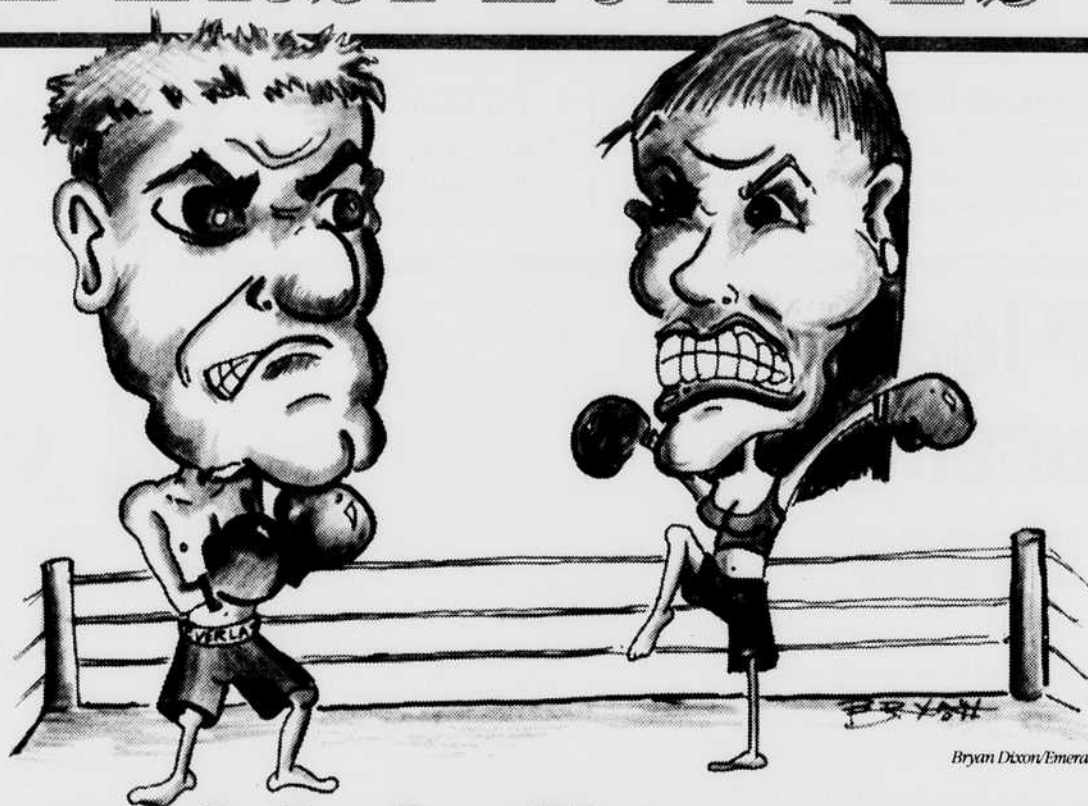


PERSPECTIVES



Bryan Dixon/Emerald

The special election process is:

The Funky Meters once sang, "I gave my love a chicken that had no bones."

That would be an excellent way to describe a brief recently filed with the ASUO Constitution Court aimed at destroying the upcoming ASUO special election, a chicken with-

Commentary

Spencer Hamlin

out bones.

You may ask how can there be a chicken without bones. The answer is, there shouldn't be.

Explanation: The chicken is the argument that the special election is illegal. The bones would be constitutional and logical backing for such an argument.

The reason I know that this chicken has no bones is because I am an ASUO student senator, elected twice to represent students and protect their interests.

Part of my job as a member of the Senate Rules Committee is to interpret the constitution for the Student Senate and check the legitimacy of all resolutions before they go to the rest of the senate.

I did my homework and discovered the ASUO Constitution does grant the ASUO president the power to call a special election (see ASUO constitution, sections 5.1-5.11-12.1-12.2-12.5-13.5-13.10-15.2).

This is important because at our last senate meeting, fortunately, an attempt to bypass the rules committee and go right to senate failed. In some instances this might be OK, but in this one the proponent of the resolution insisted on delaying the sen-

DEMOCRATIC

ate meeting to have an immediate rules committee meeting.

After this attempt was thwarted, the proponent called the senate president, Michael Olson, a liar when he asserted that he had not yet read the resolution and wanted to review it before making a ruling either way. This is a problem because we are not, as elected representatives, supposed to circumvent the democratic process for our own personal agenda.

I challenge anyone at this school to make the case that not allowing the public, or in this instance, the students, the opportunity to vote on issues that affect their lives, is how you protect and promote democracy!

The Constitution Court has clearly violated our right to vote by postponing the special election without allowing a response from the defendants, in this case the ASUO president, Geneva Wortman. Also, the court has violated its own guidelines and the ASUO Constitution several times.

