

Avoid strike, work to pass pay raise

University union workers are threatening to strike and every student, faculty and staff member should be worried.

Imagine no cooks in the cafeterias and dirty dorm halls. What if this campus lost all its public safety officers? How would you feel if you walked into Oregon Hall and there was no one there to help you? The term "Oregon Hell" would be redefined.

The 1,100 or so Oregon Public Employees Union members at the University are fed up with pay cuts and unsettled contracts. If the state doesn't act quickly, students may lose several critical services.

These union employees aren't the heralded professors or babied administrators the University caters to. They are the unsung heroes who are responsible for the every day operation of the University — cooks, physical plant workers, custodial workers, public safety officers, Oregon Hall workers and other support staff. Without them, the University could almost reach a state of emergency. A 17,000 population mini-city can't operate by itself.

About 200 people rallied in front of Johnson Hall Wednesday to warn state officials about the possibility of a strike. Students, faculty and administrators must pay attention to rallies like these. They need to understand the struggles of OPEU members and realize the impact a strike could have on this University. Any one who attends, works at or visits the University will be affected.

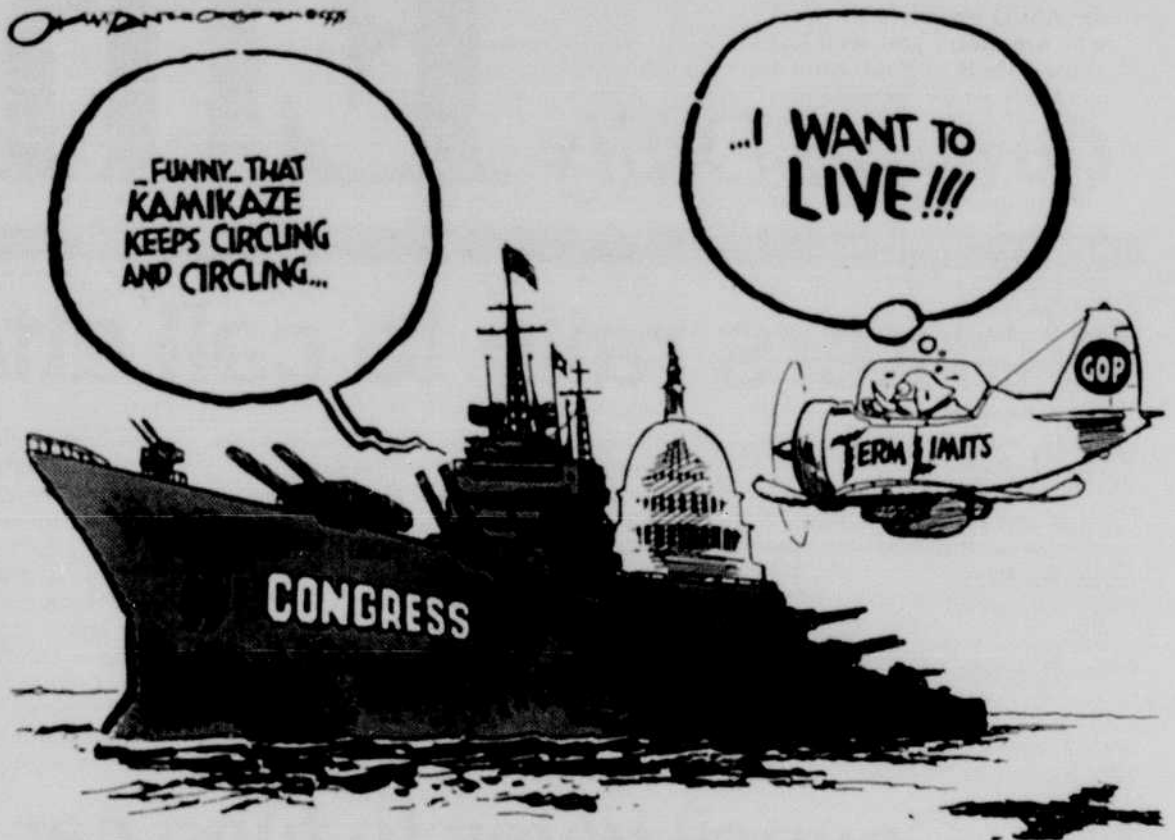
Although a strike would be tragic, it's understandable why these employees are angry: Union members were unable to negotiate a 6.5 percent pay raise with the state.

They aren't being greedy; they just want compensation for an increase in cost of living. They have suffered a pay freeze for the past two years and need to make up for inflation. Luella Nelson, a fact finder hired by the state and the union jointly, found that state employees were entitled to a 6.5 percent by April 1. However, the state rejected those findings.

