

PERSPECTIVES

University profile

Lack of funding for professor salaries, lack of diversity on campus and the youth of the recruitment program may be to blame for the small number of minority faculty members at the University



Giovanni Salimena/Emerald

As the millennium approaches, everyone seems to be in an evaluative mood, taking snapshots of current trends and cultural problems. A three-part Emerald series examining the state of the University, which ran last Wednesday through Friday, fit along such lines. But the picture produced in Friday's focus on recruitment and retention of faculty of color wasn't pretty.

The number of minority faculty increased in all groups except blacks, which actually decreased between 1997 and 1998 and still makes up only 1 percent of the faculty. Other minority groups fared better — but not much.

Although the University has been actively seeking minorities for faculty positions, it seems to have a problem with retaining them.

Two possible reasons outlined in the article were: The University cannot compete with salaries offered by other universities that are actively recruiting minorities, and Eugene has a small minority population that might reflect negatively on the University as a potential employer.

Lack of funding for retention may be credited to ballot Measure 5 in 1990 and the subsequent Measure 47 in 1996. The measures reduced property taxes and decreased Oregon's budget and higher education funding. Everyone should remember to thank Bill Sizemore for that one.

The measures limit the University's ability to compete with higher wages offered by out-of-state universities. It may be that all universities suddenly became aware of the need to diversify their faculty, and now mi-

norities can wait for the highest bidder, which of course will not be in Oregon.

The second reason is a catch 22. The University needs to actively recruit minorities, both faculty and students, to diversify the campus, but the University may not be diverse enough to attract that diversity.

Racism may also be another factor. In an Emerald article ("Murphy caught out in his 'PJs'") last Thursday one student commented that the controversial show that depicts a black family in the projects is "an aspect of textbook African-American families from a comedic point of view."

This misunderstanding of what African-American families are or that one show can show "textbook" anything is representative of why minority professors decide to leave the University or not come here at all.

Another reason that was not outlined by the article is that our University may have started a little late in the game. The University began recruitment in 1995, and this, above all else, may have the biggest impact on minority numbers. Any recruitment program begun little more than four years ago cannot expect to have overwhelming results in 1999.

It may be important to evaluate the program and see why minorities aren't attracted to the University and what can be done to combat that. But the University has a tough road ahead considering its lack of funding for faculty salaries, the lack of diversity in the first place and the youth of the recruiting program.

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

Thumbs



THUMBS UP

To peace talks: Although Serbians initially refused to let Albanians leave the country to attend peace talks in France, now both sides are sitting at the table ready to start talking.

To justice: Once again, boxer Mike Tyson is in jail. Convicted of assault in what the judge deemed "a tragic example of potentially lethal road rage," Tyson was sentenced to two years in jail.



THUMBS DOWN

To potential disaster: About 400,000 gallons of oil in a cargo ship is stuck in sand off the Oregon Coast just waiting to contaminate the ocean and beaches. The New Carissa, an 80-million-pound cargo ship, is beached near Coos Bay and enduring winds of up to 100 mph. Experts claim the ship should hold until crews can retrieve it, but no one knows what will happen for sure.

To discrimination: The Cayman Islands have decided that they will no longer allow gay tour groups on the islands. Cruise ships supply a good portion of the tourism in that area, and the islands check the ship registry for gay tour groups before anyone can exit the boat.

Letters to the Editor

Coverage biased

I would like to complain most seriously about Rob Moseley's article (ODE, Jan. 20) praising the new substation on 13th Avenue. Considering the controversy spanning the past year, the fact that the article included not one quotation from a person concerned with the over-presence of police in Eugene, or even an acknowledgment that such people exist, is an unforgivable oversight.

But more disturbing is Moseley's attitude toward the Homeless. "Transients, panhandlers, and other shady characters," were harshly insensitive words. That no one without a home was aloud to respond makes it particularly unfair. The words of 7-Eleven manager Dan Scarpelli were even more horrifying. "... less problems on the streets. Less transients. Less drugs. Less trouble altogether." Once again, no dissenting opinions presented, despite the outright bigotry of Scarpelli's statement.

Furthermore, where do Moseley and Scarpelli think all the "Transients, panhandlers and other shady characters" disappeared to? Have the police found them all homes? No, more likely they have just been pushed aside to somewhere less visible where they won't bother the business owners, shoppers and parent subsidized University students.

And I would like to remind the paranoid student who wouldn't walk down a busy street, even in the daytime, due to the presence of "shady

characters," that it is rarely the stranger in the street who is the rapist, the kidnapper or the murder. It is far more likely to be someone close to you. I would also tell her that I have been walking down 13th Avenue at all hours since I was 16 and have never witnessed an act of violence.

I can't blame her, though. Hate mongers have made the homeless person into a fearful monster. Somehow I expected more from a University paper.

Robert Slaughter
L.C.C., Social Science

Sour note

Frank Jezukewicz's recent letter (ODE, Jan. 29) about campus radio station KWVA was right on the money. KWVA operates in a manner that is contrary to the benefit of the student body. The only music that is approved, generally, is "indie," punk and the like. Hence the name, Willamette Valley Alternative. The quest for non-commercial airplay is a noble but inappropriate goal for a campus station. Yet oddly enough, they utilize a playlist system just like big commercial stations with albums ranked A, B, C, D, and E in importance. DJs are required to fit songs from each category into their show. The only way to circumvent this rule is to have a specific show approved, such as all ska, all '80s, etc.

DJs should not need to have station approval for shows. At the college stations I started at, DJs could play anything as long as FCC rules were not broken. And the station thrived! Peo-

ple did specialty shows, mix shows, marathon shows or just random music shows, and it had a huge listener base. KWVA should be the same way. Students should not allow the few to tell the many what music can be played. If you're hired by a commercial station, yes; at a University-sponsored station, no. I will end by noting that, like Jezukewicz, I talked to KWVA managers in regard to losing listeners by playing only unknown indie groups. Their response? "We've never heard of you, either." KWVA could be the best station in Eugene, but not until attitudes change and DJs start playing whatever they want.

David C. Zartman
Alumnus, 1991, Political Science

Deadly language

As an English teacher who believes that language has the power not only to reflect but also to perpetuate and create reality, I must share my troubled response to a poorly written article (ODE, Feb. 2). In a front-page headline piece on the Front Runners Club, your writer announces that at 9 a.m. on Saturday, "most people are still in their bed recovering from Friday night hangovers." I will ignore the mechanics problems here and head straight to the incorrect and downright dangerous premise behind it. Heck, it's not even behind it, but right there, clearly stated: most people were so drunk Friday night they awoke with hangovers.

Now, I don't know whom your writer hangs out with — but my experience leads me to reject this premise.

I firmly believe that most people do not wake up on Saturday with hangovers. Surely my faith in humankind is not so misguided.

Did the writer actually mean "most students"? That's not true, either — is it?

So the statement doesn't actually reflect reality — but that just makes it incorrect. What about its power to influence students (or other "people") — to make them think such behavior is the norm and thus acceptable? Does such a comment reflect a casual attitude toward alcohol abuse, or does it perpetuate, even exacerbate, an atmosphere of casual abuse?

It's rather appalling that an institution determined to reduce drug abuse, and fearful of any activity that might even seem to condone such (remember the Grateful Dead ban), might casually ignore such a formal and public act (an act of language) that threatens to compound the serious alcohol problem on this campus.

Jeff Harrison
Professor of English

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.