

CONTACTING US

NEWSROOM: (541) 346-5511
E-MAIL: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu
ADDRESS: Oregon Daily Emerald
 P.O. BOX 3159
 Eugene, Oregon 97403
ONLINE EDITION: darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ode

PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
 Sarah Kickler
EDITORIAL EDITOR
 Mike Schmierbach
NIGHT EDITOR
 Nicole Krueger

Senate decisions generate controversy

The two votes by the University Senate were reasonable and well thought out

With regard to the University Senate meeting on Jan. 14, the following points should be added to the information reported in the Emerald:

1. Concerning the ASUO motion to extend the add-drop deadlines: Contrary to Mr. Unger's statement, the ASUO did not supply all the required information. A financial impact statement (required by the University Senate Bylaws) was repeatedly requested from the ASUO beginning in early November, but it was never forthcoming. This is the reason the motion was not decided in De-

A SENATE COMMENTARY

ember. The impact statement that finally accompanied the motion was kindly provided to the ASUO by the Office of Academic Affairs on the day of the meeting, but the ASUO apparently could not support it. However, had the Office of Academic Affairs not supplied that statement, the motion would not have been returned to the floor at all.

2. Regarding the amendment to the add-drop motion, which changed the proposed dates from the original 13 (drop) and 15 (add) to eight (drop) and 10 (add): Contrary to Mr. Miner's accusation that the "faculty won't lose their pride and compromise," I would offer that the senators may have felt that the amended deadlines, likewise, need to be well researched in terms of both financial impact

and standards of teaching, and that the amendment was proposed too late in the meeting to be thoroughly debated. As Miner himself well knows, there are mechanisms in the legislative process to return issues to the floor. I seriously doubt that pride is the issue here.

3. Regarding the double-counting motion passed by the Senate: Mr. Miner was quoted by the Emerald as saying, "This is going to make students take another term to graduate." A full analysis reveals that for most students the change will simply reduce their elective credits by 12 and will result in no increase in total credits whatsoever. For those few students who may need to add credits, since the average carrying load of our under-

graduate students is 14.75 credits per term, the new legislation will mean that they may have to carry 18 credits for more terms (which is not an overload) in order to fulfill their requirements. It is not anticipated that this change will require students to spend an extra term at the University.

I hope that the above information provides Emerald readers with a better understanding of the debate which occurred on Jan. 14. The University Senate is and will continue to be a legislative body which respects all of its members and seeks fair and open debate on the issues which come before it.

Ann Tedards is the president of the University Senate. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Faculty interested in all

ASUO officers' comments in the Emerald claim that faculty opposition to extending the add-drop deadlines at the University Senate was motivated by self-interest (ODE, Jan. 15 and 16). Is it self-interested for faculty to be concerned about students' access to required courses and their ability to fulfill degree and major requirements in a timely fashion? Is it self-interested for faculty to object to students coming into classes after missing the first fifth (or in the original proposal 30 percent) of the course, then floundering as they try to catch up with readings, make up missed assignments, etc.? Perhaps it is self-interested for faculty to care about the likely financial impacts of more drops and lower average carrying loads on our state assistance, but I've always thought that students, too, had a strong interest in maintaining the solvency of the University.

Unfortunately, with this issue the ASUO has chosen to appeal to students' immediate perception of self-interest at the expense of considering their longer-term interest in access to courses, timely completion and a coherent education in a financially stable university. Student government this year has been pursuing an active and largely praiseworthy agenda, but it's time to take the add-drop extension off the table and get back to constructive measures.

Daniel Pope
 Associate history professor

AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

The University Senate risks dividing faculty from the students, whose support is needed

University politics are complicated. Students, faculty and administrators all have different goals, and at times the three groups seem incapable of agreeing.

Ideally, of course, all three groups should be able to cooperate. After all, we all want to improve the quality of education and services being offered at the University.

The reality of this year, however, has often been anything but compromise. The ASUO and other student groups have frequently found themselves at odds with University administrators due to competing visions of the school's future. Often, these battles have been waged over administrative plans to raise funds.

Until last week, however, it seemed that student groups and faculty members were on considerably more common ground. For example, both student and faculty groups have opposed fund-raising efforts that rely upon money made through questionable corpo-

rate practices.

At a more general level, students and faculty clearly have a lot to gain through cooperation. Both ought to be more concerned about the quality of education offered — be it through higher faculty salaries, smaller class sizes or increased academic resources — than about cost cutting and corporate pandering.

Unfortunately, faculty representatives on the University Senate missed a crucial opportunity to strengthen ties with students. The Senate rejected an ASUO proposal to extend the add-drop deadline during which students can change classes. In addition, the Senate approved a proposal that will prevent students from "doubling up" on credits, or using a degree requirement such as a foreign language to also fill a general education requirement such as arts and letters.

This decision was flawed at two levels. First, both votes will hurt some students. Second, the votes alienated the ASUO and students, making it more difficult for the faculty to gain student support for other causes.

By not extending the add-drop deadline, the Senate missed a chance to fix the registration system. Currently, rules concerning

full classes, wait lists and increasing class sizes are vague and often ignored.

