

Guides differ on UO rankings

The results of college guides can vary greatly, and cause incoming students much confusion

By Sarah Skidmore
Oregon Daily Emerald

The University was ranked 18th for "Birkenstock-wearing, tree-hugging, clove-smoking vegetarians" in a 1998 national college review.

In another recently released 1999 review, University students are characterized as "primarily Caucasian with an especially heavy dose of the athletically inclined."

Deciphering the truth of these rankings is difficult because of their sheer number and inconsistency.

The 1999 Fiske Guide to Colleges ranked the University in the top 42 public and private schools as one of the "best buys" for students.

The Fiske Guide ranks the University as a school "where you can get the best possible education at the most reasonable cost," wrote Edward Fiske, a former New York Times education reporter who edits the guide.

Fiske also ranked the University as one of only three schools on the West Coast that offer "remarkable educational opportunities." However, Money Magazine did not list the University in the top 150 schools in its "value ranking."

Only one consensus is reached by all the reports — that all re-

Reviews in brief

Fiske: A great education for the dollar. One of only three schools on the West Coast that made the top 42 "best buys" in the nation

Money Magazine: The University was not included in the "Value Ranking" that listed their top 150 schools of the nation

U.S. News and World Report: The third tier, an overall quality ranking that places the University between 118th and 167th, nationally

Princeton Review: The University has four separate rankings in the national review: #3, "Dorms like Dungeons"; #16, "Reefer Madness"; #14, "Party Schools"; #18, "Birkenstock-Wearing, Tree-Hugging, Clove-Smoking Vegetarians"

sults are subjective.

"No complex institution can be described in terms of a single number or other symbol, and different people will have different views on how various institutions should be rated," the Fiske Guide said.

Martha Pitts, director of admissions, said there are a number of reasons for the dissent in opinion. Different means of collecting information, goals of the magazine and varying criteria are some of the primary problems in finding a consensus among reviews.

"Each guide has to sell itself and each has to have a particular niche or ploy to get students to buy it," Pitts said.

Comparing previous reviews to

the recent Fiske review, the final results of each seem to demonstrate the power of subjectivity.

"Rooms in the dorms tend to be small but clean and comfortable, and they have Internet connections," the Fiske Guide said.

The 1998 Princeton Review gave the University the No. 3 slot in the "dorms like dungeons" category.

"Obviously they can't be too accurate if one is saying this and another is saying something else. How accurate can that be?" student Stacy Turnbull said. "That's just logic."

This difference in ranking methods account for many contradictions, which is particularly evident between the U.S. News and Fiske guides, Pitts said.

According to Fiske's compilation, the University library system is the best in the state, the quality of life rates four stars and the academics and social life are three stars out of a five-star rating system.

However, the U.S. News and World Report ranked the University in its third tier (118th to 169th) for overall quality. The academic reputation score of the University was a 3.4 out of 5.

Pitts said conflicting reports can send confusing messages to students deciding where to go to college.

"The college decision process is a difficult and scary process for families, and they want to make the 'right decision,' and they struggle with that," she said.

News Brief

Judge permits Jewell suit to proceed

NEW YORK — A federal judge has allowed a libel case brought by former Olympic Park bombing suspect Richard Jewell to proceed against the New York Post after trimming away some of its claims.

Jewell, who earlier settled with NBC and CNN, had filed a \$15 million lawsuit against the Post, accusing the newspaper of libeling and defaming him.

U.S. District Court Judge Loretta A. Preska kept most of the lawsuit in place, but threw out claims that a photograph and an editorial cartoon had defamed him.

The suit alleged as libelous and defamatory a series of articles, headlines, photographs and editorial cartoons that appeared in the newspaper in the days after The Atlanta Journal-Constitution broke the story that Jewell was a suspect.

Jewell, 34, was initially portrayed as a hero for spotting a suspicious package and helping to clear people from the area before the July 27, 1996, explosion.

But he became a villain after the FBI confirmed he was a suspect. He became the target of extensive media coverage until cleared by the Justice Department months later.

— The Associated Press

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