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# PERSPECTIVES

## Shuttle promotes safety, so it should have safe vehicles

AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

The ASUO Executive is making a mistake by punishing the Designated Driver Shuttle

Most people have seen the ads warning against drinking and driving. A grainy home video of a happy child is abruptly ended by a message saying he or she was killed by a drunken driver. Although these messages are becoming more and more disturbing in order to capture the public's attention, they often still drone on in the background as just another ad. That's why it is encouraging that the ASUO has the Designated Driver Shuttle, an entity that does more than simply fade in a jumble of messages. However, having this organization on campus does the University no good without the shuttles being in operation.

The two-van fleet for this organization, which by its very existence promotes safety, is currently in a budget dispute within the ASUO that is doing more harm than good.

Despite its political difficulties, DDS still serves several important roles in the University community. DDS is

active in preventing drunken driving and is a role model for proper use of alcohol. Most people know that driving under the influence of intoxicants is a particularly hazardous activity, and DDS is a campus organization that combats this behavior.

Last spring, students recognized the importance of DDS and voted to give the organization \$50,000 to extend its operation to seven days a week. Students also defeated a ballot measure that would have allocated money for DDS to purchase a new van. Soon after the ballot measure's passage, the Oregon University System unintentionally approved a DDS budget of \$76,212, giving the group an additional \$26,212. The added money came from a preliminary allocation by the ASUO Programs Finance Committee, but it became generally understood that DDS would operate within a \$50,000 budget, despite the mistake.

This understanding seemed to be working well until the ASUO Executive indefinitely froze the DDS budget on July 12 largely because director Brandon Smith attempted to purchase a van for \$16,383. According to the executive, Smith's action "directly violates the wishes of the students" because students had defeated the second ballot measure

in the spring.

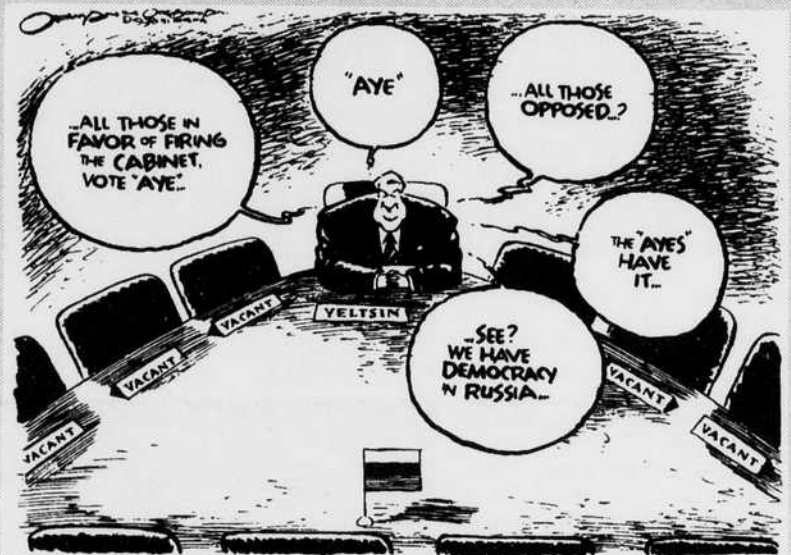
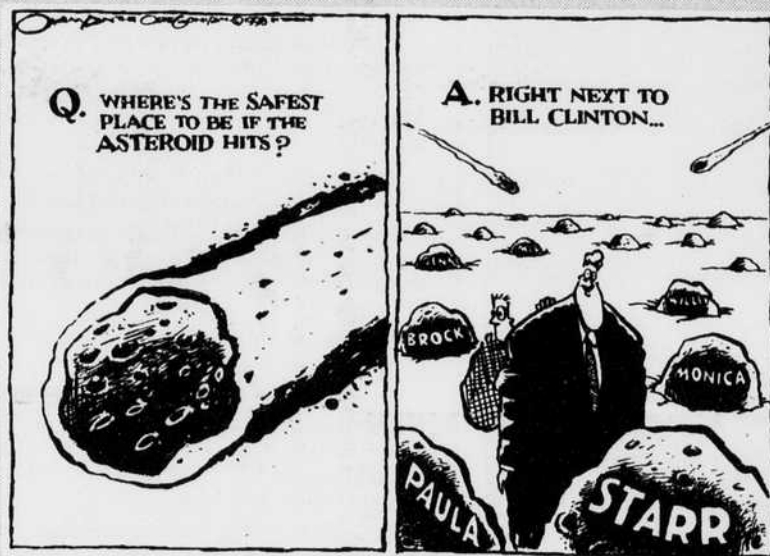
According to Smith, the new van was intended to replace one of the two vans currently in operation, and not to serve as a third vehicle. But at the time Smith made those remarks last week, there weren't any vans in operation. One of the vans had bad steering and transmission, he said. In short, the vans were not safe to run.

