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PERSPECTIVES

Who's watching the kids?

Oregon Legislature needs to provide more funding for student child care

All things considered, the average college student is lucky. More often than not, she or he need only worry about herself or himself. This is a good thing, because we students often find that our lives have become frenzied and complicated.

For example, some of us need to work to pay our tuition, so we find a job, which we must then balance with schoolwork. Sometimes we even miss class to work the job we took to pay for classes. It's a crazy cycle, but more often than not we make it work, thankful for weekends and the occasional day off.

Now consider for a second what would happen if the average college student were to take on the addition of caring for a child.

Each day, thousands of college students across the state do just that. Often they find that there are resources available to help them, but even more often they find that these resources are inadequate.

One such resource is the Student Child Care Block Grant, a partial subsidy of the cost of day care.

Great idea, right? Unfortunately, the grant faces the same problems as many other worthy social programs — there are too many people vying for too few resources.

The grant has already been doled out to 250 student parents statewide. But there are 900 others in Oregon who could be on the waiting list for more than a year.

Last Thursday at the Campaign Kickoff rally, the ASUO and the Oregon Students Association began pushing for more funding for child care. The major focus of this campaign is the Oregon Legislature.

This week, the OSA hopes to have a proposal in place to ask the Legislature for either \$7.5 million to provide grants to every student currently on the waiting list or \$3.9 million to cut the number of students on the waiting list in half.

To its credit, the state has been making significant progress in its quest to do right by higher education.



The recently adopted budget that parcels out significant funding to Oregon colleges and universities is definitely a step in the right direction.

At this university alone there are around 2,000 students with children. Providing these students with the means to obtain quality child care allows them to spend more time concentrating on their studies. This allows them to get more out of their educational experience. And shouldn't that be one of the state's goals?

Furthermore, an increase in state funds could potentially save all University students money.

If the Legislature comes through with the requested cash, University students would be given the choice of continuing to fund 200 child-care slots with student incidental fees or they could choose to use the state money to fund those 200 parents.

If the state's intention really is to increase the quality of education for

Oregon, it needs to focus on the needs of specific segments of that population, such as student parents.

Even if it doesn't approve the whole amount, the Legislature should regard the OSA proposal as an indicator of the needs of student parents — needs that aren't being met.

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

SAID & DONE

"I'm going to sneak off somewhere and smoke a cigar, but don't tell anybody."

— Rep. Henry Hyde, on what he was going to do after the Clinton impeachment trial.

"I have tried to stay out of all the Washington mess."

— Former President George Bush

"It's going to be hard to talk out of my ass after this, but I'll manage."

— Jim Carrey during his Golden Globe acceptance speech. Carrey took home the award for Best Actor in a Drama for his role in "The Truman Show."

"Midgets and monkeys and explosions and supermodels and the fattest man in the world."

— MTV "Love-line" co-host Adam Carolla on the format of his upcoming Comedy Central series, "The Man's Show."

"Pedaling through tree-lined streets in a Missouri mood, seeing a road to pick. I went east and ended it right, with 46 at my fingertips."

— Opening line of this year's Michigan riddle. The annual treasure hunt is now in its 18th year.

CORRECTION
The Jan. 22 article "Panels to promote nature, justice" should have identified Carol Logan as a member of the Kalapooya Tribe and a member of the Sacred Circle Alliance. The Emerald regrets the error.

