

## Student opinion sought for fees

A basic course in economics teaches that there is an unlimited demand for scant and finite resources. In the micro-marketplace of the University, student groups compete for limited program funds from the holder of the purse strings — the Student Senate.

Student unions, associations, committees and councils funded by student incidental fees must go before the Senate on an annual basis to justify their slice of the budgetary pie. In past years, groups seeking funds pled their case to the Incidental Fee Committee, which was abolished by a vote of the students in the spring of 1994.

The Senate must weigh the competing demands of additional or continued funding of these groups against the increasing and burdensome incidental fees charged students each term.

For the academic year 1994-95, each student will pay \$119 per term for an annual total of \$357. This is a \$7.50 increase from last year, stemming mainly from a handful of ASUO ballot measures passed by students in the spring election.

The total budget, including ballot measure funding, exceeds \$5 million. The Senate controls about \$4.5 million of this budget, doling money for those groups meeting specific criteria.

On Nov. 17, the Senate held a forum to solicit student opinion on the allocation of student funds for student groups. By seeking input from the "taxpayers" of this University, the Senate hoped to test the political waters before increasing or decreasing student fees.

We applaud the Senate's action to encourage participatory government on this campus.

Unfortunately, the meeting was a chance for many of the special interest groups receiving student funds to further embellish upon their respective causes, to once again show the Senate the value of their programs. Only a few non-affiliated (not members of a funded group) students showed up. These students voiced opposition against groups ranging from OSPIRG to the USSA and the \$1.1 million student-supported payment to the Athletic Department.

These people claimed to be speaking for the silent majority of students who don't speak out against student funds being used to lobby or to provide entertainment. The anti-fee sentiment during the forum was refreshing in that it gave senators a taste of what non-involved students think about the funding of student groups — especially those who engage in political activity.

But students should remember that groups OSPIRG and Saferide received their funding via the ballot measure, that is, students voted to fund these programs in a fair and square election.

If there is in fact a silent majority of students who want incidental fees decreased, these people need to get off their collective butts and let the Senate know. It will hold one more forum, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room on Monday.

It's a chance to speak up or continue to pay up.

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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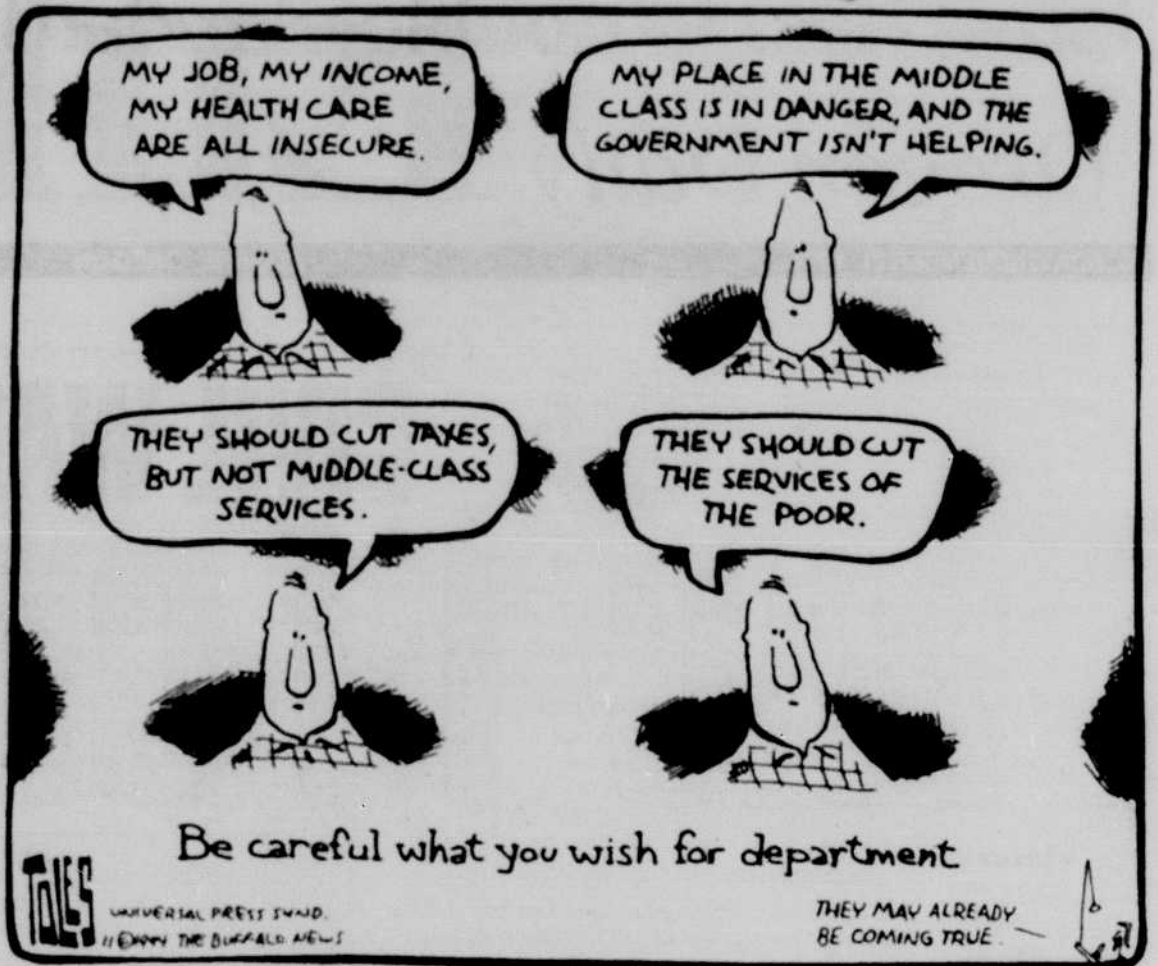
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### COMMENTARY

