

Accept individuality

In regard to your editorial on Nov. 12, I am deeply concerned with its prejudiced content. I agree that the fight against racism requires everyone to work together, but the ignorant belief that "minority students form innumerable student unions based on their heritage. They feel the need to congregate with their own so passionately, they often reject broader ethnic unions to create groups more specific to their background" is ludicrous.

Students do not devote endless hours putting on culture shows, workshops, guest speakers and other activities because of their insecurities. But because of the desire to show one's distinct culture and traditions. By lumping all minorities under the four main student unions is no better than saying "African-Americans: Athletic lovers of rap music, Hispanic-Americans: Energetic, frequent members of gangs. Asian-Americans: Short, fast-talking mathematicians. Native Americans: Bitter derelicts with strange last names."

In order for us to work as a "team" to fight racism and stereotypes, we must first be able to accept and respect each other's individuality.

Susan Hoang

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Groups not separatist

Tuesday's *Emerald* editorial got one thing right. There is racism on this campus. But simply taking a position decrying racism does not necessarily indicate that one is free from the vestiges of white supremacy. This is certainly true of the *Emerald*.

For starters, there was absolutely no need to mention stereotypes at the outset of the editorial. What was the purpose? To remind us who those stereotypes are about? To grab our attention? To be controversial? Or was the *Emerald* exercising its First Amendment rights in defense of bigotry? I'm positive that organizations such as the Pacific Legal Foundation would defend the *Emerald* at no cost to the paper.

One of the misconceptions our society continually makes, including "bleeding heart" liberals,

is that ethnic identification, outside some safe cultural expression in art or food, is separatist. Ethnic identity is allegedly an act of isolationism that impedes the cohesion of persons from various backgrounds and experiences who should just recognize each other as human beings or, as we commonly refer to ourselves in this society, Americans. This presupposes two things. One, that society is necessarily inclusive, democratic. Two, that "American" culture is an amalgamation of many cultures.

The formation of ethnic student unions challenges the two assumptions above by holding society's esteemed institutions, such as a university, accountable. Ethnic student unions are a social and political response to a political system that subjugates ethnic members to a marginal societal position. They act as a buffer to imposed hostility; provide a living community; and most importantly, affirm ethnic members' humanity.

For the *Emerald* to say that they provide atmospheres to "feel comfortable" and are established to collect student funds is at best ignorant. The fact that they exist only serves to remind us that we shouldn't cross that bridge to the past where Chinese railroad laborers were drowned in Lake Tahoe, indigenous people skinned alive by Euro-American filibusterers, slaves of African origin branded like livestock, citizens of Mexican extraction hung in town courtyards or Japanese-Americans rounded up in concentration camps.

Yes, we have made some tangible progress as a society, but there are daily reminders that we are digressing as well. Passage of Propositions 187 and 209 in California underscores the growing economic gap between the haves (the wealthy one-fifth of the population) and the have nots (the rest of us). White supremacy is alive and well in those measures. It is tolerant on this campus insofar as political power is not attained and expressed by ethnic student unions. This can be done in the form of a public demonstration of their anger, especially when it questions the political legitimacy of Euro-American society and its institutions, or when

they rightfully claim resources long overdue to them.

If democracy and justice really prevailed in our society, reparations for atrocities incurred in the past by racial and ethnic groups would have been paid a long time ago. Critics might argue that despite our deficiencies, our society is the best in the world. If that is what we have to offer to the world, then we are truly in a sad state of affairs.

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Opinion unfounded

In regard to the Nov. 12 editorial, the Jewish Student Union would like to express its belief that the article was misleading and misleading. The writer of the article painted a picture of ethnic student unions being separatist, exclusionary organizations. The article claimed "the mere formation of their union serves only as a place to feel comfortable with 'your own' and as a means to receive ASUO funds for isolated events — certainly not for outreach." This assertion is unfounded and has no anchor in truth. Ethnic student unions are con-

stantly and consistently providing programs on campus that cater to their constituents as well as to the general student population. Events such as the Native American Student Union/MEChA's Indigenous People's Day, MEChA's Dia de los Muertos and JSU's Jewish Culture Night are examples of overwhelmingly successful events that served to educate the student body and allowed all to share in the diversity of our campus. This is only a small sampling of our programs which ethnic student unions offer.

These programs would not be possible without ASUO funding. To say these funds that we all pay as a student community go to "isolationist" programs is ignorant. We all benefit from diverse programming on campus. Furthermore, the writer underestimated the importance of the ethnic student union being an environment which is safe for the ethnic student. It is a place where that student can deal with issues of being "other." In reality, ethnic student unions work with each other and with the campus at large to ensure that this university is a comfortable place for everyone. In the future, JSU

hopes that such unfounded editorials will be more carefully edited.

Micah Citrin

Director

Jewish Student Union

Debbie Levy

Board Member

ASUO Multicultural Center

University wrong

This is in response to the Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals article (*ODE*, Nov. 13). The article pointed out that University administrators deny the allegations of cruelty to animals. Yet, it seems to me that the administrators admit their wrongdoing. One quotation says, "animals are not subject to any unnecessary harassment or mistreatment." I understand this statement to mean that torture takes place only when it is necessary. In other words, cruelty is acceptable in the name of science. I think that is a rather strange justification by the administration. There must be ways animal research can be made more humane. Or is it less humane?

Joshua Gold

Exercise & Movement Science

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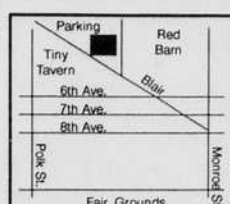
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