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PERSPECTIVES

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One low payment of only \$200

Contrary to the University's claims, the new matriculation fee will do little to ease college students' financial burden.

It's new. It's fast. It's easy. But few students will actually save money with the new matriculation fee. The fee is designed to combine fees such as the \$100 Intro-DUCKtion fee, the \$5 official transcript fee, the \$15 re-enrollment fee, the \$25 graduation fee and the \$10 add/drop fee.

The fee requires returning students to pay \$45 and new undergraduates to pay \$150. After a two-year phase-in to even out the costs between returning and new students, entering undergraduate students will pay a \$200 fee starting in the year 2000.

However, the harsh reality is that not everyone graduates, needs an official transcript, re-enrolls or adds or drops a class. By using a one-time fee instead of charging for each item separately, the University will inevitably over-charge some students for services they don't use. Transfer students may suffer the most because they will be forced to pay the same amount as students who have been at the University for their entire education. However, students who make adding and dropping classes a personal hobby will make out nicely with the new fee because they will not be required to pay for each add/drop. But should the rest of the student body end up paying for it?

The administration claims it instituted the fee because students complained that the University was "nickel and diming" them to death. But we believe the objection students have is that they pay tuition, incidental fees, Intro-DUCKtion fees and various other fees, and that services such as graduation, transcripts, add/drop and re-enrollment should be covered by the fees that they already pay. It is not that students simply object to paying separate fees and that a one-time fee makes everything better.

\$30 BUCKS FOR A PERMIT TO USE THE JOHN! YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

The administration, however, likes fees. They ensure a lump sum of money that goes unchecked when you consider that most of the student body has no idea what each individual fee is for. When you have a separate fee for each service, students can decide to use it or not. Take adding and dropping classes for example: if there is a specific fee for adding or dropping, students will take care not to over-use this service. Therefore, they have a choice to use the service or not. Under the new matriculation fee, use of these services will rise because students will have no financial incentive for restraint. The University will take this as an opportunity to raise the matriculation fee to account for increased use. And students will have little say in the matter.

Students need to see where their money is going, and payment up-front for services allows them to do that. It also allows students to monitor increases in the costs of particular services. In contrast, students are not likely to question blanket fees when they know little about how they are spent.

In addition, the whole act of creating all the fees in order to keep the tuition low is deceptive to prospective students. The cost of education is not just tuition when you continue to add fee after fee.

Although most students may be seduced by the sound of one easy, low payment, they need to consider the cost of convenience. For most students it's not worth it.

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



SAID & DONE

"I think it's important we not overreact"
—President Clinton after Iraq again refused to hand over weapons documents requested by the UN

"I hear laughter from the left. But I often hear laughter from the left."
—David Schippers, the Republican's chief investigative counsel, on the laughter that resulted from his praise of the independent counsels' treatment of Monica Lewinsky

"Few have ventured that the president told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."
—Kenneth Starr, independent counsel, during his opening statement before the Judiciary Committee

"Mr. Starr has crossed the line into obsession."
—Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., on Starr's four year investigation of President Clinton

"If your mission is to entertain rather than inform, then I hope you'll go to Hollywood rather than into journalism."
—Charles Kaiser, Wall Street Journal reporter, discussing the Clinton scandal in his speech to students interested in journalism

