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# PERSPECTIVES

## An "A" for effort

*It's a good idea, but students shouldn't rely too heavily on the professor evaluation packet when looking for good classes.*

**P**roactivity is good. We like proactivity. Furthermore, we like anything that empowers the student body. So, in theory, we like the professor evaluations.

Of course, in theory, communism works and women receive equal pay for equal work. Reality, as we all know, works a little differently.

For those of you who haven't seen it yet, the professor evaluation packet is a compilation of student opinions on course and instructor quality. You can pick up one of these booklets for free at various locations around campus. The ASUO put a lot of work into the packet, and they think it's just great.

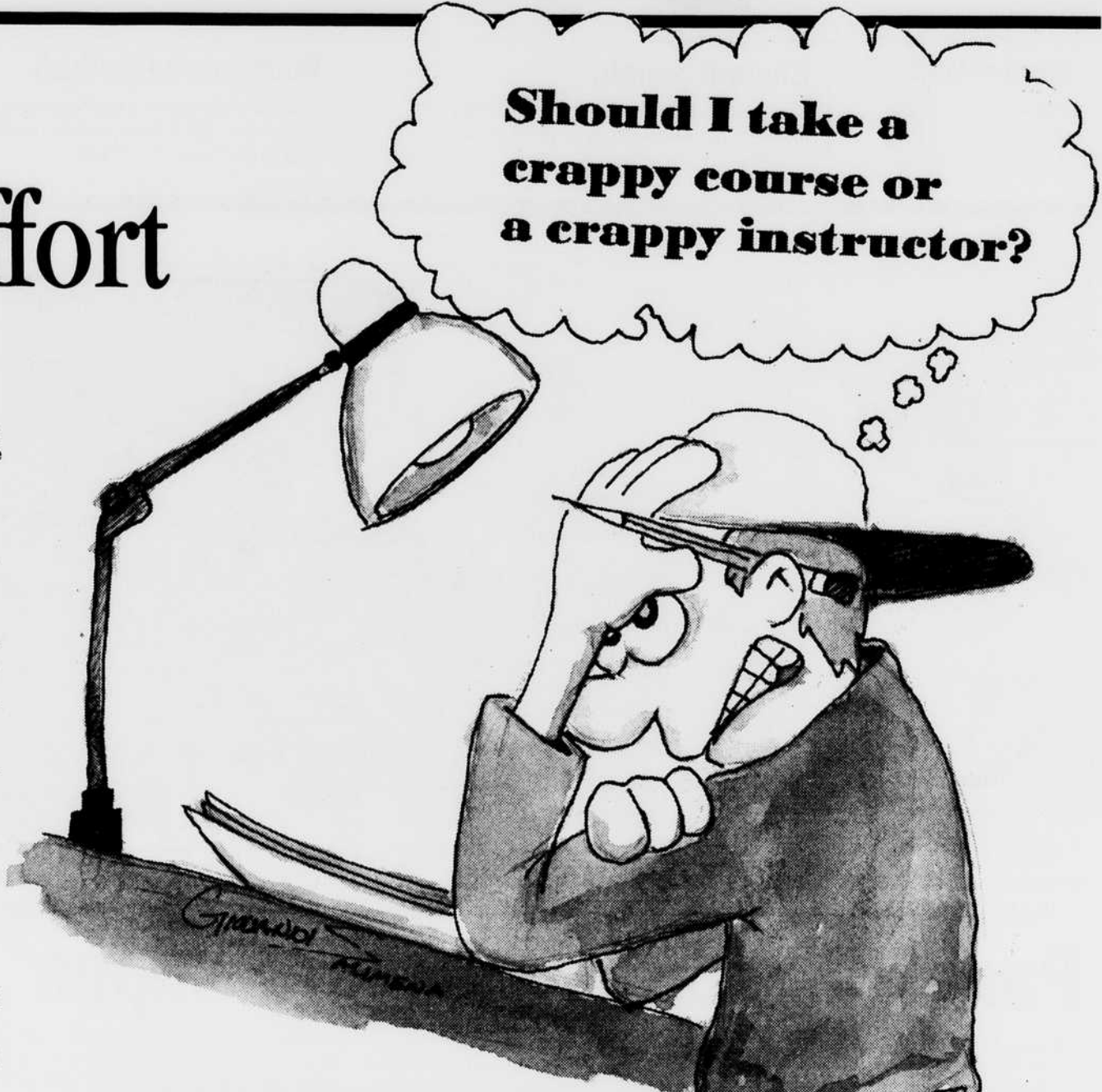
And it would be great — if the packet told you anything worth knowing. Despite the student government's best efforts, it doesn't.

In general, students tend to evaluate their courses based on two factors — what they actually learned or what grade they got in the class.

Sometimes, not always, but sometimes it's the "easy A" classes that get the 10s while more difficult courses score considerably lower.

Going simply by the law of averages, some of these classes probably just suck. But it's probably also true that some of these classes are simply difficult and that students vent their frustration on the course evaluations.

Our purpose here is not to classify University students as lazy sloths who pout and kick their chairs whenever they're called on to do anything difficult. But let's face facts, shall we?



Sometimes it's hard to be objective about a particular class, especially one that's cost you innumerable hours of sleep, your sunny disposition and in very extreme cases, your sanity. (J 202, anyone?)

The best way to find out what a course or professor is really like is to talk to students who have taken them.

One of the ASUO objectives in producing the evaluation packet is to "send a message to professors that if they teach quality classes, they will get quality students."

There are a couple problems with

that goal. For one, a professor looking at his or her score in the packet won't know what factors went into the computation of that score any more than prospective students will. A score of one through 10 doesn't tell professors whether students think they are inaccessible, or if they just think there was too much reading assigned for the class.

The only ways for professors to get this kind of concrete, decidedly more useful information is either from actual conversations with students or even the written portion of the evaluations. Unfortunately, these aren't in-

cluded in the ASUO packet.

The evaluation packet, without critical insight into the rankings, is just pages and pages of numbers.

So as winter term approaches and Duck Call season is upon us, you might find it helpful to consult the professor evaluation packet. Just remember to take the information with a very large grain of salt, or you may end up cheating yourself.

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

