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# PERSPECTIVES

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## Make research park into a real park

**AN EMERALD EDITORIAL**

*The University and Eugene cannot afford to sacrifice riverfront greenspace to a corporate facility*

The world has changed since 1988. "Grunge" has come and gone. The oppression and poverty of communism throughout the Soviet Union have been replaced with the corruption and poverty of capitalism throughout Russia.

And property tax revenues have plummeted in Oregon, leaving local governments struggling to provide services for their citizens and forcing universities to make tough choices regarding the use of precious funding resources.

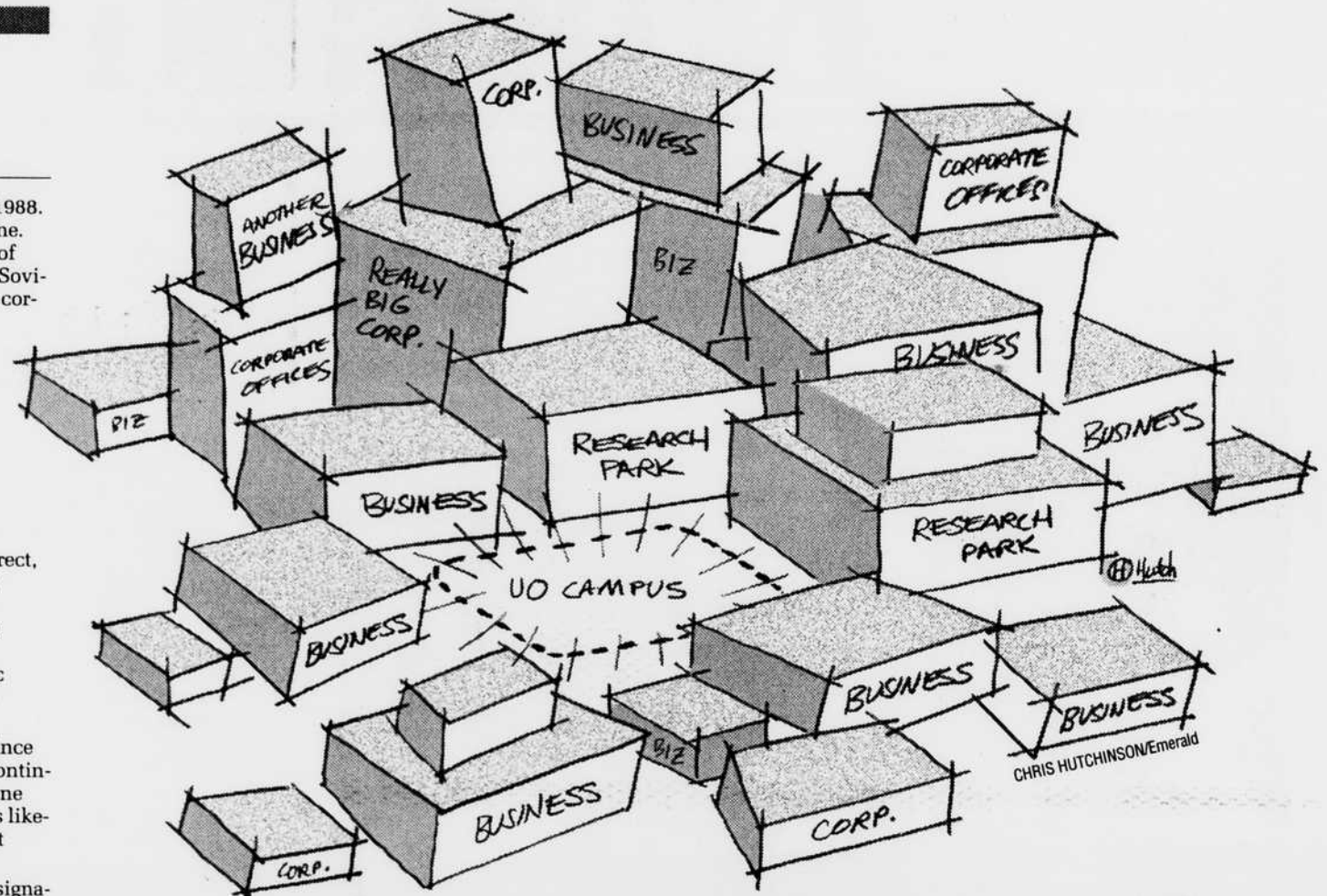
Not all those choices have been correct, but at least the shortage of money has forced everyone from administrators to faculty to students to become more aware of the budget process. As a whole, we have decided the academic needs of the University are supposed to be of primary concern.

At least one thing hasn't changed since 1988: The Riverfront Research Park continues to be a priority for the city of Eugene and the University, and neither seems likely to change its plans to reflect current problems.

On Nov. 25, more than 100 faculty signatures were presented to University administrators as part of a petition protesting development on the north side of the railroad tracks in the research park area. That area, between the tracks and the Willamette River, is a rare section of undeveloped riverfront contained within an urban region.

