

EDITORIAL

Students needed in plan revisions

At a time when tuition is rising and programs are being cut, it is important that students have a powerful voice in making policy decisions at the University.

The students pay many tuition dollars to attend the University and get the best education they can. For that, they expect their interests will have representation in the decision-making processes that occur on the campus.

However, at Wednesday night's University Senate meeting, the faculty took steps to dispel that notion. The number of student representatives for the new University Senate system was cut from the present number of 18 down to five. The Governance Reform Committee, started last spring to look at governance changes, proposed that nine students be included.

This is a poor decision on the part of the faculty. Students are the main reason this University is here. They are also the largest group on campus and most affected by any policy that comes out of this governing body. It stands to reason they should have a significant share of the decision-making power in the Senate. But things are not as they should be.

The initial proposal for the new University Senate was headed in the right direction. It allotted students sufficient representation in the new system.

On May 2, the governance reform committee proposed a 52-person Senate to the Assembly with nine student senators. This was a big improvement from 18 representatives on the existing 1,200 member University Assembly. The proposal allowed students the chance to voice their concerns and gave them the opportunity to have an effect on decisions.

We were headed in the right direction—until Tom Givon, a linguistic professor who helped draft the amendment to lower the number of students, said although the University Senate needs to solicit a considerable amount of input from the students, to give the students 17 percent of the vote is excessive.

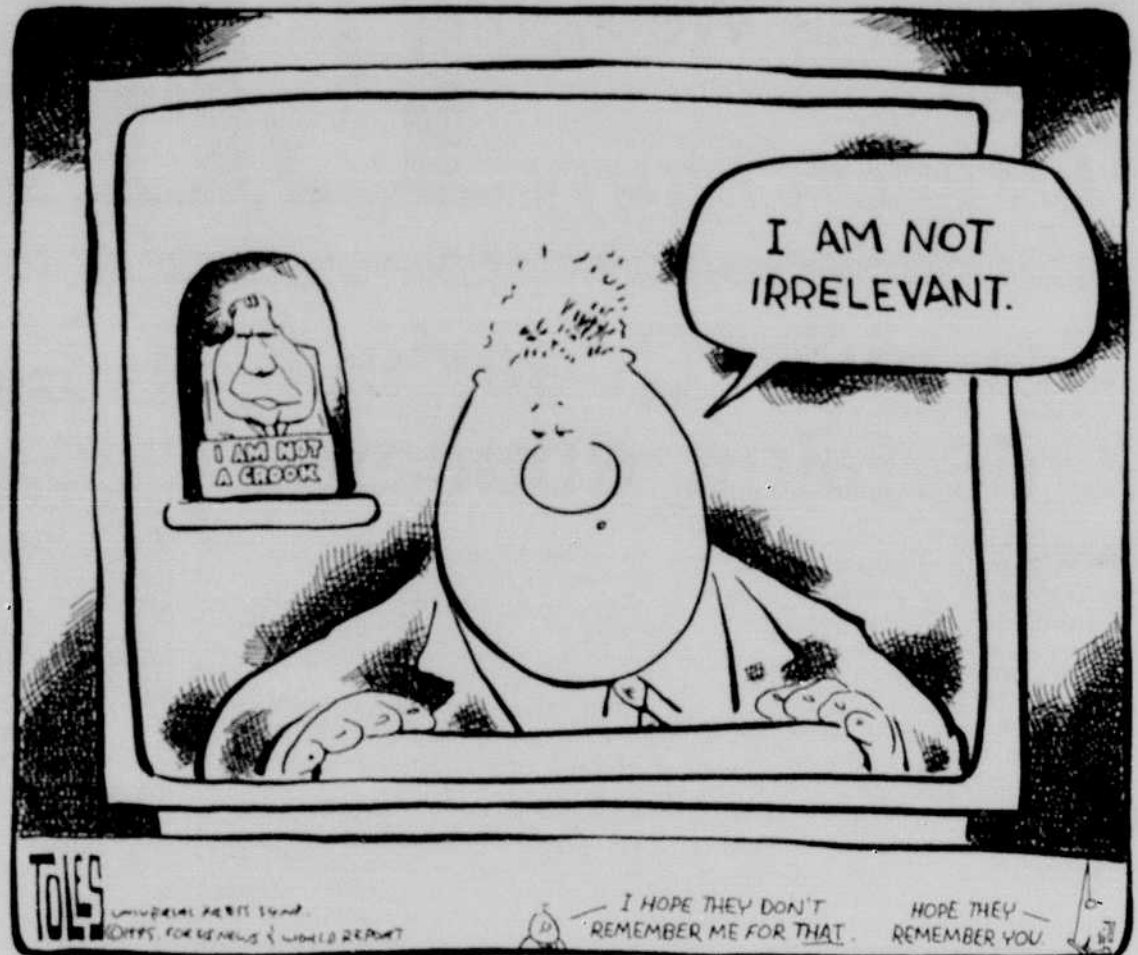
There is nothing excessive about that number. It isn't even proportionate to the number of students on this campus. Nine students, 17 percent of the vote, is adequate representation for almost 17,000 people. The rest of the representation comes from only a few thousand faculty, staff and administration members.

