

## Colleges subject to applicant lies

These days, it isn't essential to have a flawless transcript and a 10-page resume to get admitted to the best colleges in America. All you really need, it seems, is an A-plus in Deception 101.

Two recent examples of applications fraud at Harvard and Yale demonstrate how a student with a questionable record can get into a top-notch school — although they both also go to show how even the best-laid deception plans can go astray.

The first incident to gain national press attention was the case of a C-plus community college student from California who forged his high school and college transcripts and concocted glowing letters of recommendation from non-existent faculty members to get into Yale. He was caught, reportedly, when one of his professors decided his work was way below Yale quality and started asking questions — although the student had managed a B average at Yale and was only a few terms away from his degree when he was discovered.

The second case involves a student whose acceptance to Harvard was rescinded after it was learned, through an anonymous tip, that she had beaten her mother to death with a lead crystal candlestick. Harvard admissions officials say that when she failed to mention her probation on the application, she defrauded the university.

Both of these cases illustrate the ease with which application deception can be achieved, particularly at the "best" colleges with the largest number of applicants and the most inflated requirements. But they also shed light on the failings of the applications process, in two very different ways.

First, the Yale case shows that a selection process with too much dependence on numbers and grades fails, on occasion, to find the best students. Although this guy "didn't belong" in Yale, according to his real credentials, he apparently was good enough to get above-average grades once he was there.

And the Harvard case raises questions about the type of information requested on college applications. Yes, it would seem, she deceived the university, but what business is it of theirs whether she was on probation? Why is such information relevant, and if it is so important, how come the university relies on the good word of the applicant alone to find out about it? After all, if it weren't for somebody in the student's hometown sending in newspaper clippings of the murder, Harvard would've been none the wiser. (Incidentally, the student has been accepted at Columbia.)

Admissions officers at Yale and Harvard claim that they catch most application fraud, and we'll have to take their word on that. But these incidents provide a glimpse of some of the things that are wrong at the nation's best schools — and provide another reason to question whether they should really be considered the "best," after all.



### ■ OPINION

## Some candidates just don't cut it



PRIMO A. J. FONTANA

It's ASUO election season once again, so as a good opinion writer should, I'm going to endorse one of the tickets for the ASUO Executive.

In order to do this, however, I'll start at what may seem like an odd place: the Student Senate.

Joseph Lyons, currently a student senator, is a candidate in the race for seat 2, in which he is running against three other people.

Last week, presumably in order to decrease his competition, Lyons petitioned the Elections Board to combine the candidates for seats 1 and 2, as has been done in the past, making the election a six-person contest. He proposed that the top two vote recipients would each be rewarded one of the seats. That means the odds for a candidate winning would be 1 in 3, rather than seat 2's current odds of 1 in 4.

The board called the Constitution Court for a decision. The court rejected the decision, because each seat has a different term length. After this defeat, Senator Lyons appealed with a motion to combine the race for seats 2 and 3 — the same as he had proposed for seats 1 and 2. The court rejected his appeal.

Lyons has also posted notices for a write-in campaign for himself in seat 1, so he is a marked candidate in seat 2 and a write-in for 1. This means that if his motion had been accepted, he would have been a candidate for not only two, but three seats.

Just to add an additional element of intrigue to these shenanigans, Senator Lyons had some celebrity cosigners for his first petition: ASUO Executive candidates Student Senator Chris Kantrowitz and Niki Scott.

This sort of Little Rockian elbow-rubbing may be accepted in the Clinton White House, but we certainly should not allow it here in Eugene. If you feel that

such gerrymandering is inappropriate in proper electoral procedure, make sure that you let Lyons, Kantrowitz and Scott know it at the ballot box.

Now, on to the Executive. Because of their involvement with the aforementioned Lyons affair, I cannot find a moral justification to endorse the Kantrowitz/Scott ticket, no matter what the merits of their platform. On to bigger and better things.

One of the most interesting tickets to watch has been Nat Farnam and Eli Elder's. Neither of them has been part of the ASUO in the past, and they are positioning themselves as the "outsider" ticket. Although they stress the importance of the campus' relationship with the outside community, an admirable topic, some elements of their platform are problematic. They stress the importance of low rent for students, and in the April 13 issue of the *Emerald*, said they want to set up "a district where rents are more reasonable."

I don't know what this entails, nor have I discovered the answer in any subsequent campaign literature. Off-campus housing prices are beyond the scope of the ASUO Executive, and for a ticket to express its importance so greatly without proposing a cohesive course of action indicates a lack of realistic planning.

Another ticket in the outsider league is Doctor (and Student Senator) Justin Good and Rev. Thom Schoenborn's, two of the malcontents from *The Commentator*. These two have some big ideas, which include building a micro-brewery in the EMU as a fund-raising activity and bulldozing Deady and Villard Halls. Yeah, whatever dudes.

One candidate who hopes she can reach a more informed student body is Kenya Luvert.

Luvert is the current student assistant for the Black Student Union and has served the campus population in a number of other capacities. To her credit, she has stressed one of the most important problems facing this campus: students who don't understand the issues that affect their lives.

However, one drawback to her campaign is her lack of a running mate. Luvert told the *Emerald* last week that if elected, she would have a vice president appointed by a selection committee. The ASUO vice president should have ideas and views that coalesce with the ASUO president's to make for an effective Executive, which is why they run together as a single platform. This leaves Luvert's ticket only half-complete.

Last, but not least, is the ticket of Jennifer Williamson and Zachary Kelton, which I wholeheartedly endorse.

Their platform is well-defined, not only mentioning the standard issues that every candidate discusses, such as financial aid and open communication between students and the ASUO, but new ones as well.

Most importantly, they plan to emphasize teaching, rather than research, in our faculty by focusing on evaluations, professorial reviews and tenure awarding.

When I decided to give them this endorsement, Williamson and Kelton assured me they'd "be willing to break tradition if it's in the best interests of the students." That will be a great change from two years of status-quo stagnation, which none of the other tickets can offer.

When all of the factors are weighed, no ticket can match Williamson and Kelton's.

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