

# Diversity needs students' attention

Administrators and students have discussed campus "climate" for years. Is it sweltering with little humidity, or is it partly cloudy with chances of rain? I am not sure, but I do know that among the campus climate concerns is the issue of diversity, an issue that concerns everyone.

Having been a student at this University for four years, I have seen little concrete attempts made to address the problems that have been repeatedly talked about for years. Perhaps some of you, like I once did, may not realize issues such as student of color drop-out rates or student/faculty relations are real. Unfortunately, I have experienced these problems and would like to share two specific examples with you.

Once in awhile, you may run into a professor who truly reaches out to students. I had the good fortune of having a professor with this exceptional trait. However, in her attempt she made me feel humiliated and offended. After speaking to her in person on a couple of occasions she e-mailed me this message:

"Dear Susan. I wanted to check in with you to see if you could give me some feedback on the lectures and readings in the class. I gather that you may be dealing with some language difficulties and I wanted to be sure that I didn't talk too fast or use too many words that need defining. Also, the readings involve some fairly 'old fashioned' grammar and style so I wondered if you were having any trouble there. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help make the course more meaningful for you."

Because the letter left me confused, I asked her how she "gath-

## Commentary

Susan Hoang

ered" I had language difficulties. She continued by isolating the other two Asians and myself as having "grammar problems."

The thoughts that were racing through my mind were of how stupid I must be. How did I get As in all my advanced English courses in high school? Did other professors perceive me in the same way without telling me?

When I explained that this came as a surprise to me because I was born and raised in the States, she said, "Oh really? Then can you explain why ALL Asians have English difficulties?"

That was my experience and some of you may think it was an isolated incident and does not pertain to you. Unfortunately, this is not the case because this professor and others who think along the same line may be teaching you at this moment.

It is probable that hasty character judgments are being made and harmful prejudiced assumptions are being subconsciously imbued into our education.

In another example, Process for Change is a project designed to revamp the University's education curriculum. Again, among the problems that have been identified is lack of diversity. The Process for Change Web site stated:

"The University of Oregon is committed to maintaining and supporting a diverse educational community. Ethnically, Oregon has a relatively homogeneous population, and, as a state uni-

versity, our primary mission is to serve that population. However as stated above, it is important to the education of just that population that the University of Oregon achieves a sufficient level of ethnic diversity."

I interpret this as a declaration of the University's top priority to a specific ethnic population. I believe I am not mistaken when I say this University is NOT committed to nurturing a "diverse educational community" if the goal of increasing diversity is simply to fulfill a quota to enhance the education of "just" that homogeneous population.

Lastly, it is not my intention to point fingers toward any individual. Rather, I want to illustrate the reality of an integral problem of our campus climate. If our university is outmoded in its diversity awareness, it undermines our education and consequently our degrees.

Therefore, proactive measures such as faculty/staff multicultural sensitivity training should be institutionalized because multicultural sensitivity is like any other teaching skill; it needs to adapt to the times.

Furthermore, students are required to take multicultural classes, why can't we expect this if not more from our educators? I have shared my experience with numerous administrations, from the President's Council on Race to the Council of Deans, but I am only one person.

I urge you to contribute your thoughts and suggestions to the administration on diversity with hopes that our campus community will truly engage everyone.

Susan Hoang is majoring in biology and international studies.

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## Bombings continue despite release

Three released soldiers, 'free at last,' arrive at U.S. base in Germany

By George Boehmer  
The Associated Press

RAMSTEIN, Germany — Three U.S. servicemen walked jubilantly into Croatia on Sunday, celebrating their freedom after more than a month as prisoners of war in Yugoslavia and chanting in unison, "Free at last."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who persuaded Yugoslav officials to free the soldiers, hoped President Clinton would reciprocate by offering a respite from airstrikes, now in their sixth week. NATO refused to reward the gesture and alliance pounded Yugoslavia with new attacks.

The alliance's intense attacks Sunday included more than 600 sorties over a 24-hour period. NATO also acknowledged that it was responsible for the strike on a bus north of the Kosovo capital, Pristina, on Saturday that Yugoslav officials said killed 47 people.

The soldiers were flown from Croatia to a U.S. military base in Ramstein in southwest Germany, where they were greeted with salutes from their Army buddies and wild cheers from a flag-waving crowd.

Their arrival capped an emotional, daylong journey by land and air from Yugoslavia's capital with Jackson, who had appealed to Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to release them.

The freed soldiers, dressed in Army fatigues, were exuberant and appeared healthy, standing

tall and walking briskly. But they still showed signs of the cuts and bruises they suffered when captured on a patrol mission along the Macedonia-Yugoslav border on March 31.

Before journalists, they joined hands with Jackson and chanted, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God almighty, free at last." They said they were treated humanely but they were glad to be out.

"It's a great relief to be free," Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, 25, of Smiths Creek, Mich., said during the stop at the Croatian border town of Bajakovo. He said his scars and bruises came from his capture and after that, "the maltreatment stopped."

"We were treated very well," Staff Sgt. Andrew Ramirez, 24, of Los Angeles, added later before boarding the plane to Germany. "We're doing good, we're healthy. As you can see we're very happy. Mostly happy."

Jackson, who accompanied them out of Yugoslavia, said he would meet with Clinton as early as Monday to deliver a letter from Milosevic with proposals to end the NATO air campaign and resolve the crisis over Kosovo, including a face-to-face meeting.

At Ramstein, the civil rights leader, looking tired, said Milosevic had made a gesture toward a diplomatic solution, and urged Clinton to consider the offer. "Diplomacy deserves reciprocity," he said. "Let's seize the opportunity."

In Washington, Clinton expressed his gratitude to Jackson and said he was pleased at the soldiers' release. "All of America is anticipating their safe return."

Clinton did not immediately comment on the proposal to meet with Milosevic and gave no indication that he was willing to cede anything to the Yugoslav leader.

"As we welcome our soldiers home, our thoughts also turn to the over 1 million Kosovars who are unable to go home because of the policies of the regime in Belgrade," Clinton said in a White House statement.

"Today we reaffirm our resolve to persevere until they, too, can return — with security and self-government," Clinton said.

British officials were more direct.

"The captivity of those three soldiers was not what was at stake in the NATO air campaign," said Defense Minister John Speller, a deputy to Defense Secretary George Robertson. "No gestures, no promises or half-truths will serve."

On the night before their release, the soldiers said, they were too excited to sleep.

A nine-man color guard with six flags and a 27-man honor platoon, dressed in full combat gear, from the soldiers' own division greeted their C-9 military plane as it arrived at Ramstein Air Base from Zagreb, Croatia.

As the soldiers stepped out, a jubilant roar went up from the 400 Army personnel and their families who had waited for hours on the tarmac with U.S. flags and big "Welcome Home" signs.

"It does not get any better than this!!!" read one huge banner hung with yellow ribbons from an aircraft stairway ramp. "God bless America" read another.

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