Union and state negotiators have been trying to develop a contract since July but negotiations have not occurred in weeks. It's time to start talking again. Governor Kitzhaber and other state officials need to take these workers off the back burner. The state should make every effort to settle with the union members in order to avoid a disastrous strike.

If workers are forced to strike at their meeting April 19, the earliest the strike could begin is May 6. The University would be preparing for graduation and fall term registration and could not afford to lose these valued workers. Spring is undoubtedly the busiest time for this campus and it would not be able to handle the workload if employees step out.

Unless you want to clean the dorm showers or cook surprise casserole, support the union members and hope a strike can be avoided.



LETTERS

Write in

To all who will listen:

Friends, we approach a crossroads.

Since the beginning of time, student elections have presented us with several candidates. Unfortunately, knowledge of the candidates is universally minimal. Hence, a winner — indistinguishable from the others — will win after only 10 percent of the electorate chooses to vote. The other 90 percent, in their absence, send a clear but unheeded message to student government: "We don't care who wins and we won't pretend we do. They all suck."

Finally, an alternative to this expression of apathy arrives. Instead of not voting, students are encouraged to send a message by writing in Drew Mirante for Student Senate seat number 16. A vote for Drew is a vote for apathy.

In the race between Tweedle-dee and Tweedle-dumb, we urge you to vote for Tweedle-dumber.

Mirante is supported in full by the International Write In Drew Mirante Alliance.

Unlike the other candidates, Mirante will not make generic, vague promises to improve this University. Instead, he offers the following concrete platform. If this Contract with the University is not fully implemented within 100 days, he will resign from his position and pass the torch on to someone even less capable.

- Optional fees and optional tuition: Two ideas whose times have come.

- The bells atop the EMU will perform AC/DC's "Hell's Bells" every hour, on the hour.

- The University's motto of *mens agitat molem* will be changed to *semper ubi sub ubi*.

- Destroy the Empire and support the rebel alliance. Also, ensure that Captain Janeway and her crew return safely to Alpha Quadrant.

- Lap City for the football team.

- Increased exposure for student speakers.

- The practice of filing paperwork to declare a major will be replaced by a barbaric yawp from atop PLC.

- In University dining,

nachos at every meal.

Upon Mirante's election, a veritable can of whoop ass will be opened upon government as we know it. The 90 percent whose voice has gone unheard for too long will finally be sounded from the rooftops of the world. At the IWIDMA, we feel your pain.

Desperate times call for desperate votes. And if you don't vote for Mirante, someone else will.

Drew Mirante
Geology
Luke Seemann
Leisure Studies

Missed point

Primo Fontana's opinion piece of April 5, opposing the rally against the "Contract with America," totally missed the point. Fontana falsely accused the protesters of burning books, yet all that was burned was a single copy of the "Contract" symbolizing that they don't want to be bound by a contract that wasn't written with or for them. Fontana also wrote that "obscenities blared" from the loudspeakers, that students were protesting just to protest and that there were "rabid accusations" of CIA involvement in South America.

In the hour and a half that I spent at the rally, I heard no more than one or two obscenities and the obvious emotion and dedication of the speakers convinced me that they cared about more than just protesting. As for the CIA in South America, all I can say is perhaps hopeful reporters like Fontana should read the news as well as report it.

Paul Schroder
Environmental
Studies

False image

I would like to thank the Emerald staff for allowing the pro-life supplement to be added to the March 10 edition of the newspaper.

One reason I came to this University was because of the diverse and accepting image it presents to the public. After arriving, I soon discovered that the image presented is false, that

any conservative views are not represented fairly, or at all.

Seeing the pro-life supplement gave me a sense of hope that the First Amendment is in practice and taken to heart. It pleases me that it is, for once, not forgotten when it comes to views which the majority of the University does not agree.

The pro-life supplement may have offended some people, but it was giving information concerning pro-life in a non-violent manner (which is rare in recent times).

Once again, thank you. Democracy is in effect.

Allison Stormo
Journalism/Political
Science

Get involved

As a member of OSPIRG, I would like to let all University students know how easy it is to get involved with this group. Getting involved is easy to do and the benefits are many. Last term I returned my general interest card (you may have seen these in your lecture classes) to OSPIRG and then made an effort to go into the office. Since then, I have not only become a group member, but I am also the leader of the hunger and homelessness project group.

Owing to the positive experience I have had with OSPIRG, I encourage any and all University students with interests in such things as activism, education, leadership and simply making friends and creating ideas to join OSPIRG. To "get involved," just take the initiative and call 346-4377, or come by the office at Suite 1, EMU.

Dorothy Oppenheimer
OSPIRG

Commitment

This letter is in response to the April 10 article on Chris Kantowitz and Niki Scott. Although Scott has been involved in Greeks Against Rape, her level of involvement in women's issues and societal issues leaves much to be desired. As a female student here at the University, I know that I want to be represented in

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