Mark Rhinard, ASUO vice president and the only student to sit on the governance reform committee, sat on the side of the students. He objected to the change saying students need to have a voice.

Indeed, students must be able to influence their community and their school.

It is true this new system does nothing to advance student input in decisions. Each of the student representatives will have 3,400 constituents as opposed to 1,888 for nine representatives.

It would be wise for faculty and staff members to rethink this proposal and change it back to the way it was originally. Students should not be denied a voice in their own fate at the University.



LETTERS

Thanks, Brian?

Many thanks are due to Brian Womack for his attempt to clarify the various meanings of conservatism (*ODE*, May 16). With that project out of the way, I hope that now Mr. Womack might think about undertaking an examination of his own views of liberalism.

His column of May 16 exposes what I think has been a problem with his writing all year long: he hasn't got a clue what liberalism is, either generally or for specific individuals on this campus.

This is made clear by his ridiculous claim; daring to say that multiculturalism has some flaws or capitalism is a good thing, certainly means that one is not a liberal. This is in line with his habit of implying that "liberals" in Eugene march in mindless lockstep for causes that any thinking person would recognize as unreasonable.

This sort of myopic caricaturing of one's opposition may make good copy, but it also makes it hard for me to take his views seriously.

In fact, liberalism as a political ideology is historically associated with capitalism. Liberals are capitalists, not Marxists. Liberals do not all share a single coherent vision of multiculturalism, something that Mr. Womack might have figured out if he actually tried to talk to people with whom he disagrees rather than insulting them.

If Mr. Womack intends to continue writing opinion columns in the future, I would suggest that he make less use of misinformed anecdotes and do a better job of actually informing himself before going into spew mode.

Ken Kirby
Philosophy

Union Diaries

Maybe you may or may not know that today's hottest young Hollywood star is 19-year-old Leonardo DiCapria, starring in the movie "The Basketball Diaries," a movie about the gritty life of a teenager's downward

spiral into the world of drug addiction.

Well, I'd like to tell my story. I call it "The Union Diaries," and it goes like this:

I am just one of 17,000 OPEU members on strike and 1,700 of us work at the University. We are former welfare, single-parent mothers who earn \$1,100 a month (keep in mind all wages are before taxes) with cost-of-living expenses to be met everyday.

But your 12-year-old daughter tells us to stay out on the picket line. "Do it for me, Mom," she tells you each day.

We are 40-somethings on the picket line who work at the Physical Plant and donate our day's wages to OPEU's Hardship Fund. We are women who provide quality childcare at the EMU's Childcare and Development Center's seven sites on campus and off with some of us earning as little as \$1,100 a month.

Who cares about those children out of care this week? But we also have families to feed.

We are OPEU members who rallied on Tuesday, May 9, at Oregon's state Capitol in Salem, who listened to the few supportive state legislators who have a conscience and haven't sold out to big corporate business, who are steamrolled by the vast Republican majority who continue to fiercely write anti-labor, anti-union legislation.

These Republican politicians want to give corporations another \$153 million tax break (a 50 percent tax cut). And they say there is not money for state employee salaries.

We are Oregon's state employees who are suffering a two-year wage freeze and yet have seen the cost-of-living increase 3 percent to 3.5 percent each year. Our pay lags behind comparable jobs in the private and public sector by 10 to 20 percent, respectively.

We face a 6 percent pay cut because the state voted for Ballot Measure 8 (narrowly defeated by some 900 votes). On July 1, state workers will pay for their own retirement benefits, benefits that were given to us to replace the sting of the wage freeze but now soon to be taken away.

We are OPEU workers who know state revenues are up 19 percent and know the budget surplus is \$548 million.

We are proud state workers who spoke with our state representatives and state senators in Salem on a cloudy, overcast day and were told it's okay to be on the poverty line, that we're all "a bunch of lazy asses" and if we don't like it, "get another job" and "rest in peace."

We are on the picket line in front of our work sites as early as 7:30 a.m. and receive coffee and cookies from ASUO, listen to the University faculty tell us of their loyal support and shake hands with President Dave Frohnmayer as we rally through Johnson Hall.

But we also hear some 30 percent of us have crossed the picket lines around the state because they have bills to pay and families to feed.

We are not every stereotype you may have heard of a union worker.

We are you, Oregon, who want fairness and justice and miss being on the jobs we proudly care about doing.

We want justice. We wanted it yesterday, we want it today and we will want it tomorrow.

We want you to read this diary, and then never look at us the same way you may have looked at us before.

Victoria Bolz
Assistant Childcare Teacher,
EMU CCDC,
Westmoreland Preschool

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 3156, 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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