

This is the final sound off. Have you ever considered, even for a second, replying to one of these things? Let us know.

OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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All thumbs



To the scheduling of the panel presentation:

The program's three days of events were well organized and executed but at least one was poorly scheduled. Wednesday's panel presentation on "Realizing the Dream" took place in the EMU Ballroom at 10 a.m. and, not surprisingly, was sparsely attended.

At that time, students (and faculty) are either asleep or in class (or both), and the EMU Ballroom is not exactly the most visible location on campus. In contrast, attendance for the candlelight vigil in the busy EMU Courtyard on Tuesday afternoon was high for an event of its magnitude — and for good reason.

To the Skinner Butte cross:

Now that the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has determined the cross won't reside on public land, many residents are calling for its destruction. But at least five churches or religious institutions have expressed interest in placing the cross on their property. If there is a home for it on private land, it deserves to be there. The cross is too important to too many people.

To Dave Frohnmayer:

Our beloved University president is teaching a freshman seminar entitled "Theories of Leadership" twice a week in Gilbert Hall. Besides the scary fact that he actually has time to do this, the idea of our president interacting with undergraduates is a good one. While Frohnmayer may never teach again, the effort put forth to do so this term is worthy of recognition.

Residency rules need clarity

■ OUR OPINION:

Current policy for out-of-state students is inconsistent, vague and unfair



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

Who is a resident of the state of Oregon? The question might seem simple, but it's not. According to the state, a resident is anyone who is living and paying taxes in Oregon. According to the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE), it's a little bit more complicated.

OSSHE declaring a student as a resident means much more than being able to vote in Oregon and get an Oregon driver's license — it means that student doesn't have to pay out-of-state tuition. Currently, the state subsidizes about 75 percent of the cost of higher education for residents. Those who come to the University from another state do not get this government subsidy because the state says they haven't paid into the system through taxes and therefore, should not be able to cash in on the benefits.

This means out-of-state students pay a considerably higher price for a University education than residents do. Many people who want to attend the University from another state have a great interest in establishing residency so they can reap the rewards of a subsidized education.

That's where OSSHE comes in. If becoming a resident of Oregon were as easy as getting an apartment, registering your car and paying taxes in Oregon, a considerable number of people would find it in their interest to become residents — and state colleges would stand to lose a lot of money. For this reason, OSSHE has set up a separate standard for becoming a resident that is considerably harder than the state's requirements. Under OSSHE's requirements, for out-of-state students to become residents they must be financially independent, live in Oregon for one year, be primarily engaged in activities other than those of being a student and prove that they came to Oregon for rea-

sons other than to receive an education.

It is those last two requirements that are responsible for almost all the problems people have with becoming a resident. What activities qualify as being a student? How does one prove what his or her intent was when he or she came to Oregon? Questions like these are, in many ways, matters of opinion. Who is supposed to decide what someone's intent is when they came to Oregon? OSSHE can almost arbitrarily decide who can get residency and who can't based on their interpretation of these two requirements. The whole situation just lends itself to controversy.

Students who attempt to become residents but are rejected based on OSSHE's opinion on their intent face two problems. Not only must they pay out-of-state tuition in Oregon, but having given up their previous residency, they must pay out-of-state tuition back home as well. They are, in essence, residents of nowhere, stuck uncomfortably between the cracks of the system.

The vagueness of these rules is no accident. Oregon colleges are in a tricky situation with residency issues. On the one hand, they don't want to lose money when people from other states establish residency. On the other hand, they don't want to lose money when people from

out of state — unable to pay out-of-state tuition and unwilling to go through the residency process — are forced to leave for another school. What's left is a murky set of requirements purposely filled with loopholes so OSSHE can monitor who becomes a resident and who doesn't.

As long as residency requirements are unclear, there will be problems with determining who is and isn't a resident of the state of Oregon. Instead of relying on OSSHE's judgment on what someone's intent is, a clear set of requirements should be drawn up. If people meet the requirements, they become residents; if not, they don't. Period.

If OSSHE is worried too many people will establish residency once the rules are clear, make the requirements harder. Instead of asking potential residents to live in the state one year, why not make it two? The fact is it doesn't matter what the requirements are as long as they are consistently applied. That way, no one will be confused as to why his or her bid for residency was rejected. Only when the requirements to become a resident are clearly defined will the residency problem be resolved.

This editorial represents the majority opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

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