

Revising grievance process real reason for special election

The ASUO has a vision of a University that reflects the idealism and power of the student body.

Your student government wants to make students' lives better. We took office because we saw problems for students and wanted to utilize the student government to solve them.

This ASUO Executive believes that higher education should be accessible for all students. We believe that the student body should reflect the diversity of the rest of society. We do the work that we do because we feel all students should feel safe on campus, and we are committed to protecting student control of student fees. We advocate for student interests and student programs.

So far this year the ASUO has worked hard toward another tuition freeze, saving students \$300; the recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color and to make this campus safer.

We've advocated for student parents and registered 3,500 students to vote. But despite all of this great work, there has been

one campus problem that the ASUO Executive knew must be solved: the ASUO Elections grievance process. It is the duty of this administration to ensure a better process for students involved in ASUO in the future.

Over the last two years, anyone on campus would agree that the ASUO elections were messy and cumbersome. The outdated grievance process caused our elections to come to a screeching halt. The process is the equivalent to the state Supreme Court having to rule on every minor elections grievance instead of working through the elections division.

The ASUO Constitution prohibits even the most minor grievance from being ruled upon by the elections board. Instead, the Constitution Court, a body that should be spending their time with more weighty issues, has to hear these grievances. Imagine having to wait weeks, until the election is over, to receive a ruling on something as simple as the number of posters allowed to be posted on a bulletin board.

The result of this cumbersome

Commentary Geneva Wortman

process has been years of a log jammed court and ASUO candidates remaining "unofficial" for nearly a month. Years of such a difficult process convinced us that it is our responsibility to change this process.

There had to be a more simple and fair way to handle elections grievances. Students deserve to have a fair and democratic elections process.

Last April the Emerald editorial board clearly agreed that "if the elections board were given the power to consider and act upon grievances, and if that power were clearly defined and included action beyond rerunning the elections, the entire elections process could be made to run faster."

This was such a priority that the ASUO elections coordinator was hired two months early, giving her time to work with the

Constitution Court chief justice to draft a more fair and streamlined grievance process. Proposed changes created a grievance process with a quicker response time and a process for appeals.

To accomplish this, the ASUO Constitution must be amended. For this change to affect this year's regular election, we must hold a special election.

There is no reason to conduct one more sloppy election. In creating a special election, we followed the process of the "regular election" as closely as possible to create a fair and democratic process. Consequently, the initiative process was open to any student.

The ASUO Executive's action was even recommended by the Emerald editorial board when it urged "the Constitution Court, the current and future ASUO Executive and the elections board should all address [this process] by meeting and formulating a proposal for rules changes."

The ASUO Executive drafted this language, which has been approved by this year's Constitution Court, but due to their injunction

of the special election, students have been denied their right to vote on these grievance changes.

Amending the constitution to streamline the grievance process is just one of the ASUO's priorities this year. The ASUO Executive is still working to increase the number of students and faculty of color on campus and to make our education more affordable and the campus safer.

We are holding another book exchange and are publishing another term's professor evaluations. Unfortunately, this is not the information chosen to be published in the campus newspapers.

The intention of the special election is the same as all of the work that the ASUO Executive does every day: to better the lives of students. It is just unfortunate that this year's Emerald editorial board and the Constitution Court don't share this vision.

Geneva Wortman is the ASUO president. She can be reached via e-mail at asuopres@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the Editor

Truth, lies and special election

The flurry of letters sent to the Emerald from environmental studies majors this week (ODE Feb. 15 and 16) may be passionate about reinstating OSPIRG, but their passion for the truth is wholly nonexistent.

1. LIE: The Constitution Court is a tool of the Oregon Commentator, and they have halted the election because of a) a "God complex" and b) "constitutional mumbo jumbo."

TRUTH: The Oregon Commentator has

had no involvement in the elections, save its Jan. 30 cover story, which cites the same reasons the Court did — that the special election clearly violates ASUO Constitution articles 12.2 and 12.7.

2. LIE: The students' democratic rights are being violated.

TRUTH: There is nothing democratic about an illegal election, and should the special election proceed, the democratic rights of last spring's voters would be the

ones infringed upon. This argument lacks anything resembling credibility or honesty.

3. LIE: OSPIRG is being impeded by the whining and nitpicking of a few egotistical students whose views are not shared by the majority. What majority are they talking about? It certainly can't be the majority that voted down OSPIRG by an unprecedented 20 percent margin this last year.

With vague threats against Constitutional Court justices, high-flown rhetoric spewing forth from misguided dupes and a possible

Senate move to impeach the Constitution Court justices, OSPIRG and the ASUO Executive are causing far more harm to the student body than they could ever rectify by scamming us for \$150,000 and sending it to Portland. If anyone should be impeached, it is ASUO President Geneva Wortman and Vice President Morgan Cowling — and as soon as this settles down, I hope that is the first order of business.

Cory Evans Falk
Computer Science.



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Saturday • Apr. 10

Hult Center

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