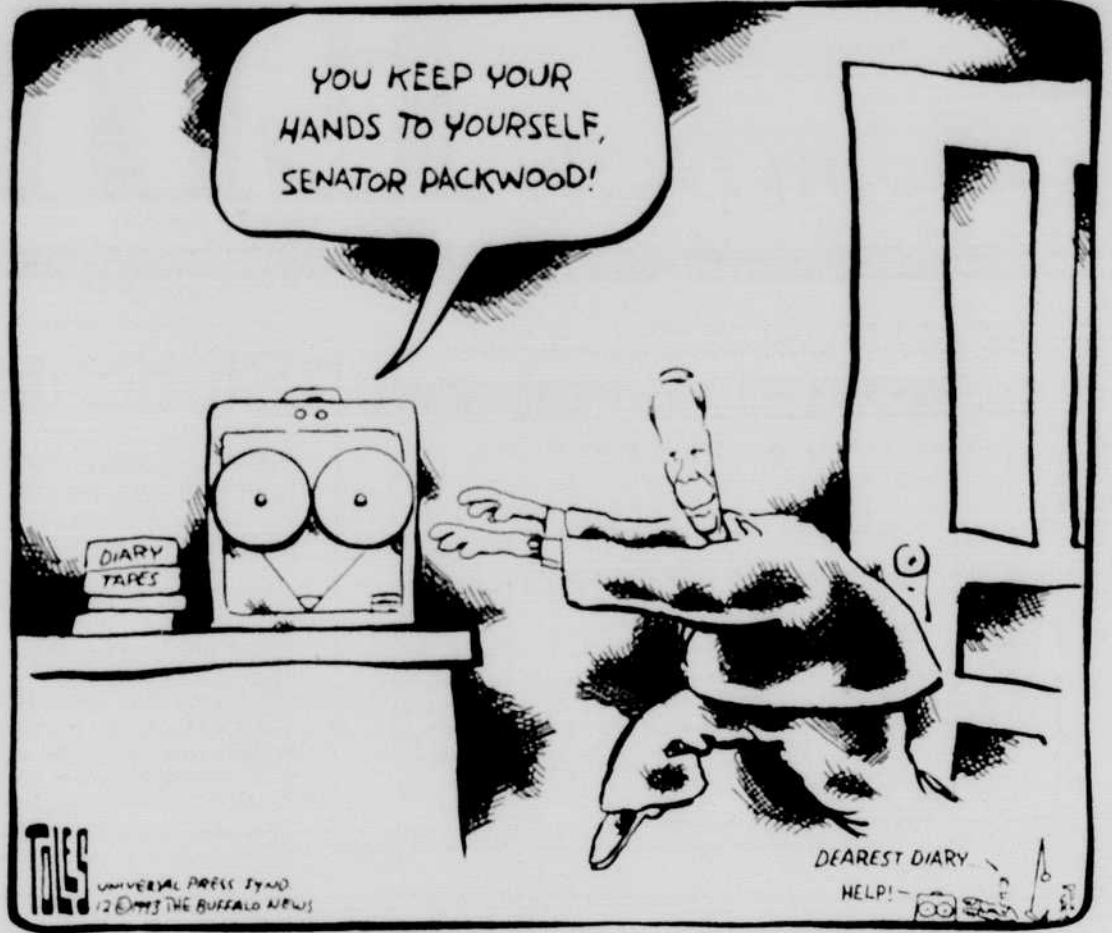
It was not insensitive to raise questions about the group's request. That is the IFC's job.

It was also not insensitive for Cornwell to move to reconsider the budget, nor was it insensitive for four of the other IFC members to support her motion. If a decision was made hastily, it should be reconsidered. Decisiveness is a virtue, but it is not as important as making the right decision.

The problem that surfaced in the wake of this controversy is one that appears with disturbing regularity. These careless charges of racism and insensitivity have no place at an IFC meeting. They serve one purpose and one purpose only: to intimidate. Calling someone a racist is a character attack; it is not an argument to justify a budget increase.

As far as MEChA is concerned, it all worked out for the best. Upon reconsideration, the IFC reaffirmed its original decision to grant the organization its full 16 percent increase, although only three of the IFC's six members in attendance voted in favor (two were opposed, and one abstained).

The ultimate decision to grant the full request may, unfortunately, send a message to other groups about the use of intimidation and character attacks as bargaining tactics. In essence, the message is this: Such measures may not be subtle, but they are effective.



LETTERS

Massacre

The slaughter of innocent civilians during prayer, unarmed and unaware, feeling secure as they are in the service of God, comes as a complete shock. This is not the work of one lunatic as the media is trying to present; there were actually several soldiers involved.

If there is any claim to justice, then let it be seen now. When a state is involved in covert operations it is not regarded as terrorism, but when an oppressed victim stands in the face of a tyrant he and his kind are immediately branded as fanatics, fundamentalists and terrorists. If fighting against injustice takes this form, then it is an honorable duty.

It is easier to condemn people like Saddam Hussein who commit atrocities against their own people, but it is harder to accept that he — like many other tyrants in the Muslim and third-world countries — is sustained and kept in power by Western governments, who are preaching democracy on one hand and being discouraged on the other hand (like in Algeria's democratic elections: an Islamic party won).

It is the duty of all humans to fight against injustice and to teach intolerance and be able to coexist with all people of the world. In the nearly 14 centuries of Islamic history Muslims have coexisted peacefully with all people, especially the Jews who were being persecuted in Christian lands and fleeing to Muslim lands. Not once have we wiped out people because of their religion or race; rather we have been the victims of genocide from the Spanish inquisition to present-day Bosnia and Palestine to name a few. Today our reward for tolerance is intolerance.

Nawab Chakaar
Director
Muslim Student Association

Save the seats

I'd like to take some time to comment on the editorial by Steve Mims (ODE, Feb. 28) con-

cerning the student seating at basketball games. I think Mims is exactly right.

Coach Jerry Green inherited an ailing basketball program, a fixer-upper. He took limited resources, and he did the best he could with them. And what has he done? He's got a team with some talent, a team that is winning some games, and a team that is playing top-10 teams very well. He's got a team that students are excited about and actually want to go out and watch, not to mention stand the entire time and scream their heads off like fans are supposed to do. Green asked for support, and he got it.

What I don't understand is where the athletic department gets off telling student that they have to sit down so paying customers can see. Paying customers? Hey, Brooks, each one of the students is paying \$1,000 to \$3,000 a term (plus an additional \$2 a game) to stand up and scream at Mac Court. We are the paying customers, and we will do what we want! Why can't we have the so-called "paying customers" escorted out of their seats for not standing up and showing support for the team?

I personally think Brooks just doesn't want the basketball team to be more successful than the football team. I can see it on his bored face during the basketball games and I can just tell he's thinking, "How could I get this many people at the football games?" It's called excitement, Rich. People are getting sick of your third-and-10 draw plays. Keep up the good work, Jerry. We'll cheer for you!

Ryan P. Kahn
English

Call Brooks

Our fine basketball team, lead

Phil J. Donovan
Student

LETTERS

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

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