

Court should allow officials to keep jobs

Voters who approved a set of drastic changes to the ASUO constitution in a special election earlier this month may have gotten more than they bargained for, depending on the outcome of a hearing scheduled for the ASUO Constitution Court this Friday.

Student government representatives from the Student Senate, the Incidental Fee Committee and the EMU Board of Directors who were elected last year to two-year terms may find those terms shortened to one year each, if the Constitution Court does not agree to transfer those officials into the new student government structure.

A tiny percentage of the University population turned out to approve the new government, which replaced the old system and its structures with a new overarching Student Senate and a troika of lower bodies, responsible for the EMU, the athletic department and the various ASUO programs.

By revamping the structure this way, the voters effectively eliminated a number of positions, and replaced those positions with new ones not precisely the same. The voters put several representatives out of a job by eliminating their positions.

The court should agree to make a decision on the matter, and that decision should be to make a place for those hapless officials in the new government. Most of the positions have rough equivalents in the new system, so it should be a simple matter to plug the old representatives into the new positions. For instance, an Incidental Fee Committee member could be given a post in the new Student Senate's financial subcommittee.

There are only a few individuals who have been affected by the constitutional changes; those people who held one-year terms would have left office anyway, and several of the two-year posts expired this year as well. Only those who were elected to two-year seats in the past year have been impacted by the government's radical makeover.

Because their numbers are small, there should be no problem moving them to new positions, if they so desire. There are plenty of seats to go around.

It's important that the wishes of the student body, as expressed in last spring's ASUO elections, be faithfully followed. The voters elected these representatives with the understanding that they would serve two-year terms. The voters have not indicated that they want their representatives to lose their jobs, so the Constitution Court should respect the voters' original wishes and allow the officials to keep their positions.

Doing so will help create a sense of continuity, from the old government to the new. That's the whole purpose of having two-year positions in the first place: to make sure that each successive year of government has some "veterans" from the previous year.

It will take some time before the kinks of the new system are worked out; the experience of these individuals will help make the process a little easier. Keeping these representatives is not only the fairest option, but it would also help the new government get off on the right foot.



LETTERS

No luxury

I am writing in response to Damien E. Marquez's letter (*ODE*, March 28) attacking Saferide and feminism. In his letter, Marquez implies that women are irresponsible for their own personal protection, and that Saferide is a luxury.

In 1990, I took two women's studies courses to learn how to be responsible for my safety. I took two self-defense courses the same year. That summer as I went for a night walk to get some air, I was accosted by a group of four men who were apparently coming from a party. They were clearly intoxicated and invited me into their apartment a short distance from the party. When I refused to go willingly, they became menacing. Despite my efforts to defend myself, they overpowered me, took me to their apartment and took turns brutally raping me.

Of the 10 women I know and am close to, six have been raped at some point in their lives. All six of these friends of mine are strong, capable, responsible women. Just what exactly are we supposed to do, Mr. Marquez?

I am telling you and I think I speak for my friends as well — Saferide is not a luxury. Walking alone at night is a luxury.

Korin Gary
Speech

Walk and talk

Kathy Phelps, chairwoman of Lane County Republicans and Oregon Citizens Alliance, officially claims there's "little hope for an end to 'her' party's factional infighting" and there'll be a "fight to the end" (*Register-Guard*, March 9). In the same article Republican Jean Tate offers the olive branch, hoping factions will "set aside differences and concentrate on common interests." (Tate submitted 310 precinct committee post applications from inclusive oriented Republicans for the May 17 election.)

So while Phelps continues to

mouth the 82nd Airborne rhetoric of her boss, OCA Director Lon Mabon, Tate voices what a growing number of Republicans feel who abhor the divisiveness plaguing our party. Phelps and Loretta Neet (another OCA employee wearing a Republican official's hat) continues to promote groundless fears and political agendas targeting homosexual Oregon citizens. And though the OCA says gays have a "militaristic homosexual agenda," one need only witness the "storm the beach head talk" (and walk) of the OCA to recognize what is dividing not just Republicans, but all of Oregon.

Republicans should work together on problems of paramount, legitimate concerns (the economy, crimes and schools) and reject lightning rod anti-gay non-issues dumped on our party by the OCA.

There's room under the GOP's Big Tent for all, even extremist conservatives. But we cannot continue to allow extremists to distract us from pressing issues, nor divide us. We must show Oregon voters our priorities do not include the OCA's narrow agenda promoting legislation which discriminates against any Oregon citizen.

Carol Berg
Eugene

Ideal world?

Regarding Damien E. Marquez's letter (*ODE*, March 28):

In an ideal world, half of the rapists, assailants and other thugs who perpetrate heinous crime against other people on campus would be females, thus eliminating the need for student groups who provided females with "special protection" such as Saferide. In a perfect society,

everyone would equally, "enjoy the benefits of the society" and share responsibility equally, regardless of gender. But this isn't the case in our society. Welcome to America, dude.

Maybe you haven't thought about this, Damien, but in our patriarchal society, women are repressed in the economic, social, sexual and even academic spheres every day. Which gender has to deal with working twice as hard to make half of what the opposite gender earns? Which gender is systematically denied membership to many prestigious country clubs? Which gender has to worry about having its self-esteem in the classroom stunted just because the other gender is too busy acting competitively, fueled by its incessant testosterone? Which gender wasn't even eligible for the Rhodes Scholarship just 20 years ago? Which gender has to put up with the opposite gender telling it what it can and cannot do with its bodies?

One doesn't have to be a genius to figure out that if anyone's enjoying "the benefits of society with no risk and little responsibility," it certainly isn't the females. Working to attain equality and respect does not equal a "recipe for a lack of success, added nine parts victimization," but maybe your bitching about wanting to maintain your hold on the societal privilege equals such.

As a male University student, until I am convinced that there are equal amounts of male and female thugs around campus, I would gladly give up my "special protection" and call OPS for an escort home instead.

Mo Nishiyama
Eugene

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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