

ASUO stipend hike a burden to students

Tuition has escalated more than 50 percent since the last increase was given to the stipend budget of the ASUO, over five years ago. In other words, the cost of attending the University has risen dramatically, while the paychecks brought down by such student government officials as the ASUO president have not risen at all to keep pace.

Good.

The attempt by the ASUO to "correct" this oversight went by almost unnoticed, as the Incidental Fee Committee on Monday granted an 18.1 percent increase to the ASUO, most of which will go toward raising the stipends of ASUO officers. The president and vice president's stipends will go up to \$400 a month each.

It could've been worse. The ASUO came to the meeting with a request for a 100 percent increase in such stipends as the president's.

So while the financial burden being shouldered by individual students is going up all the time, the ASUO, the humble servants of the student body, have succeeded in making that burden a little heavier.

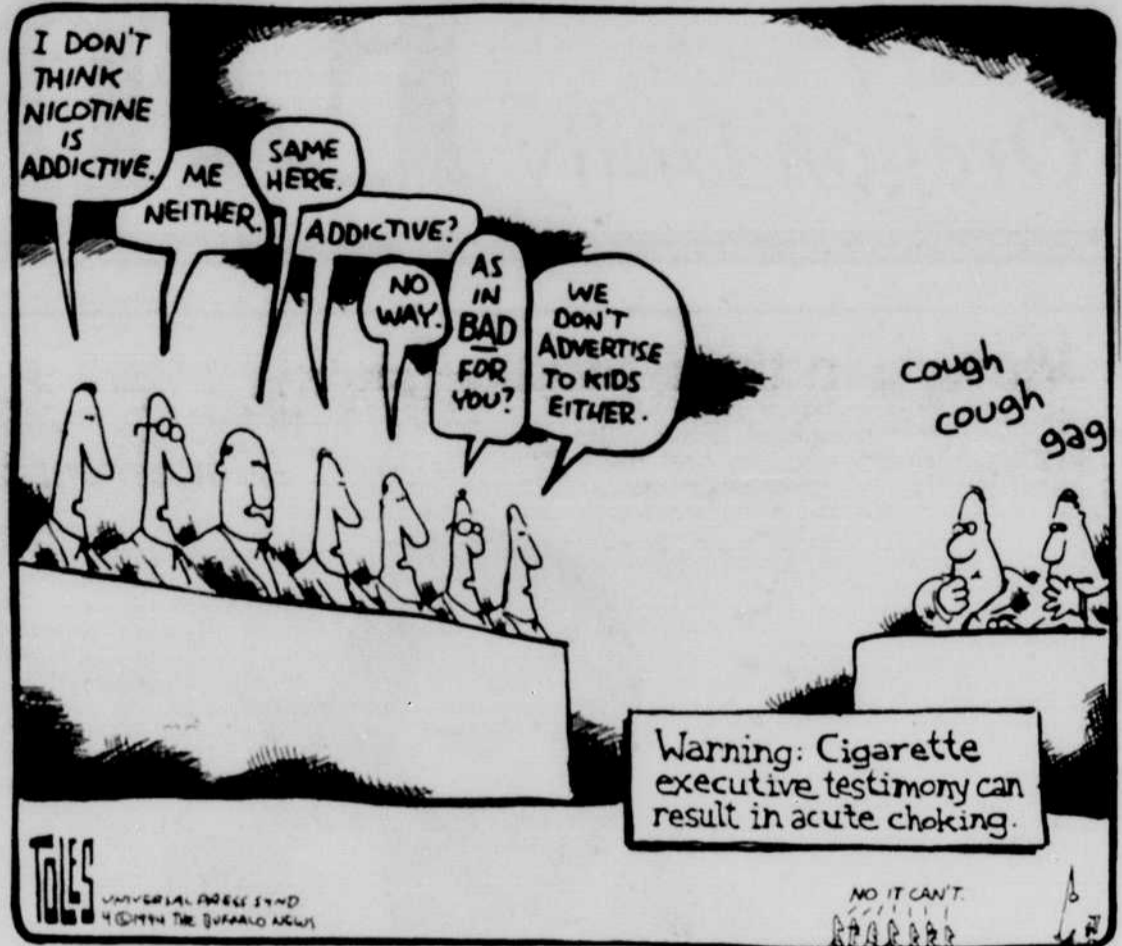
There is a double standard being applied to the ASUO and the various other programs being funded by incidental fees. In the past, the IFC has stated that stipends should not be considered compensation for labor, in the same manner that an employee at Burger King gets paid for doling out french fries. It is assumed that those people who are in stipend positions want to be there, and that they enjoy what they are doing. If that weren't the case, they wouldn't have run for office in the first place.

There is more to be gained from holding an ASUO position than a paycheck; it is a way to gain valuable experience and build a resume. ASUO President Eric Bowen has said that his position is paid less than minimum wage. But stipend positions are not intended to pay well; they are more like an internship than a job.

