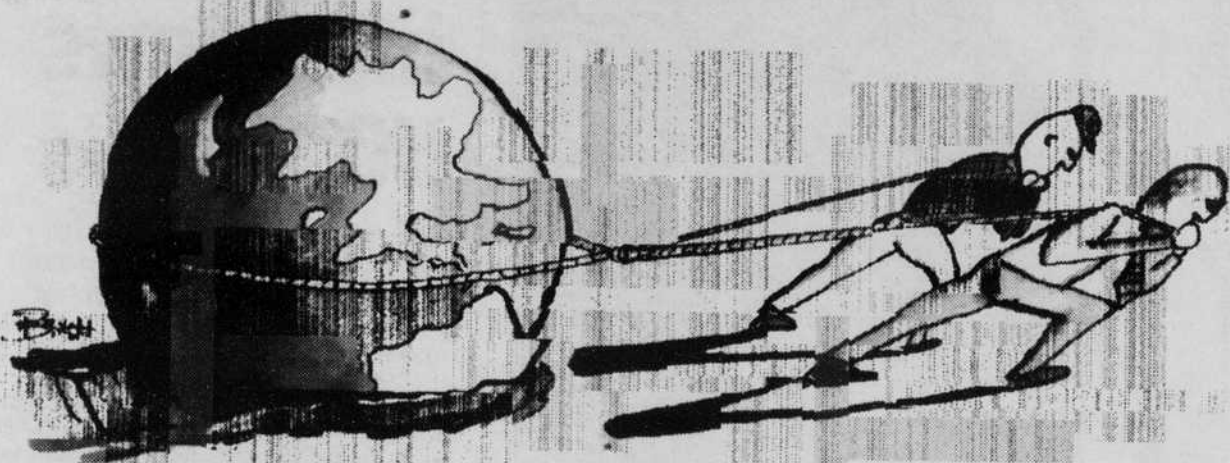


PERSPECTIVES

PULLING TOGETHER

Diversity issue requires input from both students and administrators



Diversity, what it is, the lack of it and how to get more has been a hot topic on campus for several years. Recently, in an effort to address some of the most pressing campus issues, the University administration launched a campaign called the Process for Change.

One of the major goals of the campaign is to investigate and implement ways to recruit and retain students and faculty of color and address the unique needs of those groups. The Process for Change is a way of formalizing goals the University has been trying to achieve for years.

But despite lofty goals and great

expectations, the composition of both the student body and the faculty remains more or less the same each year.

Some attribute the school's continuing homogeneity to a failure to take tangible steps toward greater diversity. Many agree that proactivity is the solution, but few agree on just what that entails.

Those looking for an example need look no further than last weekend's Education 2000 Conference.

The event focused on brainstorming ways that the University and the entire Oregon higher education system could better address diversity issues both inside the classroom and out. By most accounts, the conference

was successful in stimulating discussion and affirming the commitment that many people on campus have had to the issue.

Hopefully, the conference will set a precedent. The diversity discourse would benefit greatly from more events like this.

One of the most impressive aspects of the E2K conference was the fact that it was entirely student organized. What would really be impressive would be if the administration were to use its resources to do something like this.

Organizers of the conference are quick to applaud the support they received from many campus departments, especially the Office of Stu-

dent Life, which not only lent financial support but also helped organize the conference and lead workshops.

Still, some were disappointed by the lack of upper-level administrators like President Dave Frohnmayer and his executive assistant Dave Hubin, both of whom were invited to the conference nearly a month before.

Granted, the University brass have hectic schedules, and the conference was held at the same time as parents' weekend, which probably made those schedules all the more chaotic. But for an issue that means so much to this campus, at least one of the top administrators should have found a way to make an appearance.

Students have the drive, determination and enthusiasm, but ultimately it's the administration that has the power to make changes.

If we really intend to bring more diversity to campus, to stop talking about it and actually do it, then we need an equal level of involvement between students and administration. The Education 2000 conference was a step in the right direction. Let's make it the first of many steps that both students and the administration take together.

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

QUOTED

"The people have decided, and we respect the people's wish."

— Benjamin Netanyahu after losing Israel's prime minister election to Labour Party leader Ehud Barak.

"We're not racists. We're snobs."

— Theresa Shackelford, a descendant of Thomas Jefferson, on the decision to deny the descendants of Jefferson and slave Sally Hemmings in the Monticello Association until more research into their genealogy is conducted.

