

Runge pay raise well-deserved

The University granted Jody Runge, the head women's basketball coach, a salary increase that will almost double her current pay. The debate over her salary turned into a debate over gender discrimination and equity in pay.

In the end, Runge scored a significant victory and the University came closer to closing the gap between the salaries of men and women.

It's about time.

Runge's raise goes to a basic right of equality — men and women should be paid the same amount of money for doing the same job. While Runge is the coach of the women's basketball team, she was paid \$48,000 last year. Hardly the going rate for a university basketball coach these days, especially for one who took her team to the NCAA tournament in her first season at Oregon.

With a raise, Runge's base salary will increase to \$80,000 annually. It doesn't come close to Jerry Green's mega deal, but it is a tiny step closer to equality.

Some have said the University caved in when it granted a salary increase to Runge — a move to avoid a lawsuit for sex discrimination. While few except those directly involved know the true reason for the agreement on a new four-year contract, it seems the University understands a basic principle. Men and women should be paid equally for doing the same job.

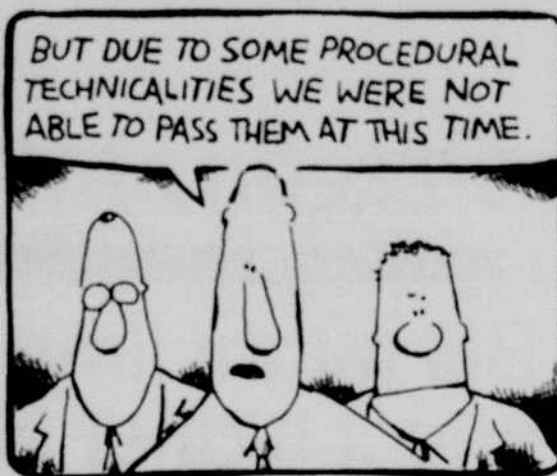
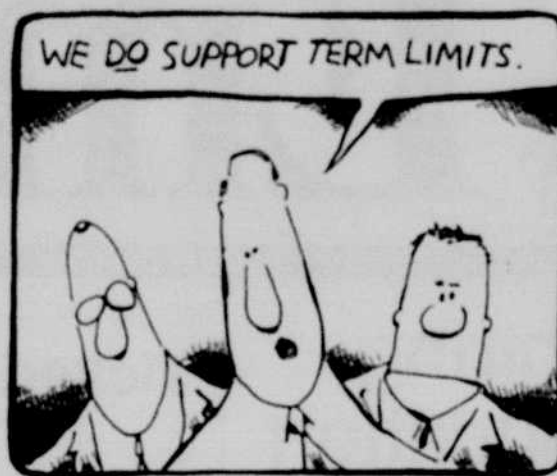
Others have said the men's and women's basketball programs are something less than comparable, given the fact men's basketball is breaking even financially and the women's program is not. That fact should be reflected in the salaries of the coaches, they say.

However, while this may be an indictment of the way the University promotes women's basketball and the interest some students have in it, Runge cannot be held at fault. Runge's job is to coach a basketball team, not to be its only cheerleader.

The University must share in the responsibility of making the women's basketball program the best it can be. Spending more money on the women's program will be justified. Runge can produce a higher-caliber team that will draw more spectators and dollars to Mac Court.

A provision in Runge's new agreement would involve the University promoting her program. It's encouraging to hear the University will take more of a visible interest in the program. With added promotion of the program, perhaps more students will develop interest in the program and the program will make more money.

Sometimes the right thing to do isn't the most popular. The University should be commended for agreeing to grant Jody Runge a raise. While the move will cost the University a bit more money annually, it demonstrates the commitment the University has to gender equality.



OPINION

Condoms not foolproof solution to HIV



BRIAN WOMACK

Personally, I'm a big fan of sex. But I'm not a big fan of "safe sex."

People should have sex that protects them from getting HIV — that's why I don't like the ideas of "safe sex."