This is precisely the same justification that the IFC has offered when lowering the stipends of positions outside the ASUO this year. But when the stipends of the student government itself came up, the ASUO asked for a different standard to be applied, and the IFC agreed (although somewhat reluctantly).

In the course of that agreement, IFC member Joey Lyons, a candidate for ASUO vice president, declared that he would abstain from the decision, because of a conflict of interest. The position for which he is running is one of the ones which will be receiving a stipend raise. When it appeared that a lesser increase than requested would be approved by the IFC without his opposing vote, he changed his mind and decided to vote to block the lower increase.

But that is not the issue here. The issue is whether the ASUO was really looking out for the students when it asked to be paid twice what it has been getting for the past five years. With tuition rising, and the IFC making its last year in existence a costly one for students, it's hard to justify a pay raise for the ASUO. Now more than ever, students need to keep their money ... not put it in the ASUO's pockets.



LETTERS

Lifelong lessons

I am writing this letter to thank the University of Oregon State Public Interest Research Group chapter for their work. Both before and since I was appointed as an Oregon state senator, I have been well aware of the important work of OSPIRG. As a University student, I was involved in the origins of the group, an organization dedicated to the public interest through informed advocacy.

In the last several years OSPIRG has taken a statewide important role in such matters as toxic use reduction and campaign finance reform. University OSPIRG students have gone on to become judges, scientists and to assume other positions of responsibility in society. The lessons learned through OSPIRG are lifelong lessons, and the ongoing work to be done today continues that tradition. I urge everyone in the University community to become involved with OSPIRG.

Peter Sorenson
Oregon State Senator

Original sin

I enjoyed the article on religious intolerance on campus (ODE, April 14). I must agree that there is much more of such intolerance on campus than is reported; or anywhere else in the world for that matter.

We are all believers and non-believers alike, prejudicial against any religion that says there is a God in control and we are not living as we were meant to. It is the one thing that no individual can, by natural inclination, be objective about it.

The reason is that we are all guilty, and further, we want to remain guilty. We would rather rule our own lives, however shabbily, than be healthy servants of God. We live like criminals, always in hiding, running from the law to keep breaking the law. "Freedom or Death!" It's mankind's eternal cry.

We misunderstand freedom and so incur death. This idea, by the way, is not new. It is called original sin. We hate the idea

and thereby prove its truth. Nobody who prides themselves on their beauty enjoys looking in the mirror in the morning — truth hurts.

Matt Fox
Classics

Pests

Of the 700 million pounds of pesticides sprayed annually in the United States, about 1 percent actually reaches its target. What happens to the other 99 percent, you ask? It gets into our drinking water, our ground water and the air we breathe. It is known that at least 66 of the 300 different pesticides used on crops are potentially cancer-causing, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resources Defense Council estimate that 5500 to 6200 preschoolers will get cancer just because of their exposure to pesticides in produce. These pesticides are used to improve the output of crops in the U.S., but since the 33-fold increase in their use since 1945, there has been no reduction in pest damages. Obviously pesticides pose direct threats to everyone, yet people in Oregon don't have legal grounds to demand access to information about the effects of pesticides.

However, OSPIRG printed three reports in 1992 to warn resident of Oregon about pesticides and what alternatives there are so that we can naturally, safely defend our crops against pests. In the general elections on campus April 26-27, students will be given the choice as to whether or not they want to continue to fund OSPIRG and their work. OSPIRG provides solutions by educating people about important environmental and consumer issues such as pesticides, and by giving students a place

where they can take action by interning or volunteering with the Pesticide Action Group. Vote "Yes" for OSPIRG.

Anne Marie Dutcher
Eugene

Earth Week

Earth Week is here and it's a good chance for all of us to think about what is happening to our planet, and what we each can do to save it. Recycling is an easy but vital way to make every day an Earth Day. Student Recycling is working hard to make recycling easy for everyone on campus, but we need your support.

On April 26-27, you can show your support for recycling by voting to approve a ballot measure that would increase student fees that Student Recycling needs in order to expand its services. Please vote!

Remember every ton of paper that gets recycled saves 17 trees, 8,000 gallons of water, and 4,100 kilowatts of electricity. Support the planet, support student recycling.

Britta Wells
Student Recycling

Stop noise

Eardrums are not recyclable. The Earth Week noise pollution coming from the EMU area must stop. I attended lectures seven times during Earth Week and at least twice the professor said something interesting. But, both times, I was prevented from hearing it by Earth Week noise pollution.

If it doesn't stop, I'll throw Snapple bottles in the trash and make extra photo copies of everything. Then I'll hop into my 1970 Ford and go get a steak dinner. Take that.

Jay Remy
Journalism

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LETTERS

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