

EDITORIAL

Computer fee offers unique opportunity

The high-tech information age is arriving at the University via the Technology Resource Fee.

The charge appeared as a \$50 line item on every full-time student's billing statement; part-time students paid a prorated fee.

For those unfamiliar with the fee, it was approved by the faculty and administration to usher the University into the information age — where access to information will separate the haves from the have-nots.

Although the \$150 per year for each student seems a bit excessive, the potential returns on the investment are boundless. The fee offers access to the Internet and a multitude of on-line databases in addition to training on those systems, which is a benefit to every student. But the access is only beneficial if each student takes the time to use the new technology.

The EMU computer lab now sports 125 computers and free laser printing for all students. By the end of fall term, the Knight Library will offer 25 high-powered personal computers with several software applications along with access to Janus and many CD-ROM programs. And for those who like to work from home, 48 high-speed modems will be on-line by Nov. 1 to offer remote access to all systems in the library.

But such inducements will not justify the fee for many students who have no intention of ever using on-line technology. Unfortunately, there is no way of getting around the no-option fee this year.

Total revenue from students for the fee will exceed \$2 million during the 1994-95 academic year.

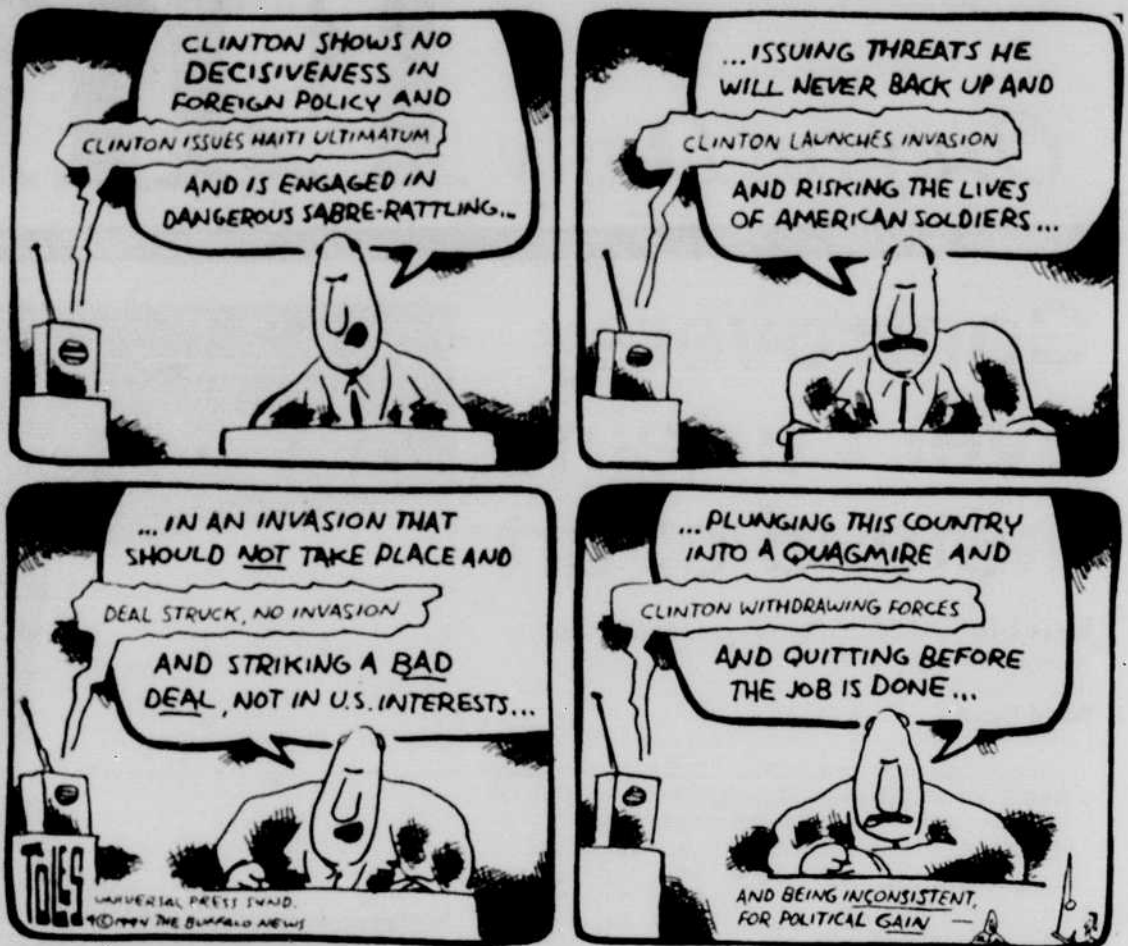
The bonus, at least in this instance, is that all the money generated from University students will stay on this campus. All eight colleges and universities in the state pool their revenue, which is then redistributed. Because the University is the biggest in the state, in terms of students and revenue, it pays a larger share of the state system's operating costs and receives less than its contribution.