"Womack, what are you getting at?"

I'm glad you asked.

In another one of those catchphrases of the 1990s, safe sex has ruled the debate on AIDS prevention like Jordan rules the NBA.

Thursday, AIDS activist Mary Fisher gave an excellent speech at McArthur Court on why the HIV-infected should not be treated with fear or without love. The speech was moving and enlightening.

But when it came time to answer questions on how AIDS prevention should be handled in the school, she gave the cliché we often hear.

"If you don't want a sexually transmitted disease, don't have sex. But I've seen the numbers [on teen sexual activity]. We need to give them information to act responsibly. [We need to give] the tools that can save their lives."

What tools could she be speaking of?

Well condoms, of course.

But the problem lies in that, as Fisher implied, condoms aren't foolproof. In fact, relying on them can kill you.

An article in the June 1993 issue of *Social Science and Medicine* shows the Russian roulette people play when they depend on condoms.

The article, entitled "A Meta-Analysis of Condom Effectiveness in Reducing Sexually Transmitted HIV," says HIV transmis-

sion studies indicate condoms may reduce risk of HIV infection by approximately 69 percent. In other words, condoms fail 31 percent of the time.

That's about a one in three chance of getting the deadly virus if one has sex with an infected partner. The article said the effectiveness of condoms may be as high as 86 percent or as low as 46 percent.

The author of the piece, Susan C. Weller, said these findings are tentative. But even if they are not right on target, what would the risk then be? One in four? One in five? I don't like the odds whenever there's a chance of acquiring the virus.

Whatever the case may be, it's obvious the condoms just don't make sex safe. As Weller said, "Condoms will not eliminate risk of sexual transmission and, in fact, may only lower risk somewhat."

Another problem with the reliability of condoms is their propensity to slippage and breakage.

An article in the Sept.-Oct. issue of *Family Planning Perspectives* said a study based on a convenience sample of 177 couples, who each used 11 condoms, found 103 condoms (5.3 percent) broke before or during intercourse and 67 condoms (3.5 percent) slipped off during sex.

These statistics show how condoms are a joke.

Yet the calls for education on safe sex persist despite the pitfalls of condoms.

When we tell kids to make sure and use a condom to protect themselves, we're really telling them to make sure and hope they don't get HIV — because hope's all they have to lean on.

Some have got to be ashamed of themselves. Telling kids, and the public as a whole, condoms are protection from AIDS is like telling a driver to take the road with only three drunk drivers instead of nine.

"But kids are going to have sex anyway!" the critics shout.

Like huge bands of cats in heat, teenagers will have sex, no matter what we do. So shouldn't we teach them to protect themselves with a piece of rubber that unreliable?

Perhaps not.

An article in the Spring 1994 issue of *Policy Review* points to a very interesting quote by Joe McIlhenny Jr., president of the Medical Institute for Sexual Health. "The philosophy that directs teens to 'be careful' or 'to play it safe with condoms' has not protected them. It has only enticed them into the quagmire of venereal warts, genital cancer and precancer, herpes for life, infertility and AIDS."

Believing teens are mind-numbed slaves to their hormones is asinine. Yet if they are repeatedly told they are victimized by these feelings, they may start believing it.

We've seemed to forget sex is beautiful. It's not something to be done whenever people's passions feel the need. Laws against rape and incest are in place for that very reason.

Sex is being cheapened in our society. It's something the media loves to portray as something to get whenever one can. Yet, it often ignores the consequences that can arise from such a casual approach to sex.

The horrors of AIDS could be hugely alleviated overnight if intravenous drug use was stopped and monogamous sexual relationships within marriage were valued as they once were.

It's not going to happen by passing out condoms at schools or playing commercials that have condoms jumping into bed when its owner forgot it during sex.

It will happen when we remember the beauty of it and why it should be cherished as something special.

It is beautiful.

That's why I'm a big fan of sex.

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