## Rational debate key to success

That's it! This is ridiculous! After many years on this campus I should be immune to politically correct blathering run amok, but this tears it.

First, let me be clear about my purpose. This is not primarily a letter about any one issue, per se, but about rational thought and argumentation. Specifically, I deplore the fact that rational analysis has been supplanted by emotionally charged accusations that people who are pro-Proposition 187 are rotten despots, and a head-in-the-sand attitude that avoids acknowledging problems or proposing realistic solutions.

In their letter (ODE Nov. 15) opposing Proposition 187, Lowry and Bookstein pull out all of the stops, painting the legislation and all supporters as racist, referring to a white supremacist agenda, and Big Brother-style informants.

Now I happen to support their conclusion (i.e., Proposition 187 is a bad move), but deplore their reasoning. Why do you have to start screaming racism and preaching moral indignation about "inherent rights" and the injustices of the colonial period? Get real! This is 1994 and no matter what happened before, we have to deal with REAL social problems with REAL solutions rather than wounded homilies about rights and injustice.

Though currently very popular (used by conservatives and liberals alike), these "life, liberty and the American way" sermons are hopelessly self-righteous and serve only to obscure the true issues. Let's talk about facts. Then let's talk about solutions. Proposition 187 is not inherently about race; it is about money and one idea of a solution. Yes, true, since we are talking about California, it will affect Hispanics more than others. But then I can think of a lot of tax laws that affect some people more than others; I can even think of some that are not just.

Why insist on imagining a sinister racist agenda behind this law rather than attacking it in an

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orderly rational way? Lay out the problem the law seeks to address, characterize how the law proposes to address the problem, and then say why you disagree. Sure it makes a rotten sound bite, but it's much more productive.

For example, rational discussion of Proposition 187 must focus on an exceedingly simple equation. There is a high demand for government social services in California, and the tax base cannot support this demand. If we start with the assumption that we want to maintain (or increase) the current level of services there are only two solutions. Either you somehow decrease demand, or you increase the tax base (i.e., raise taxes). In advocating an open border policy and claiming that the problem is a "lack of services," Lowry and Bookstein implicitly advocate the latter; Proposition 187 takes the former approach. Either way, you have to show that your approach can come up with enough dollars to cover proposed services because this is the REAL world.

So, no matter which of the two above approaches you prefer, let's stick to the real issue — money. Either come out and say, "I am for sharing what wealth we, as a society, have with all comers" or state, "I feel that we should prioritize the distribution of this society's resources and I also believe that citizenship is good criteria for this."

Don't start screaming about racism and Nazis, don't start calling people white suprema-

cist, don't start planting scare tactics about Big Brotherism. Address the facts, state your position, and suggest a solution. Not everything has to be painted in the day glow dramatics of grave injustice.

Let me give you an example, so we can have profitable discussion rather than politically correct or conservative invective in the future.

I do not believe that Proposition 187 is a solution to the financial crisis in California. Legally or otherwise, people immigrate for economic gain, not just for social services. Given that people will come regardless, we are much better off with a populace that is educated and generally healthy. The reasoning here is basically that if people have a shot at opportunity, they will be less likely to turn toward crime and are more likely to raise non-poor, non-social-service-using kids.

Furthermore, illegal immigrants have contributed substantially, both in taxes and profits arising from cheap labor, to this country since its inception. Since every single state in this union has directly or indirectly benefited from this economic boon, I believe it is the job of the federal government to help out hard-hit states like California, Texas, and Florida. Yes, this might mean a tax increase, and yes, I would be willing to put my money where my mouth is by paying more taxes or selling the presidential yacht or doing without a similarly "essential" government outlay.

Now look how easy that was! No screams of inequality, no character assassination, no implying people who disagree are Oregon Citizens Alliance members or Hitler, nothing! Of course, it's way too boringly rational to get on the evening news....

Eck Doerry is a graduate student in computer and information science