If the University had simply increased tuition to bring the new technology to campus, it is doubtful the money returned would have equaled the money sent. By charging a local fee, all money from University students stays here.

Certainly this fact will not console all of those unhappy with the fee, especially in light of the regular pattern of tuition increases.

The heavy task of educating students about the importance of computer literacy lies with the faculty and administrators who approved the fee. Without the ability to journey on the information superhighway, graduates will enter the working world at a distinct disadvantage, no matter the chosen field. But armed with superior computer skills, through the use of the equipment provided by the fee, University graduates will have a leg up on the competition.

Nonetheless, students should keep an eye on how the resource fee is used by the University. If, after a year, the return is nominal, students should protest and demand a reduction in the charge.



■ OPINION

Curtains defeat aim of art show

The EMU Gallery exhibit titled "See No Evil," which intends to highlight censorship and repression, has itself been hidden behind black curtains and kept from viewers' eyes since Sept. 14. The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon is sponsoring the Uncensored Celebration, which includes this exhibit.

Warning signs posted at either end of the EMU Gallery further stain the temporary curtained corridor. The signs read, "The art behind these curtains may be objectionable to some viewers. Where minors are concerned, parental discretion is advised." A second sign posted by the curators of the EMU Gallery protests the installation of the curtains.

Since the late 1980s, a national wave of censorship of art and artists has been promoted by right-wing politics and religious zealots. The unacceptably heavy-handed tactics contrast sharply with America's great tradition of respect for free speech. The University's participation makes the Uncensored Celebration the latest victim in this purge against artistic freedom.

Throughout September, in an annual state wide event, galleries, bookstores and libraries will celebrate free expression and the arts by providing showcases for censored or controversial art.

Originally installed without curtains "See No Evil" alerted viewers that they may find some work objectionable. News releases mailed to the local media warned that the very nature of the show subtitled "Censored Art" involved controversy.

EMU Director Charles "Dusty" Miller, who was quoted Sept. 15 in the *Register-Guard*, explained that the purpose of the curtains was to give people the option of not viewing the art while allowing the show to remain open.

The EMU director and the gallery coordinators are clearly



ANNE MOSER-KORNFELD

in conflict with one another.

After reading the gallery notes from people viewing the exhibit, the overwhelming sentiment of anger is directed at the curtains. Most people argue that the show is tame in comparison with other exhibits.

The basic problem lies in the way the art addresses issues that cause people to feel uncomfortable. Each artist's work poses questions about sexuality, gender, bodies and the sexual abuse of children.

The University community attempts to provide a forum for new thoughts and diverse views. But when an exhibit addressing society's hidden secrets gets displayed in an open corridor, the EMU administration feels free to sidestep one of the University's missions.

As if there isn't enough irony to this situation, the curtains are rented for a fee of \$721, and it's not certain who will pay the cost.

The gallery is up a flight of stairs or accessible by an elevator. Because of the second-floor location, the gallery is not readily accessible to the public and is possibly less wheelchair-accessible with the curtains in place.

Some argue that "See No Evil" may be not suitable for children. The exhibit contains material directing viewers to deal with horrific events taking place every day in this country. Jane Orleman, for example, uses oil paintings to present her memories of surviving childhood incest.

The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse Survey (1991) listed 404,100 reports of child sexual abuse in its 1990 census. For children in the local community dealing with incest,

this exhibit could speak to them and for them. Concealing a piece of art that could help those needing healing denies the ongoing sexual assault suffered by children.

The EMU administration missed an opportunity to applaud Brooke Molla and Jane Orleman for their ability to create work with disturbing themes. Their methods invite the public to become more aware of issues central to women and children.

The curators of the EMU Gallery showed their innovation as the administration held to a conservative, protective stance — as if putting something behind a curtain would make it go away. The exact opposite has happened, and those who may not have seen the show now come to gawk and pass judgment.

Other works in the show convey independent views.

Joe Cronan's three-color photograph, "Red/Green From Eden," appears realistic. Cronan wrote in the artist statement that the work developed from a willingness to explore self-censorship.

Ines Kramer used a mixed media to compose "Hidden Histories." Her story embraces her family's legacy and presents a chapter in gay American history, bringing her lesbian relatives out of the closet.

Each piece in the show is an imitation of real life. One piece could not jump out from behind the curtains and breathe life. This artwork is not an enemy of the people.

On Thursday, a public discussion panel will take place at 5:30 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room. Following the talk, there can perhaps be a better understanding of why an art exhibit centering on the work of censored artists was itself censored. Such an understanding might ensure next year's exhibit isn't curtained.

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