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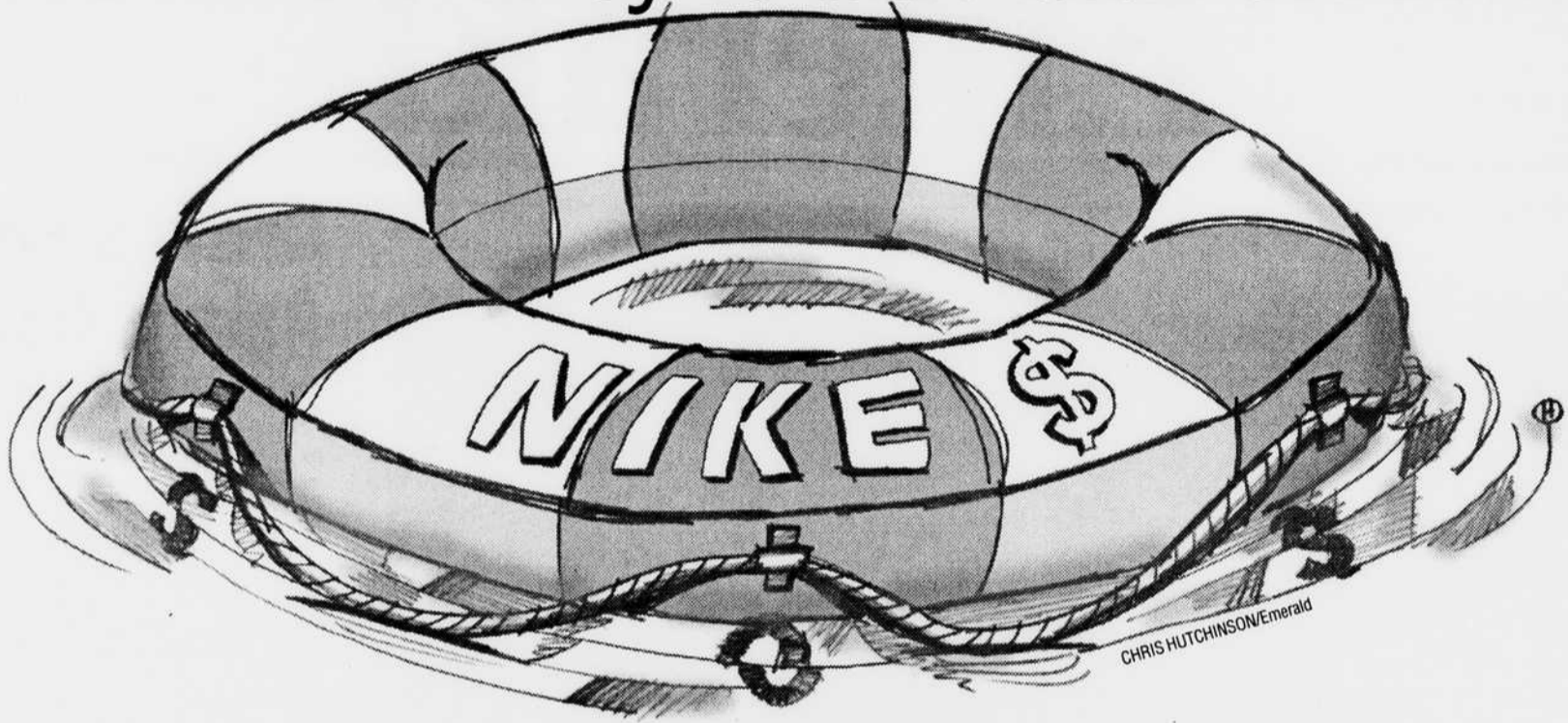
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# PERSPECTIVES

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## Give Nike money to aid Asian students



*The \$100,000 emergency loan fund will not be enough to help the student affected by the Asian economic crisis*

An open letter to University President Dave Frohnmayer:  
 Dear Dave,  
 Ed Vignoul said it best: "We really aren't doing anything different for anyone."

Vignoul, director of Student Financial Aid, was referring to the University's response to the Southeast Asian currency crisis, which has affected about 450 international students. Though Vignoul doubtless was trying to express the opinion that the University was treating these students fairly, he inadvertently pointed out that we aren't doing anything special for people whose nations have had their entire economies collapse. We should, for the following reasons:

First, the situation these students face is extraordinary. The Indonesian currency, for example, has been devalued to one-fourth its original worth. This means stu-

dents who normally would pay roughly \$20,000 for out-of-state tuition are paying the equivalent of \$80,000. Grenardy Arief, head of Permias, the Indonesian student association, said that "four or five students have already gone back to our country due to this problem."

Those that are staying are having a tough time paying for their basic needs, such as food and housing. They are faced with few alternatives; credits earned here are "like nothing" in Indonesia according to Arief. The same is true of many other countries affected by the currency crisis. It's the quintessential rock-and-a-hard-place dilemma. Either the students stay here, struggle to afford food and hope the crisis gets better — a gamble if ever there was one — or they return to a devastated economy without even recognized college work to show for it.

