

# Donations

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Programs

Oregon Campaign donors have many ways to direct their money throughout the University. They can give one-time gifts or make a long-term gift commitment. They can endow a faculty chair or initiate a student scholarship program.

But donors also have the opportunity to establish gifts with very specific purposes, be they funding new fields of study, as donor James Warsaw did for sports marketing, or building new facilities, as donor Phil Knight, Nike's CEO, did for the new law school.

If a donation to a college is undesignated, the dean of the college decides where the money goes. An undesignated donation to the University ends up in the hands of President Dave Frohnmayer.

There are limits, however.

Donors are screened throughout the process to make sure their requests mesh with academic priorities and are in the University's best interest, said Duncan McDonald, vice president for public affairs and development.

In these discussions, donations are dictated by University needs and not donor needs McDonald said.

#### Academic freedom threatened?

Critics of the program question whether private donations are in the best interest of the University.

Julie Fox, an adjunct sociology

professor, believes that the University's new emphasis on donor money creates a situation where the University and its faculty begin to worry about criticizing funding sources in their academic research.

Fox posed a couple of questions: Would there be a tendency for donors to cut off their donations if the University criticized their business practices or politics? And would the University then stifle its research to keep the money?

This situation has happened before. Perhaps the most publicized event occurred at Yale University in 1995.

Yale alumnus Lee Bass had given \$20 million in 1991 to create more Western civilization courses. He asked for it back in 1995 after controversy erupted because some faculty members believed the courses weren't needed, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Yale officials said their decision to give the money back hinged on Bass's insistence that he approve the instructors for the new courses.

Fox said she believes a similar story happened when she taught sociology at Loyola University in New Orleans in 1995. Freeport McMoRan, a global mining corporation, had given \$600,000 to establish an environmental communications chair.

The gift sparked debate across the campus because of charges that the corporation treated its Indonesian workers poorly and that the company had a poor environmental record.

The criticism culminated in a protest outside the home of the corporation's CEO, after which The New Orleans Times-Picayune reported that the CEO asked Loyola for its money back.

But money stayed and the chair was filled a year later. Fox has publicly charged and criticized Loyola for trying to sanction those involved in the protest, although the university claims no such thing occurred.

Fox, who came to Eugene as an adjunct professor that same year, said she's seen potential for conflict here.

Students and faculty have protested Nike on campus in recent years, making charges of poor labor practices in Southeast Asia. And yet the University took a \$25 million donation from Knight, seemingly an endorsement by students and the University of Nike practices, she said.

"Well, the workers would like recognition for what they gave," Fox said. "Philanthropy obscures where the money is coming from."

In her mind, corporate philanthropy also hinders the University's academic freedom because faculty members may fear that any research critical of the company could result in the compa-

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Lynn Kahle  
Sports marketing professor

ny pulling its money out, as happened at Loyola.

Sociology graduate student Ann Strahm said she was discouraged by sociology faculty members from pursuing a dissertation critical of Nike, because it would probably put any graduate review committee in an uncomfortable position.

McDonald called the idea that fund raising from the Oregon Campaign could cause a silencing of research and criticism against private donors "paranoid and idiotic." He said the University would never sacrifice its academic freedom.

"What professor, what director ... in their right mind would ever want to suppress" criticism, he said, "if in fact what a university is all about is research, inquiry and discussion."

McDonald said that he's been amazed at how low-key donors have been, almost to the point of being shy at wanting any recognition — a far cry from trying to dictate the University's functions.

"People contribute to the University and ask for little in return," he said.

He also points to the strong faculty government that stands behind campus research and wouldn't be silenced if it felt pressured by the implications of the campaign.

"Am I aware that anything like this has ever happened? Absolutely not," he said. "Would I stand for it? No."

#### Word Around Campus

If individual cases show there is pressure not to criticize Nike on campus, sociology assistant professor Michael Dreiling said, they wouldn't directly show that a donor's influence on campus is silencing research.

