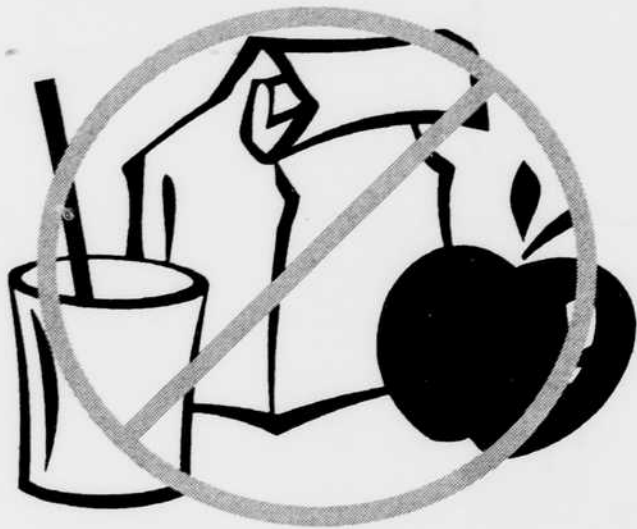


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UO rated one of top college 'best buys'

A new guide gives high marks for the quality of life and social climate

By Teri Meeuwsen
Higher Education Reporter

Out of more than 2,000 public and private institutions in the United States, the University is rated as one of the "Best Buys" this year for prospective higher education students, according to a popular college guide that hit bookstores this month.

The 1998 Fiske Guide to Colleges lists 43 public and private schools where students can get the best possible education in the best possible atmosphere at the most reasonable cost. The University was named one of three on the West Coast and one of four west of the Mississippi River to make the "Best Buy" list.

"Despite rising tuition and decreasing state support, there are still some bargains to be found in American higher education," writes Edward B. Fiske, a former New York Times education reporter who began publishing the guide in 1982.

The guide provides 300 in-depth essays on institutions across the nation. Its editors use research from a standard set of data from school administrators and a cross section of students who have completed open-ended essay questions.

The academic climate is rated with three stars. University students singled out freshman seminars and freshman interest groups as a "good source of helping students acclimate to campus life."

Students who participated in the study cited architecture, music, molecular biology, business, chemistry, journalism and psychology as the strongest programs.

The social atmosphere and the quality of life were both given high marks. Eugene was considered to be open to diversity and reflective of the qualities of the University.

In one essay, a sophomore said Eugene is "where the hippies went when the '60s were over. The community has embraced the University with open arms. It's great."

The guide also provides a description of the student government, greek system, dorm system, and favored activities that students enjoy, which range from hanging out at local bars to athletic events.

"Students here — though they gripe about rising costs and shrinking space to park their cars — are all too happy to follow along, kicking off their shoes and kicking back with a local micro-brewed beer after a long day of classes," Fiske wrote.

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