

Kelton plays politician by going with the flow

OUR OPINION: Our ASUO vice president follows public opinion like a hungry puppy

Zachary Kelton is well on his way to becoming a politician.

In his public statements about funding the *Oregon Commentator*, the ASUO vice president has offered the most dramatic and disturbing reversal of opinion to be seen in student government this year.

In a letter responding to an *Emerald* columnist's call to defund the publication two weeks ago, Kelton expressed his desire to see it stripped of its student-fee funding.

He said he wanted the student body to vote on the *Commentator's* budget — a rare procedure for any student group on campus — and was "confident that students' outrage at the magazine's content [would] result in dramatic editorial change or removal of the publication from the ASUO budget."

Kelton also threatened to veto any ASUO Programs Finance Committee decision that did not put the *Commentator's* budget on the ballot.

But we heard a different Kelton at the journal's PFC hearing Monday night.

"I must emphasize that I do not, in a personal or professional capacity, want to see the *Commentator* budget placed on the ballot," he wrote in a statement to the committee, adding that he would "be comfortable" with the any decision the PFC might make.

Come again? In fewer than two weeks, Vice President Kelton made a 180-degree turn. In the end he made the right decision, but that does-

n't excuse his moral-conviction-of-the-day conduct.

In the weeks that followed his initial statement, the *Emerald's* editorial pages were filled with letters criticizing his position. It was soon clear that the vice president did *not* speak for everyone, not even his own president.

In his second statement, written because he saw which way the wind was blowing, Kelton wrote that the first letter was composed in "frustration" with the way previous student government committees had decided controversial budgets such as the *Commentator's*.

He said the content of his letter had been "harsh," but argued that he did not want the members of the PFC to think that he had a "lack of respect or recognition" for their work.

But what else could it be? He threatened to override any decision they made that didn't satisfy his demands. He then dismissed any concerns the PFC might have about the *Commentator's* First Amendment rights as an "age-old" argument against censorship — an argument Kelton apparently feels/felt had outlived its usefulness.

Kelton's change of heart would seem less troubling if he had admitted he was wrong, or even that he understood why he shouldn't carelessly interfere with the fee-allocation process that he now claims to hold "in the highest regard."

We can only hope that Kelton will choose his words more carefully in the future and resist throwing his weight around without thinking it through — and be glad that this time, public opinion was not on his side.



ODE eats words right off an EMU plate

Your opinion regarding healthy food choices in the EMU (*ODE*, Feb. 6) was timely and quite possibly too accurate. The EMU Administration and the EMU Board of Directors realized we needed to make significant changes in our food service offerings and physical design, and in the systems that support service delivery — four years ago.

The initial response was to hire an architectural firm to review design options and a market research firm to conduct a campus-wide research study that would assist in the identification of food offerings desired by the community.

The results of those initiatives were major factors in the EMU Board of Directors requesting a little more than \$4 million from the Oregon State System of Higher Education student building fee fund. The board was successful in their request and we received the funds last summer.

The process of addressing the concerns listed in your opinion has already begun.

This fall the EMU worked with Thomas Ricca Associates to conduct focus groups leading to the creation of a market research instrument that asked the campus community what they valued in food service, what their preferences were in food concepts, physical environment and much more. The response rate was exceptional.

We had hoped to receive 500 usable survey responses (a number beyond the amount necessary to provide data that could be interpreted with a high level of accuracy).

We received almost 1,100 usable responses. We are just beginning to receive the final tabulation of that information.

The process of changing food service concepts in response to community needs will be very

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DUSTY MILLER

challenging and inclusive.

Currently, two groups made up of students, faculty and staff are reviewing the accumulated data by listening to audio tapes of the focus groups, reviewing the literature, visiting other campuses and scheduling open meetings to gain more input.

These subcommittees and the final committee that will help guide the architect and the EMU already realize that the sources available — the \$4.02 million — will not be enough to meet all of our needs. They are attempting to make these funds stretch as far as possible.

The ideal time line is to finish initial planning this spring term, select an architect later in that term and begin renovations next summer. The process may not be as fast as we would like, but it needs to be thorough.

Until a renovated service is available, please visit and try some of our newer options: Samurai Duck, a locally produced "bento" boxed lunch; our new fresh salads, including Chicken Caesar, Traditional Julienne, Thai Chicken or Shrimp Caesar (all made fresh daily); our expanded deli sandwich bar, as well as Little Caesar's, Taco Time, and the salad bar and Asian cuisine available in the Skylight.

We may not be there yet, but we are on the way to providing food service products that are customer driven.

Dusty Miller is Director of the Erb Memorial Union

LETTERS

Experience Learning

It seems unfortunate that as a student so interested in learning about other cultures, Lyons has apparently not looked beyond the cultural identities of his professors, in the words of his textbooks, to "learn" (*ODE*, Feb. 14).

Learning is an interactive process that requires the active participation of the recipient.

The University may not have as many professors of color as Lyons would desire; however, the university environment provides ample opportunity for people to experience diversity and learn from its offerings.

Obviously, Lyons has overlooked the International Stu-

dent Association and its associated functions; the numerous cultural nights sponsored by the Indonesian, Malaysian and Chinese student organizations (just to name a few); and different lecture series in various departments around the University.

Furthermore, if Lyons found the University so lacking in diversity that he felt his education was suffering, perhaps he should have sought his own opportunities to experience other cultures first hand and outside the confines of academia.

Lyons himself commented that history is not an objective process, so we would think he would actively seek the chance

to form his own opinions.

Back to the issue of the cultural identities of Lyons' professors, we are dismayed by his insinuation that because the majority of University professors are of "European-American" descent, they all represent the same ideas.

Of course the goal of "multiculturalism" is good, and we hope the University strives to create a campus of diverse thought and experience, but it's unfair to degrade the rich environment of ideas that already exists.

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