And frankly, Dave, your proposed solution of encouraging local residents to "open their hearts and perhaps even their homes" doesn't go nearly far enough.

Even this \$100,000 emergency loan fund isn't a viable long-term solution. For one thing, it's not going to be enough to help all of the students in trouble. For another, the loans could blow up in students' faces if the currency crisis deepens. As Amita Malakar, co-director of the International Student Association, put it: "It's very nice

everyone's concerned, but at the same time, students are worried they might have to pay back even more if the currency situation gets worse."

Ultimately, says Edward Chen of the Malaysian Student Organization, this could hurt future enrollment of international students altogether.

"For future enrollments, if the University doesn't come up with a solid deal, there won't be many students coming from these countries in the future," he said.

So, given that everyone wants to give international students the opportunity to stay — you pointed out yourself that they "are a very important part of the University" and that "their art, culture and history enrich campus" — we should look for an alternative funding mechanism. Fortunately, you have an appropriate mechanism at your disposal.

After all, Oregon generally and this University specifically has a lot to answer for in these countries. Fiscal policy sponsored by the United States has helped businesses such as (your favorite and mine) Nike exploit the resources of Southeast Asia for some time now. Follow the chain of dominoes with me:

Underage, underpaid and mistreated workers construct the shoes. The money Nike saves on labor goes into the pocket of the company's CEO. That CEO writes a check to a university. And who has the

money then?

That's right, Dave. It's you.

The \$25 million endowment Phil Knight gave the University was made possible by the sweat of people in these countries — most likely, by family members of certain students affected by this crisis. It's time to give something back.

Take some of the \$25 million Knight sent to the University and put it toward a temporary tuition reduction for the international students.

It's the only way all students will get to stay. Malakar told me that "as a long-term solution, at least temporarily, if they could lower tuition, that would be best." Arief agreed, and pointed out that such a measure would only have to be temporary ... "one or two years, until our currency is better."

It's fairly clear that this is the best thing for everybody. The international students get to stay without onerous constraints, the campus is enriched by their presence, and best of all, Dave, you come out of it looking great.

Besides, there's a certain poetry in Nike dollars going to Indonesian, Korean and Malaysian kids in their time of need. I like the idea of that a lot.

*Jeff Shaw is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.*

**OPINION**



**Jeff Shaw**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Invest in the future**

I am a junior here at the University of Oregon in my first term this winter. Upon entering the University, I was counting on my ability to receive financial aid to assist with the expenses of returning to college after an 18-month break. I applied as early as I possibly could, but still I did not receive any grants or scholarships for the 1997-98 school year. I did, however, receive a large loan to cover my dorm housing, courses, books and a very small amount for personal expenses.

I do not see loans as "financial aid" necessarily, but I know that without it I would not be able to continue my education. Financial aid is the only way I can attend school, and I will be depending on it every year until I graduate. I already have two years worth of loans, and I estimate if the averages remain the

same, I will graduate being over \$50,000 in debt to student loans. My largest concern is that college costs increase every year, yet the amount given to students seems to decrease. Does anyone else see the problem here? I am taking an active part as a student and a concerned citizen to address the issue of the imbalance that exists within the current financial aid programs.

The ASUO is currently running a campaign to correct the imbalance that exists within the current financial aid system. Congress with be revising programs affecting financial aid this year. Within the last month we collected video, postcards and other messages for lobbying our senators and representatives. I hope to see more students take an active part in their school and volunteer or intern within their student government, the ASUO.

It is such a positive experience. Maybe with more participation we can make some changes in the current system that is causing so much stress financially on the students of the University of Oregon.

I wonder what kind of difficulties students today are going to face in the future with graduation, facing hefty loan balances to pay. I wonder where the grants and scholarships have gone. Somehow in the effort to balance the budget it has been decided that cutting higher education funds would help. I personally believe that government should not take away from programs that help the future of the country. Government should invest in the future and stop cutting funding for higher education.

**Rachelle R. Pavao**  
 ASUO legislative team intern

**Help all students**

I was angry, confused and a bit hurt when I read the article "Asian crisis puts students in financial bind" (ODE, Jan. 23). As a student here at the University, I'm unable to attend classes this term because of a financial crisis. I thought that I was going to receive financial aid that I did not receive. I did not know that this was the case until I went to register for my classes for winter term. I paid a large amount of money and thought I was in the clear. When I was unable to register, my parents and I both called different people in the University to figure out what had happened. In the process, I was told that I had been sent a letter to my home address. I had never seen such a letter and my mother confirmed that she had not received such a letter. When my mother called the University to ask about the letter, she was told that she needed to pay

better attention to her mail. Even though I had half the money I needed to register, and I would have had the remainder in less than two weeks and also a new loan to cover winter term, this was not good enough, and I was unable to register for classes this term.

The reason I'm angry is that I feel the administration, if they are going to bend to help international students, need to help other students as well. Granted there are circumstances that make every situation different, but I think that other University students deserve at least as much help during a financial crisis as the international students do. I hope that there will be more accommodations made for all University students in financial crisis in the future no matter what country they call home.

**Kate Lamb**  
 Journalism