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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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Finding a home for Footnotes

OUR OPINION:
Without a clear mission statement for the EMU, other groups will face the same fight for space as Footnotes

For anyone who ever slept through an early morning class, this is important. Footnotes' lease in the EMU is up for renewal, and the future of the student service is in jeopardy.

The problem isn't about student demand for Footnotes — it's about space. With the number of student groups continuing to grow and space for these groups continuing to shrink, Footnotes' 700-square-foot office is being eyed by many as the solution to the student group space crunch.

That's bad news for Footnotes and students who rely on Footnotes as an academic aid. If Footnotes is denied a lease renewal, as many on the EMU Board of Directors are suggesting might happen, the much appreciated student service may find itself homeless.

In response to Footnotes' dilemma, House members of the board unanimously voted to recommend that Footnotes be guaranteed an alternative spot in the EMU if its current lease is not renewed.

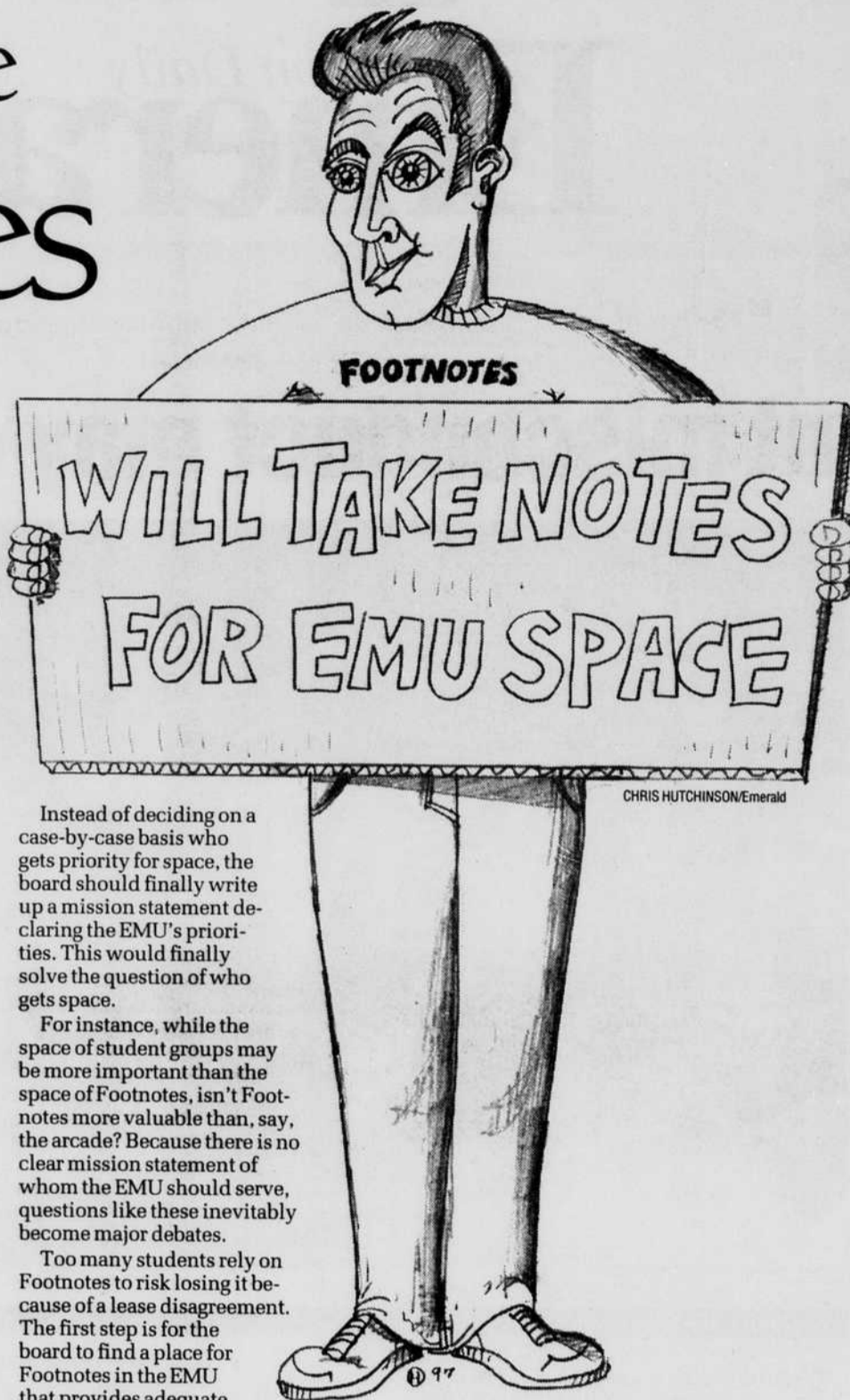
We hope the board follows through with the House's suggestion. While 700 square feet may be too much for Footnotes, especially when some student groups have no space at all, it is critical that Footnotes remains in the EMU.