The construction of the research park was originally approved in 1988. A joint effort between the University and the city, it will eventually consist of several buildings on both sides of the tracks. Those buildings and the facility as a whole will be used by various businesses to conduct research.

The city stands to benefit from increased corporate investment in the region, and the University will be in a position to provide researchers with trained students. However, there is no reason why the park needs to



be built on the riverfront land.

Developers planned to use the site largely because of its availability and convenient location. That doesn't justify building the park there, nor does it mean that the entire site must be dedicated to research park buildings.

We concur with the faculty members who signed the petition that the park should not be built on the riverfront land. Not only does development on the river bank risk environmental damage, but it also wastes land that, in tight budgetary times, could be put to better use.

The University and students are spending large amounts of money to renovate Esslinger, the primary recreational facility on campus. Riverfront land currently slated

for research park development could be used for recreational facilities, as suggested by University biology Professor Howard Bonnett, in a letter to the editor (ODE, Nov. 25).

With budget cuts due to Measures 5 and 50, the city is being forced to cut recreational facilities. Despite this, it is still willing to dedicate money to the research park. Instead, the riverfront land could be used to provide recreation for Eugene citizens who have lost other facilities.

Both the University and the Eugene community stand to gain more from the addition of recreational greenspace than they do from the construction of buildings dedicated to corporate use. Tight budgets have meant making choices, and this isn't a diffi-

cult choice to make.

In addition, the University stands to gain from the aesthetic value of the riverfront land. As Bonnett pointed out, having greenspaces near campus increases the ability of the University to recruit faculty and students, thus raising the academic level on campus.

Unless we missed something, there is one more thing that hasn't changed since 1988: Academics are still supposed to be the primary concern of the University, rather than helping businesses or building research parks.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu*

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Tariffs help Mexico**

I'm responding to Jonathan Collegio's letter, "Trade helps Mexico," (ODE, Nov. 24). This is an interesting but irrational letter. Where is the logic?

He states that, with the withdrawal of tariff protection for local corn, forcing farmers to compete openly with U.S. agribusiness, "the money that could be saved on cheaper tortillas would create new jobs in competitive industries." What evidence is there that the few pesos saved by the mass of Mexican people on cheaper tortillas would be invested in new industries, when the majority of people in Mexico are struggling to survive in the current economic climate?

Then he says, "The money that could be spent on American corn would come back to Mexico by way of American consumption of Mexican goods ... or American investment into the Mexican economy." There is absolutely

no evidence that the profits on U.S. corn sold in Mexico have been or will be reinvested in Mexico.

Third, he uses the example of Japan, which has developed a thriving economy through use of protectionist measures, to encourage an open economy for Mexico with no protection for local agriculture. Japanese agriculture and industry have historically been cushioned by high tariffs on competing imports.

**Marion McLean**  
 International studies

**Reconsider symposium**

I have been honored to serve as the faculty advisor for the Sustainable Business Symposium this year. I am writing on behalf of several faculty members who participated in the Faculty Colloquium with Paul Hawken, which was the first event of that symposium. In response to your editorial on the symposium (ODE, Nov. 10), we appreciate the importance of wariness of easy solu-

tions to complex environmental problems, and anyone who promises easy and painless cures through the maintenance of the existing status quo. However, we are concerned that your overall critique of the symposium and its speakers, coming as it did before they had spoken, may have had the effect of discouraging your readers from attending the event and judging it for themselves. If discouragement occurred, you did your readers a real disservice.

Journalistic balance and professionalism should strive to encourage your readers, as educated, critically thinking adults, to attend the event, listen and come to their own conclusions. In order to undo any damage done by your discouragement, the student organizers of the Sustainable Business Symposium will rebroadcast the principle speeches, including Paul Hawken's keynote, in late January 1998, and a videotape of the principle speeches is currently available at

the Instructional Media Center for students and faculty to view. I hope that you will encourage those who missed the event to take the opportunity to see its speakers and judge their merits for themselves.

**Robin Collin**  
 Associate professor of law  
 and three co-signers

**Discuss research park**

Thank you ODE for being so bold as to publish the article "Faculty members oppose research park" (ODE, Nov. 26). As an involved member of the Eugene community, I have grown increasingly suspicious of the clandestine "partnerships" that this city and University are forming.

I can only assume that the current Riverfront Research Park ("park" being a misnomer except if it is short for parking lot) and its expansion of a road in preparation for car access to the river is indicative of the approach and methodology that future devel-

opment will take. This means we can expect more environmental destruction, increased automobile usage, money leaving our community, hidden subsidies, and a paradigm shift as to the purpose of gaining knowledge (which will breed animosity within the UO faculty community). If the recent migration of politically connected Eugenians who lobbied to get Hyundai here and who are now employees of Hyundai is any indication of what we can expect at the Riverfront Research Park, we will see top faculty leaving their teaching positions for the corporate dollars.

I urge the University administration to have an open-ear policy and really engage in a dialogue about its plans. Its tactic of non-information to the students, faculty and community about this project certainly has helped to delay any public outcry to this boondoggle.

**David Niles**  
 Eugene