

Go ahead and run for ASUO offices

It's springtime; the sun is shining and students are skipping classes by the dozens. Spring also means that ASUO elections are just around the corner.

While the elections are fast approaching, it's not too late to get involved in the process and run for office. Candidates must file by Wednesday to get on the ballot, meaning that with concerted effort, students can still run.

We do not intend to encourage anyone to throw together a shoddy campaign in a couple of days just to beat the deadline. However, if someone out there has concrete ideas on where he or she wants this campus to go and has always wanted to be a University politician, let there be no doubt: now is the time to run for office.

Students and student groups often complain, sometimes justifiably, about how money is spent on campus. Some have gripes about various University policies. Others are just plain tired of how student government is run.

What better reasons could there be to get involved with student government? Elections are the time for candidates to step out and let

students decide the future of the University. Democracy, on the campus level, only works when a variety of students from different backgrounds are vying for public office. Get involved and change the system, rather than staying outside and complaining about it. Run for office.

Students should run for office if they are interested in bettering the campus community. Rather than concentrating on flashy campaign posters and catchy slogans, or making promises they couldn't possibly keep, candidates should focus on solving problems. Much like state and federal government positions, students need dedicated representatives who will listen and make tough decisions.

It's never easy being a University leader; it won't make anyone rich or famous. But those aren't reasons to run for office. Instead, students need a leader who is capable of making reasonable, rational decisions and who will be accountable to students for making them. There are much easier ways to brighten one's resume than running for office, but there are few that are as satisfying and will result in direct changes to the way the University is run.

For some, the campaign is already beginning. Campaign posters are popping up, indicating that debates and balloting will follow soon. While time is tight for students who are just now thinking of running for office, they should take the time to file and get on the ballot.

The deadline for filing as a candidate for ASUO is Wednesday. Make the most of it and run for office.

Your University and its students need you.

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COMMENTARY

Diversity focus of International Week

Susanne Steffens, Jeff Thierfelder, Tom Lwebuja and Jessica Lim

Hello, fellow students. Today marks the first day of International Week, a time to celebrate diversity at the University. Since 1963, the International Student Association has used this festival to express and enjoy the uniqueness of world cultures and to educate the University and Eugene communities about the importance of diverse points of view.

Currently, almost 1,600 students come from outside the United States to study at the University. They make up about 10 percent of the student population and bring with them valuable insights and learning opportunities. Though Oregon is often decried for its lack of racial and cultural diversity, our international students represent a significant asset to the University and contribute considerably to the learning experience of all students. We have students from over 90 countries who speak many different languages. This diversity and variety provides a learning environment and a different perspective that is valuable in understanding the greater global arena. Without these wonderfully diverse students, the University would be a dull place indeed.

International Week is the annual festival made up of four continent days, one global issues day, and a celebration night. This year's theme is "Window to the World." Beginning Monday, World Forum Day kicks off the festival, followed by America Day, Africa Day, Asia-Pacific Day, and Europe Day. On Sunday, the grand finale of the festival is International Night, an evening of dining on authentic food from around the world and dancing, singing, drumming, and a fashion show.

The reason we have Interna-

tional Week is twofold. First, we are celebrating the wonderful gift of sharing different cultures through food, informational presentations and entertainment. Second, we are attempting to educate ourselves and the surrounding communities about different people, places, customs, and ways of thinking. We hope to provide, through our programming, an avenue for people to begin to understand and to appreciate the diversity of human beings and to accept different value systems and ways of thinking.

World Forum Day is an opportunity for community school children to take part in interactive presentations that promote global issues and cultural awareness. There will be panels on such topics as world peace and study abroad. Tuesday's America Day is a chance for students from Central and South America to express their rich cultures. Highlights will include an Andean music concert and a movie about Guatemala. On Wednesday, the African students will have a chance to express aspects of their homeland. This exciting day will include poetry, a movie and a slide presentation from Africa.

Thursday, Asia-Pacific Day, will feature various Asian demonstrations and dances, and provide guests with a chance to sample a variety of Asian dishes. Completing the week on Friday is Europe Day. This day will provide the curious with an abundance of information and entertainment. Some highlights are the raffle, the opportunity to taste different authentic European dishes and the chance to meet many friendly people from around Europe.

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Finally, the culmination of the festival is International Night, which traditionally sells out at more than 500 people. This year, groups of students will perform skits, songs, dances and music from more than 20 cultural regions. But the biggest attraction will be the exotic food. Authentic dishes from around the world are presented buffet style, an adventurous eater's dream. This uproarious evening will end with fireworks, which are bound to cap a successful and entertaining week.

Tickets can be purchased for International Night at the EMU Main Desk, the ISA office, and the ISA table in the EMU from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. every day. Prices are \$8 for students and \$10 for non-students. Ticket prices include the full dinner and the evening's entertainment. We are also selling T-shirts and sweatshirts at the EMU table that creatively illustrate the theme "Window to the World." Please stop by and find out more. We hope you enjoy our events and we look forward to seeing you at International Night.

Susanne Steffens, Jeff Thierfelder, Tom Lwebuja and Jessica Lim are members of the International Students Association.

LETTERS POLICY

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

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The *Emerald* operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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