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# PERSPECTIVES

## PRIDE Denied

*University lists lots of reasons to quash controversial hall, none of them good ones*

**G**ripe and complain, as some of us might, that nothing ever happens on this campus, the truth is that we have more than our fair share of controversy. Be it Nike or Gardenburger, we always find something to talk about.

The recent flap over the PRIDE hall, a residence hall that would cater to students from various under represented groups, notably those who self identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered is yet another example.

The debate ended on Wednesday when the University officially announced it would not approve the plan to establish the hall.

The argument against the PRIDE hall centered on two main concerns: that it would promote segregation and that it the hall might become a target of harassment.

That a hall was perceived to be primarily for LGBT students, whether that perception was accurate or not, might experience some problems is indeed a valid concern.

Despite our easygoing, tolerant image the University of Oregon and the city of Eugene have their fair share of the homophobic and the ignorant.

But don't openly gay students face the same risk of being harassed in other residence halls? Furthermore, if harassment does occur, it seems that these students would be better served by the community of support

a PRIDE hall would undoubtedly provide.

The segregation argument is more problematic. It begs an important question: Are students who would choose to live in a PRIDE hall any more guilty of self-segregation than those who choose to live in the Multicultural hall or any of the other special interest halls University housing sponsors?

To begin with, the proposal for PRIDE, an acronym for Providing Residents Interested in Development and Education called for an environment "committed to dispelling racism, sexism, ageism and ableism." This is perhaps the most inclusive mission statement of any of the theme halls.

Some have voiced concern that if LGBT and other minority students

move to a separate hall, then other residents will lose the opportunity to learn about diverse backgrounds they might not encounter otherwise.

What these people lose sight of, however, it is that it is not incumbent upon any student of any background to act as the standard bearer for their race, gender, sexual orientation or any other aspect of their identity that might set them apart. In fact, educating residents about other backgrounds and points of view is a task the University has assigned itself. Establishing the PRIDE hall would have served to further this goal, not detract from it.

If we view the PRIDE hall as a choice between individuals segregating themselves, or being alienated by others, then the arguments against it become moot. The choice between self preservation and feeling isolated or threatened is no choice at all.

One of the University's main goals in providing housing is to engender a sense of community in which all members feel safe and valued. One would think that an attempt by students to establish an inclusive community to meet their unique needs would have been met with a more enthusiastic response.

Though the hall will not exist next year, at least the University knows it must find ways to better serve a segment of the campus community. This is probably not the last we will hear on PRIDE, and if anything good came out of the University's decision, that's it.

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



### Thumbs



**To Michael Jordan:**  
With 13 seasons and six championships under his belt, the retiring NBA phenom just may be the only player fans still like.

**To the Make-A-Wish Foundation:**  
The latest in a long line of good deeds, the organization recently granted a seriously ill young girl her greatest wish: a chance to be in a Muppet movie.



**To Furby:**  
The funny-looking fuzz ball was recently banned from the National Security Agency office in Maryland. NSA officials feel that the toy, which records and repeats sounds, might be a threat to national security.

**To Global Stupidity:**  
A group of Russian robbers recently planned a heist via walkie talkie. Too bad they used the police-band frequency.

**CORRECTION**  
The ODE article "Esslinger face-lift continues," Jan. 13, should have read: "The sports medicine lab is a cooperative effort with Physical Activity and Recreation Services and the University Health Center. The athletic department contributed \$700,000 of the \$1.2 million budget for the new tennis court." The Emerald regrets the error.

