

PERSPECTIVES

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State of the student union

The recent overhaul of the EMU suggests that the University is becoming more attentive to student needs

Amid the crunch of covering big events like elections, riots and wannabe riots, we here at the Emerald often lose sight of the little things. And to hear some people tell it, we never have anything nice to say. That being the case, we would like to take this opportunity to give kudos to a campus institution — the new Erb Memorial Union.

For those of you enjoying your first term at the University, it might be hard to imagine the EMU as it was for the bulk of last year. Almost everything that could be considered even remotely convenient or useless to students was either closed or simply didn't exist. The amphitheater was basically a fenced in pit, and the seemingly constant sounds of buzz saws and jackhammers precluded studying.

The seemingly endless quibbles over who would move where and how much it would cost for them to do it got tiresome fast. And for a while there, some people thought the building would never be done.

But what a difference a summer makes. When time students descended on the University to begin the new term we were greeted by a revamped recreation center, offices in logical places, and most perhaps most thrilling of all, places that serve actual food instead of soggy hot dogs and stale donuts.

But it's not the coffee house, the amphitheater or the cleverly named bakery that makes the EMU a worthy discussion topic. It is the fact that these changes were made with the students in mind.

Home of ASUO, most of the student groups and your very own campus newspaper, the EMU represents more than a simple construction

project. It is essentially the center of campus, one of the few places on campus where students intermingle outside of an academic setting.

The new EMU feels more like a student union that it ever has before. This is largely because of the fact that there are actually people here. Even before the construction started, there was little about the building that inspired anything but ire. It was not so much a destination as a place people passed through on the way to somewhere else.

The building's layout vexed many a new student, and even people who thought they knew their way around would occasionally find themselves lost. These days, however, the labyrinthian design can be considered quaint.



Giouxanni Salimena-Emerald

The new spirit of the EMU is best embodied by the flurry of activity in the new amphitheater.

Even those of us who derided the initial concept of the amphitheater as being an expensive, if useless, way for the 1996-1997 ASUO Executive to establish a legacy have to concede that there's something about sitting in the sun — or the rain — watching the jugglers, musicians and crackpots of every stripe who parade across the outdoor stage that is simply good for the soul.

Ultimately, the status of the student union doesn't seriously impact most of the campus community, but it's still nice to know that someone thought enough about what the students who use need and want.

The challenge now is to extend the student friendly attitude that helped to build the new EMU to all aspects of University life.

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

Thumbs



TO SCOTT AUSTIN:

For a noble effort. In the end, the University student lost his bid for the State Senate seat, but he seemed to have the time of his life.

TO SPRITE:

The soft drink company's promotion for its "NBA Salary Cap Game" featuring basketball stars Grant Hill and Kobe Bryant underscores the silliness of the lockout. Well, at least someone's getting paid.



TO THE LOCAL MEDIA:

Even though little more than verbal conflict occurred, some news organizations were quick to classify the recent incident at Hamilton as a riot. Must have been a slow news night.

Letters policy

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.