One example being the court postponed the special election for two weeks, ruling it didn't have time to review the briefs any earlier because one of them will be out of town. OK, well, a quorum — the number of officials needed for a formal ruling — is three and there are five judges, so you do the math. It seems like they could still have enough people to get together.

I said hi to one of them at Rennie's one night last week. Too busy to deal

with the job, but not too busy to throw back a few cold ones? How many of you have handed a midterm in two weeks late saying, "I didn't have time"? Would your teacher believe you if he or she saw you "throwin' back a few" on a school night?

So what do we have here? A court that won't say why it has stopped our right to have a special election for the purpose of streamlining the future election process (the reason this election was called in the first place), and a student senator who wants to circumvent tried and true senate rules for the purpose of reprimanding another branch of student government.

Let the record show that when the Senate Rules Committee did meet, the author of said resolution withdrew it without offering any explanation. I guess it wasn't that important, anyway.

In sum, I want to ask all of you: Should our Student Senate meetings be a forum for calling others liars and selfish people?

Should we spend our time criticizing people for working to protect programs that they believe are a fundamental part of this campus? If the answer is no, then you and I are in the same boat. If the answer is yes, then you are a chicken with no bones.

Stand up for democracy, stand up for a progressive student government and stand up for your right to vote!

Spencer Hamlin is a student senator majoring in political science. He can be reached at via e-mail at spunser@gladstone.uoregon.edu

Rumors involving the ASUO special election have been flung around this campus faster than lightning. I urge all students to discuss the rumors that they have heard and make an effort to dispel the lies and myths surrounding the controversies.

First, the ASUO Constitution Court did not cancel the special election. The election was postponed until both sides of the case can be heard. This is called democracy. Second, the court did not rule that either side of the controversy had merit. That decision may be made at a later time.

The Constitution Court has not made any decision that would justify the court being called "biased." People who seem to think the court has been biased either do not understand the court's legal terms or have not even read the court's decisions.

Actions to recall and protest the court are ridiculous and border upon harassment (two members of the Constitution Court have found a dead chicken on their doorstep). Student government has a series of what are called "checks and balances." In the past two years, the Student Senate has confirmed all the court justices. The court was hired by last year's and this year's ASUO Executive.

Whether the extension given to the ASUO or OSPIRG for submitting ballot measure language by the ASUO elections coordinator is constitutional or not, it is corrupt. Very few, if any, programs and students were notified that the deadline would be extended. Because of this, students and/or programs were denied their equal right to place a measure on the ballot.

CORRUPT

On Feb. 10, a draft resolution denouncing the ASUO Elections Board's deadline extension for OSPIRG and the executive was e-mailed to the senate.

All members of the Senate Rules Committee were asked to reply with any changes or suggestions about the resolution. The only reply the senate gave was a "nay" from Senator Spencer Hamlin, who is a campaign worker for OSPIRG. The rest of the committee did not reply with any changes.

On Feb. 10, two senators tried to put that resolution to a senate vote. No other topics were on the meeting agenda. Senate President Michael Olson said for the senate to discuss a resolution, it must go through the rules committee.

This is not true. There is no rule stating that any resolution must go through the rules committee before being reviewed by the senate.

Senate Ombudsman Jerome Grzybowski, Olson and Hamlin, who all have been campaign workers for OSPIRG, refused to meet as a rules committee when two members of the committee asked to convene before or during the senate meeting on Feb. 10. That night would have been the last time the senate would meet before the special election Feb. 17-18.

Olson said he had not checked his e-mail in two days and did not see the resolution. When the senate was provided with the time of his last e-mail login, Olson went on to state that he had checked his e-mail, but had not read the proposed resolution.

In fact, Olson's e-mail ac-

count stated that he had no unread e-mail messages. Olson then stated that he was too busy to read the resolution.

If any student senator were to come across senate business and ignore it for a lack of time, they would not be fulfilling their duties as a student leader or senator. The precedent Olson set was detrimental to the student body and the student government as a whole.

Commentary

Autumn De Poe

I was denied a fair discussion of the special election by the senate. The OSPIRG supporters decided that an open discussion would harm rather than help their cause. The democratic process was shut down, and now supporters of this special election are relying on disinterest and apathy among the remaining senators, as well as the rest of the student body, to carry them through this farce.

I urge all students to contact the senate or the ASUO with concerns regarding any matter. I also urge students to look at next year's candidates for the ASUO Executive and senate closely.

We cannot afford to have dishonest students dealing with our incidental fees, especially when the fees may be attacked by our state government. With the incidental fee process at risk, the ASUO Executive should do the right thing and stop the election madness.

Autumn De Poe is a student senator majoring in journalism and theater. She can be reached via e-mail at autumn@oregon.uoregon.edu