Shouldn't this situation be simple to resolve? Of course it should. If the vans don't work, shouldn't the organization have the right to purchase new ones? Of course it should.

This is an organization dedicated to keeping the University and its roads safe for everyone. The actions would defeat the mission's purpose if DDS began running unsafe vans to shuttle students. The ASUO Executive is flexing its muscle at the wrong time and in the wrong situation. DDS provides the University and the ASUO with a chance to set an example and provide leadership to students and community members, and that opportunity is simply stifled when the shuttle can't run safely.

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

### DRAWING BOARD



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Coffee taste ignored

According to Theresa Coleman-Kaiser, director of food services for the EMU, the recent choice of Seattle Coffee Co. as official vendor for the student building was "interesting" (ODE, July 21). Perhaps so, but to anyone who has followed the University's behavior toward business and the Eugene community as well as the history of the coffee choice, the decision should be anything but shocking.

Once again, the selection committee has chosen style over substance. "Marketing and promotion of the company" were significant factors in the decision; taste and cost obviously were not. In the previous, voided effort to pick a vendor, Seattle Coffee lost badly to other candidates in both taste and cost, yet was chosen in the final round based largely on their well-polished presentation.

Choosing companies based on the strength of their marketing doesn't serve the interests of the

students. The choice should have been primarily about taste and cost, the two things that matter for the student consumer.

If the University were going to look at other factors, perhaps it should have considered the labor records of the companies and their coffee suppliers, the use of organic and shade-grown beans (two more ecologically sound practices) and even the proximity of the company to the University. Eugene and the school are intertwined; both rely upon the community built by the other. A spokesman for Seattle Coffee said the firm feels "as if we're a local company." In reality, they are anything but. Helping a truly local business would have improved the University's ties to Eugene and strengthened the community from which the school draws support.

The selection committee could have opted to support students, the planet, workers and even the Eugene area with its decision. In-

stead, University officials have once again shown where their true interests lie: in increasing the powerful hold large corporations have over our education and lives.

Mike Schmierbach  
Portland

#### Laws apply to all

Akili Smith and Co. were denied access to a local nightclub because they did not have the proper identification. Oregon law requires all patrons to have proof of ID. This is not the establishment's responsibility.

According to the Oregon Daily Emerald (July 21), "Smith and McCullough were trying to attract the attention of former Duck offensive lineman Paul Wiggins, who was inside the club and thought to have some pull with the ownership. This was supposed to serve as a means to gain entrance for Smith and McCullough, according to the police report." What makes Smith and Co. think that they can disobey the laws of the liquor con-

trol? People have to obey the laws, so why shouldn't they?

I blame society for putting so much value on sports. The athletes need to realize that they are human, and one wrong move on the field could end their special treatment real quick.

Craig Wisniewski  
Psychology

#### Exclusion unfair

There is something instructive about watching the University of Oregon faculty at work on topics Middle Eastern. Their endeavors give us no idea of the 50 years of suffering, injustice, racism and exclusion experienced by the Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

No less a crime is the politics of exclusion practiced and maintained over the years by the American supporters of Israel at the publicly funded University of Oregon. Since no Muslim Middle Eastern-American social scientists are among the faculty, the instruction and debate on Middle

Eastern courses (if offered) and seminars (if given) are organized and controlled by faculty members who have pro-Israel biases.

There is no center of Islamic studies at the University. However, there will be a center for Judaic studies. To add insult to injury, the Linguistic Department has begun recruitment for a modern Israeli Hebrew instructor, while instruction in Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi languages is shamefully ignored.

University administrators should integrate Muslim Middle Eastern scholars into tenured positions to protect them from harassment and instill fairness and balance in instruction, not to mention vitality to the marketplace of ideas. A center for Islamic studies should be created and courses on Middle East politics, societies and literature become permanent additions to the curricula.

Exclusion and racism at the University must end.

M. Reza Behnam, Ph.D.  
Eugene

### Oregon Daily Emerald

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