Instead, Dreiling focuses on the overall effect of private money on campus. He said he sees private money having more and more control over the University's curriculum.

"Why do we have a business school and one of the only sports marketing programs in the country?" he said. "These are the questions we should ask ourselves"

"But why don't we have a labor studies program?"

Dreiling believes private fund raising and the donors' ability to fund specific programs is leading the University in a direction that focuses on producing students

with marketable knowledge instead of students who are critical thinkers and good citizens.

A simple comparison between the campus's run-down buildings and newly renovated buildings shows where donors are emphasizing scholarship, he said.

"Who's working in those buildings? What kind of non-marketable knowledge is being produced out of those arenas?" he said.

Fox claims that companies — or individuals who represent companies — are giving money to receive the indirect benefit of free student research. She points to Sports Specialties Corporation President James Warsaw, a sports-cap producer, and his creation of the sports marketing department as the quintessential example.

Sports marketing professor Lynn Kahle said there's much critical learning occurring in the business school, one of the buildings to receive \$10 million in 1994, and it doesn't have to do strictly with research that companies can use.

He points to his own studies, where he is less focused on sports marketing and more on the psychological questions behind consumerism.

He said that sports marketing department research does benefit the industry in general, but business research is published in public places where anyone can use it, not solely a specific company.

Kahle, who has been at the business school 15 years, said he is appreciative of the private money coming into the University. He doesn't buy the argument that his research would be tainted by the needs of donors.

"I've never had anybody tell me to behave a certain way or do certain research because of a donor," he said.

And often, donors have competing businesses and marketing theories, he said.

In sports marketing, for example, Knight's and Warsaw's marketing philosophies often contradict each other.

"If my academic integrity has been bought by a gift, which way would I go?" he said.

Some on campus tend to think society hasn't given enough to higher education.

Bill Harbaugh, an assistant economics professor whose research focuses on why people give money to charities, has concluded that people give money not for the quid pro quo or tax break, but for the warm glow they receive from it.

Harbaugh said he believes people are not charitable enough and that society would like them to give more.

He sees private donations from the Oregon Campaign in the same way. The University has

come up with a way to praise and recognize donors, he said, and donors are now forking over their share.

Although there is potential for donors to try to forward their agendas, most donors initiate programs that are positive, such as Judaic Studies, he said.

"It's a totally worthwhile thing," he said. "It's hard to argue that that's a problem."

Janis Weeks, biology department head, said the University is between a rock and a hard place.

"We're trying to run the best university we can with ever-decreasing resources," she said. "We have to look at whatever possible funding ... but we don't want to sell our souls to the devil."

Weeks said most Oregon Campaign money in her department has been focused on student scholarship.

But she is leery of donations that might have political consequences or corporate interests behind them. And she wants to know how donations are evaluated before the University accepts them.

#### Questioning Gifts

The UO Foundation has a gift acceptance policy. Smaller donations and donors are approved by deans of colleges and development officials. Larger gifts go through the University administration or Frohnmayer.

McDonald said no gift has ever been challenged.

The policy states a gift could be denied in the following cases: if it fell outside the boundaries of approved curriculum or faculty position; if the donor gained undue influence over the University through the donation; if the money was "tainted" — given through illegal or questionable sources; or the donor is "notorious," as a donor with a Mafia, Nazi or terrorist background would be.

In most situations, McDonald said, a public challenge would occur only after the University already accepted the money. The gifts can be returned, he said.

He advises concerned members of the University community to first question a dean or department head about a gift, and if still unsatisfied to request a formal review of the gift.

Harbaugh believes it's an adequate system.

"The real question is, if the money's perfectly legal, but some people just have moral qualms about its source, should they be able to prevent the University from taking the money?" he said.

Harbaugh said no.

But Fox said yes.

Of course U.S. companies can exploit Third World workers without it being called illegal, she said, but to ignore such actions makes for a fund raising system with low standards.

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