Admittedly, the ASUO proposal, both as submitted and as amended, did little to solve this problem. Senate arguments against the proposal, however, highlighted the need for reform. If faculty members are worried about students being behind in a class because they enter late, it shouldn't matter whether that entry is one or two weeks after the beginning of the term. Instead, it should suggest that the process of registering late for a class must be changed.

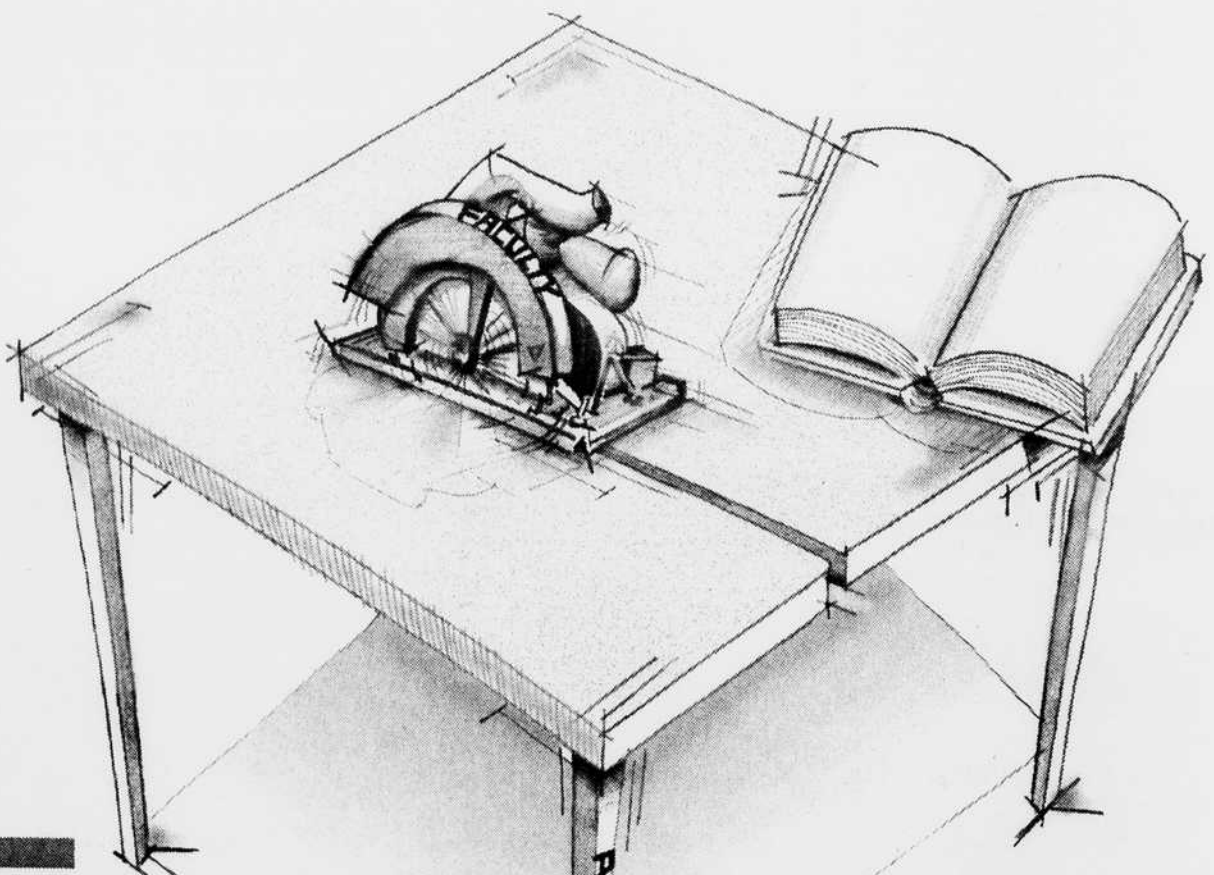
That change, of course, would be more necessary if the deadline to drop classes was extended. As it happens, extending that deadline makes sense. One week is not long enough to see how a class fits into a busy academic schedule. Faculty members are worried that a few students leaving or entering their class might affect lesson plans or even funding.

Instead, instructors should strive to ensure that their classes

engage students and that the enrolled students want to be there and are interested in the material. This will help guarantee numbers remain high enough to ensure state funding, and it will improve the learning process by letting students focus on material that is important to them.

Similarly, banning "doubling up" might force students into certain classes faculty deem important or keep high numbers (and high state funding) for a little longer because of excess requirements placed upon students. In the long run, though, such a move does not improve the quality of education offered.

If faculty want to broaden the educational requirements, those changes should happen at the level of major requirements or because students are made to be interested in a range of engaging subjects. The Senate proposal won't improve education by making students take classes they don't want to sit through.



Worse, the students most likely affected are those in specialized fields such as art, music and architecture, in which majors usually take fewer general education requirements. These students already work harder than most and often spend extra time in school as it is.

The real goal of the University Senate should be to improve the quality of education being offered. This requires classes that appeal to students, educational standards that are fair and engaging, and academic policies that allow students to evaluate their workload and focus their efforts. It also requires better faculty pay, easier tenure and reasonable class loads.

If the faculty want those last items, however, they will need the support of students. That support could have been increased by recognizing the legitimate concerns expressed by the ASUO over requirements and registration deadlines. Instead, senators missed an opportunity to show they care about students and the quality of education offered inside the classroom.

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