

# PERSPECTIVES

## Student senator should step down

THEFT... BETRAYAL... CORRUPTION...  
WHO SAYS U of O STUDENTS AREN'T  
INVOLVED ENOUGH WITH POLITICS?

*By pleading guilty to stealing University property, Michael Dixon loses credibility he needs to serve students*



As human beings, our biggest burden and our biggest boon is that none of us are perfect. But whatever our status in life, we can find some degree of comfort in the fact that none of us are inherently better than anyone else.

One of the things that does distinguish us is our conduct. This does not mean that we are not allowed to make mistakes, but rather that an unwritten code of honor demands that we own up to those mistakes and accept the consequences that come with them.

This is what makes the case of Student Senator Michael Dixon such a difficult one to consider.

On Monday, Dixon pleaded guilty to two counts of felony burglary related to the theft of more than \$5,000 worth of items from the Bean Complex. In a separate case, he also pleaded guilty to one count of misdemeanor theft for making \$50 or more worth of unauthorized long-distance calls while employed as a University Housing conference assistant.

If Dixon were just any student, his actions would probably rate little interest among the general student population. Unfortunately, Dixon is not just any student.

He made a choice to serve the University as an elected member of student government. The nature of his position calls for him to be a representative of the students, and effective representation involves some measure of trust.

These offenses were not

committed in the distant past. The Bean burglaries occurred between June 1998 and October 1998. The unauthorized phone calls were made between August 1998 and February. Dixon was appointed to the senate in late January.

Senate President Michael Olson told the Emerald earlier this week that "any of these actions are not becoming of a senator ..."

Dixon should be commended for his efforts to serve the University. He is active within the student unions and his fraternity. But his participation in the theft of University property casts serious doubt on the appropriateness of his continued occupancy of the senate's business seat.

Olson was also quoted as saying that it is up to the students to decide the future of Dixon's position on the senate. Olson's wrong.

In truth, it is up to Dixon to decide. As strong as his desire to change his life and make amends for his actions may be, he still betrayed the very students he now seeks to serve.

If the students were to formally call for Dixon's removal, students would be put in the difficult position of judging someone who seems to have an earnest desire to serve his university and constituents, but someone who also exhibited gross disrespect for those same entities just a few months ago.

Elected officials on any level, be they a student senator or president of the United States, are by nature of their position subject to a different standard than the average person.

They must give up some measure of privacy and, as a result, must be able to justify actions the rest of us are allowed to shelve away. When those actions cannot be justified, the only things that remain are responsibility and consequence.

Dixon is a human being. He's actually probably quite a good one. His mistakes can be forgiven, but not at the cost of student government's integrity. If he truly wants to act in the best interests of the student body, Dixon should resign from the Student Senate.

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

### Thumbs



**THUMBS UP**  
**To increasing accountability:** Invoking an obscure parliamentary procedure, state representatives forced consideration of a bill that would require background checks on all firearm sales at gun shows. Special kudos to Rep. Lynn Lundquist for crossing party lines to revive the bill.

**To fewer teen mothers:** Citing a decline in sexual activity and increased awareness of contraception, the National Center for Health Statistics recently reported that the teen-age birth rate has declined for the sixth straight year.



**THUMBS DOWN**  
**To the Roboduck promotion:** Half man. Half mallard. All lame.

**To eBay:** The popular on-line auction house had to shut down Monday due to server problems. The outage left bidders and sellers of the coveted new "Star Wars" merchandise in the lurch.

#### 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.

#### CORRECTION

In the May 5 article "Activities celebrate Mexico," the times for Fiesta Latina should have read, "Friday, 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., and Saturday, noon to 11:30 p.m."

In the May 4 article "Dixon pleads guilty on all charges," the headline should have read, "Dixon pleads guilty to felony charges."  
The Emerald regrets the errors.

#### CLARIFICATION

The April 23 article "Studying abroad can help careers" should have read, "Tiffany Allison said the eastern half of the island of New Guinea is one of the last places to study the religious exchange between western Christianity and indigenous people."

