

PERSPECTIVES



Money isn't everything

Most University students view education as a road to personal fulfillment rather than a way to get rich

Picking up The Register-Guard this week could cause distress among University students. Specifically the Feb. 18 issue that presents a study of Oregon state universities and income levels for graduates with bachelor's degrees.

According to this study, University of Oregon graduates made the least and had the highest rate of unemployment out of all seven state universities in 1996/1997.

However, this averaging of income does not take into account graduate school enrollment, our University has the highest, and the fact that the University does not have an engineering program, the highest entry-level income occupation. Therefore, these results should be taken with a grain of salt.

As a liberal arts school, the University is more concerned with academics than income. Most students who attend the University have chosen to major in professions that may be rich in personal fulfillment and may have a different approach to college than do other students.

For example, our University produces the highest number of Peace Corps recruits which provides a small stipend that barely covers food and shelter.

Many students come to the University more for getting an education for the sake of education than for a sizable paycheck. These students tend to seek a

broad-based education. And generally, the more specific your degree is, the easier it is to get a job right after college. Larry Smith, director of the University Career Center explains in the Feb. 18 article that University graduates spend time in "clarifying-their-life-mode". And this may account for the high unemployment rate.

In addition, students who major in history, journalism, or fine arts all make career choices and do not expect to graduate from college earning as much as an engineer or an accountant.

Liberal arts occupations, however, serve a great purpose to society. These history majors will be future teachers or researchers providing essential services to documenting our culture. Therefore, using this study to make any decisions about how well the University of Oregon is doing its job in terms of making students job ready would be ridiculous. The study is comparing apples to oranges and should not make a difference to those who attend or to the administration.

It should be student satisfaction that decides the quality of education, not income levels. And when students from this study were asked whether they would chose their University over again, University of Oregon was ranked the second highest. Therefore, graduates themselves clearly make the case that income is not everything at the University of Oregon.

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

Thumbs



THUMBS UP To getting involved

The Oregon Student Association is sponsoring a student lobby day. Groups from state universities and community colleges will assemble in Salem on Tuesday to lobby for child care, student fees and the Oregon University System budget.

To doing it yourself

A group of women have filed lawsuits arguing against an Alabama statute that outlaws the sale of sex toys, which includes vibrators and specialty condoms. The judge has not ruled on this case that involves an anti-obscenity act passed last year.



THUMBS DOWN To losing an icon

Film critic Gene Siskel of "thumbs up, thumbs down" fame died Saturday from a brain tumor at age 53. He will be greatly missed.

Emerald Perspectives page aims to promote debate

The recent spate of letters to the editor have shown that there seems to be some confusion as to Emerald editorial policy. This piece is an attempt to address some of the issues raised in recent weeks.

Editorials run on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of each week. These pieces are unsigned because they represent not the opinion of an individual, but of the collective editorial board.

There are no shadow conspiracies or illuminati-type mysteries to unravel here. Identical or at least similar methods of presenting commentary are used almost universally in newspapers ranging from campus publications to major metropolitan dailies.

The editorial board is comprised of seven members — two editorial editors, editor in chief, managing editor and three

newsroom-elected representatives. The board meets twice a week to propose topics and adopt a stance. Because the likelihood of seven people reaching unanimous agreement with any degree of frequency is extremely low, the board instead operates by consensus.

A recent letter to the editor described the Emerald as a "student fee funded" entity. This was not an entirely accurate statement.

For the last fiscal year, the Emerald received \$132,870 from student fees, 15 percent of our total budget. As per the arrangement made in 1971 when the paper went independent, this amount goes toward distribution costs and is considered the subscription fee for the student body.

For clarity, it is important to reiterate that the Emerald is independent of the University. Furthermore, aside from employ-

ing several journalism school students, we are in no way affiliated with the School of Journalism and Communication.

Finally, the Emerald is privileged to employ four talented columnists this year and supports their right to express their opinions.

Columnists are not reporters. They are not assigned topics or beats. Their work reflects issues that concern them and their opinions are theirs and in the familiar parlance, don't necessarily represent the views of the paper.

The editorial staff greatly appreciates their willingness to hold themselves up to public scrutiny and the praise and criticism that accompanies their positions.

As a service to our readers, we offer them the same opportunity. Guest commentary of 750 words or less and letters to the editor of 250 words or less can be dropped off at

Suite 300 or e-mailed to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

The Emerald enjoys a level of independence and editorial freedom that many campus publications at other universities do not. Out of deference to this freedom we will continue to provide a forum for diverse opinions.

We are not obliged — nor are we inclined to always be in step with the attitudes of the University administration, student government or any other external entity. The most noble goal of any editorial department is to stimulate thought and debate among its readers. This is what we strive for.

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