Footnotes is an invaluable service for students and it isn't funded by student fees. A service that provides student benefits at such a low cost deserves a spot in the student union.

Forcing Footnotes out of its current space without first finding an alternative location would put a serious strain on the future success of Footnotes. Because the EMU provides a low-rent location, Footnotes has been able to keep costs low. But if it is forced out of the EMU, low prices will be a luxury of the past for Footnotes subscribers.

The current problems Footnotes is dealing with are due primarily to bad luck. Footnotes' lease just happened to run out at a time when space was particularly tight. The same debate could have been repeated with any other student service that found themselves in Footnotes' shoes.

The problem isn't with the different services in the EMU; it's with the EMU itself. Is it a place for student groups, academic services (like Footnotes), food or entertainment? Because the board has no clear focus on whom it will serve, there will always be questions of who gets space and who doesn't.



Instead of deciding on a case-by-case basis who gets priority for space, the board should finally write up a mission statement declaring the EMU's priorities. This would finally solve the question of who gets space.

For instance, while the space of student groups may be more important than the space of Footnotes, isn't Footnotes more valuable than, say, the arcade? Because there is no clear mission statement of whom the EMU should serve, questions like these inevitably become major debates.

Too many students rely on Footnotes to risk losing it because of a lease disagreement. The first step is for the board to find a place for Footnotes in the EMU that provides adequate space for the service to remain active.

Then, the board should prevent future problems by drafting a mission statement that makes it clear what the EMU is for and whom it will serve. If this is done, the University won't have to go through the same struggle the next time Footnotes' lease is up.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

READER VOICES

Should Footnotes be allowed to stay in the EMU?



"Keep them [in the EMU]. If they get a smaller space, they'll have less people working there and the quality of the footnotes will be lower."

Phil Platt
Junior
International Studies



"I don't care if they have to move. I've never used Footnotes and I never will."

Melanie Supnet
Junior
Psychology



"I hardly think [Footnotes has] enough resources as it is. So to minimize it more, it would not make it a very productive place at all."

Elizabeth McNeil
Junior
Sociology



"[Footnotes is] one of the groups that has a direct applicability to the student body, so I think they deserve as much space as they can get."

Brad Talley
Junior
Psychology

LETTERS

Urban destruction

As an ex-Chicagoan, I thought I'd seen the best the world could show in the way of corruption and scandal. But the story behind the rapid destruction of the Willamette River scenic corridor opened my eyes to the impressive betrayal of public trust in this city of *not-so-big* shoulders.

Those who have seen what the city, University and private industry are doing to the lovely natural parkland at the Autzen footbridge must admire the audacity of the riverfront "research park" project. What will replace the quiet swimming holes, playing fields and woodland trails where we take our out-of-town guests to hear them sigh with envy at the views available on a casual bicycle ride? A restaurant, of course, and sprawling buildings connected by a

snarl of roads and parking lots.

And how is this being financed? Believe it or not, *urban renewal* money solicited from the federal government is supplementing this desecration. While we see the library hours cut and some of our park centers about to close, tax money is being siphoned off to help pay for the "improvement" of this area.

The river frontage in its natural state has more value to present and future generations than the grandest money-making scheme our local mobsters can devise. Be watching for a ballot measure on this issue. Meanwhile, for relief, picture with me a chain gang of profiteers with pickaxes, sent up the river to demolish the concrete they've poured over our local beauty.

Teresa Mueller
Eugene

Fatal oversight

While entirely supportive of the *Emerald* providing useful safe-sex information about condoms (Feb. 10, *ODE*), I was shocked to see the absence of male-to-male and female-to-female transmission rates for common STDs, particularly HIV. This is no small oversight. Men who have sex with men must know how to avoid HIV infection. In this time of the AIDS epidemic, no article on National Condom Week can afford to forget that gay men and sex between men exist.

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