

# Ethnic diversity abounds on campus

I never thought I'd be penning a letter in defense of the University.

It puts research well before education, buries students in bureaucracy, is dumbing down at an incredible rate and must have a mission statement somewhere along the lines of, "We bend over for any shift in the whims of political correctness."

I came here because despite its blatant mismanagement of funds, the University is cheaper than anywhere else.

In spite of this generally low opinion of the school, when I read Joey Lyons' letter (ODE, Feb. 14), I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Lyons wrote, "As a student interested in studying ethnic history and politics, there is next to nothing for me here."

Excuse me? Any casual glance through the course catalog will reveal a plethora of such courses. The University offers more courses on the history and literature of various cultures than one person could take in a lifetime, much less in four years.

He wrote that he's had only one professor who was not "European-American."

What does that mean? Is that by descent or citizenship? And if it is by descent, just how far back do you want to go?

What about the idea that the only real Americans are the descendants of those whom inhabited this continent prior to European settlement?

Have all his professors been Native Americans? (On that note, my grandfather was born in Denmark, yet I consider myself a native of America — a land that my fourth-grade teacher taught me owed much of its greatness to being a "melting pot" of cultures, which led to its own unique identity.)

And if our priority is to be the educational veneration of professors differently cultured than

## COMMENTARY

Adam Rasmussen

ourselves, what's wrong with Europeans? Does their physical similarity doom them to sharing the same cultural heritage with rest of the United States?

I'd bet he hasn't been to the Ukraine lately.

Lyons complained that "when it comes to other peoples, their traditions and their heritages, all I've learned is what I've been able to read."

Is Lyons somehow bound to a hospital bed or unable to physically enter the campus?

That must be so, for otherwise he'd have seen the daily displays in the EMU in which students from practically every culture on Earth are almost begging to share their native cultures with the rest of the student body.

He'd have been able to take African dance classes from Rita Honka, participate in weekly religious activities with the Jewish (or a number of other faiths) Student Union or visit the awesome photography display featuring prominent African-American women.

Lyons asked, "Are there faculty of color, women professors, gay, lesbian or bisexual professors, teaching in their discipline?"

Damn straight there are. I can't believe he sees a lack of female professors contributing to the Women's Studies Program.

I took a course in modern Chinese history last term from Dr. Guo, who is not only Chinese, but experienced the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution and observed the reforms of Deng Xiaoping.

The vast majority of my Japanese-language instructors are Japanese, and they bring to the classroom not only a native-speaker's knowledge of the lan-

guage, but a personal knowledge of the culture that is inextricably tied to it.

If you want to learn how a people thinks and feels then learn the way it speaks.

As for gay, lesbian and bisexual professors, in the vast majority of cases, I don't know, and unless they choose to share it with you, neither should you.

The crucial point, however, is not that Lyons has missed a world of opportunity to study various cultures here. The point is his hate-ridden implication that an educator must be born of a culture to teach about it.

What does it matter, really, if a professor of Thai history is Thai, so long as he or she is an expert in the subject matter?

Lyons explains that history is subjective — yes, thank you, I knew that.

Is he trying to say that members of one culture will be less subjective than members of another? Sounds like it, and some very good people throughout my short life have taught me that to make assumptions about an individual based on the sole criteria of their ethnicity is evil. Period.

Are professors Goble and Bogel less worthy to teach Japanese history and art history because they do not have Japanese parents?

In his last paragraph, Lyons refers to "what is important to say and not say."

Thus his tactics are revealed. For all his talk of "the ability of our civilization to work together, respect and support each other," Lyons seems to care only for waging a war of politically-correct, dogmatic syntax, the only possible result of which is the driving of an ever-larger wedge between the various cultures on this campus and throughout the world.

Adam Rasmussen is an Asian Studies major.

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**Thursday, February 29th**  
**Ben Linder Room, 6-8 P.M.**

Find out what the EMU has in store for the future:

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### OP

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- **Cycling Southeast Asia:** last year Susan Tillack spent nine months and over 5,000 kilometers pedaling across remote regions of southern China, Burma, Laos, Vietnam and Nepal. This informal slide show will convey how easy, cheap and amazing it is to cycle this fascinating part of the world. Tues., Feb. 27, 7:30 P.M., EMU Outdoor Program room.
- **Painted Spider:** this week's "nooner" video takes a look at every type of rock climbing in every place imaginable. Canyonlands to Smith Rocks. Bring your lunch and join us for the adventure. Wed., Feb. 28, 12 Noon, EMU Outdoor Program room.
- Have you planned your spring break adventure yet? The Outdoor Program can help! Drop by our office for the latest in outdoor info., maps, books, etc. 346-4365

### CONCERT TICKETS

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☆ Coming Attractions: ☆

Mar. 2	Curtis Salgado.....	\$10.00
Mar. 5	Gin Blossoms.....	\$15.00 UO students/\$18.00 G.P.
Mar. 7	St. Patty's Day Celebration w/Sky Day.....	\$6.00
Mar. 11	Leftover Salmon.....	\$7.00 UO student/\$9.00 G.P.
Mar. 14	Babes with Axes.....	\$6.00
Mar. 22	Floater.....	\$5.00
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Mar. 30	3rd Annual April Fool's Ball.....	\$6.00
April 1	The Charlie Hunter Trio.....	\$7.00 UO student/\$8.00 G.P.
April 9	James Cotton.....	\$10.00 UO student/\$12.00 G.P.

☆ Tickets subject to service charge ☆

http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~emumain/tickets.html

We've temporarily moved to the front of Fir Room.

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Saturday, March 2:

Sunday, March 3:

Sunday, March 3:

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