"Let's let the Senate and not the gun lobbies run this Senate chamber."

— U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) on the influence of the National Rifle Association on gun-control policy.

"The first people who will experience this at first hand are those who try to enter our territory — they will know they have entered a hell on earth."

— Yugoslav General Nebojsa Pavkovic on the possible consequence should NATO introduce ground troops in Kosovo.

CORRECTION

The May 14 article "Author bell hooks challenges power structure" should have read more than 750 people listened to bell hooks. Also, the article should have read bell hooks recalled an incident that led her to write the book, "Killing Rage" as a way to channel her anger at an airline passenger. Hooks was addressing a professor from Lane Community College. The Emerald regrets the errors.

Letters to the Editor

Comment misread

I'm writing to express my outrage with Marcy Miranda Janes' accusations that I flung racial slurs about Senator Michael Dixon (ODE, May 17). I had no idea that Dixon was African-American until the follow-up letters supporting Dixon indicated he was active with the Black Student Union.

My comments questioning Dixon's credibility in lieu of his felony conviction were made because I feel that he violated my trust. He represents you, me and the entire student community. I cannot put my faith in a person who stole from us. I can't follow a leader who isn't accountable and who doesn't accept responsibility for his actions.

He has blamed the Emerald for doing a background check. I ask that if his record were clean, would he still question the validity of background checks? In my opinion, Dixon doesn't seem to realize that he committed crimes and was subsequently found guilty of the charges brought against him. His lack of accountability is why I called on Dixon to give up his senate seat.

Janes, you don't know my background. How dare you slander my words as racist and inflammatory. Here is some background for you. I grew up in North Portland and attended elementary and middle school at Kenton and Ockley Green. That might not mean anything to people who didn't grow up there. No matter the color of your skin in that neighborhood, you're all equally poor. I grew up playing basketball, football, and baseball with kids of all colors, especially African-American. Hell, I've had an African-American girlfriend.

I spent four years in the military. The two most influential people to me during my military experience were African-Americans. Janes, I'm may be white, but I'm not a racist. It infuriates me that you would manipulate the context of my feelings about Dixon's conduct as racist vituperation.

I know Dixon has a lot of support on campus. I'm sure he'll keep his senate seat. And I do commend him for working to become a better person and giving so much of himself to public service. I, however, cannot place my trust in him as a senator. As a public university, taxpayers buy the resources he stole. Therefore, he stole from you Janes, he stole from me, he stole from the Emerald, he took from all of us. I'm sorry that you're blind to this, Janes. Let me reiterate that I'm questioning Dixon's character, not the color of his skin.

Finally, Dixon, I sincerely apologize to you if you took my comments as racist. My concern over your actions has absolutely nothing to do with the color of your skin. I've lost faith in your ability to lead. You are our voice to incite change and promulgate legislation for the betterment of the University. I'm wary of your character. Well, I should be because you took from all of us. I greatly respect that you want to regain our faith. However, at this time, how I can I support you as a student senator if your integrity is in question?

Joseph Nicholls
Geography

Senator mislead voters

Judge Senator Michael Dixon? We don't need to. He already agreed with the police and district attorney that he wandered around Bean Complex committing felonies.

But Dixon doesn't think we have the right to know about the skeletons in his closet. The senator may well have been plea bargaining with the D.A. at the time of the election — this was not something from his distant past, this was something he was right in the middle of. His "skeleton" still had a pulse!

Students, ask yourselves a question: "If I had known that Michael Dixon was facing felony charges at the time of the election, would I have vot-

ed differently?" Should we not hold public officials to a higher standard than common street criminals?

If you say "No," that's fine with me. Democracy is all about making personal decisions. Vote however you want.

But if you say "Yes," please realize that Dixon stole your ability to make that personal decision. To those calling for Dixon to leave office: Hang in there. If Dixon won't step down now, we will recall him in the fall. We are going to have 3,500 freshman coming in who have not been charmed by Dixon's excuses.

And to Dixon: Get out while you can still do it with some dignity. You misled the voters. You don't belong in public office.

Jeff Miholer
Law

NATO justified

As I was strolling down 13th Avenue after a test, a person who was standing outside of Johnson Hall confronted me and proceeded to tell me how awful the NATO bombing blitz of Serbia is, and how I should write my congressman to demand that he put an end to it now.

He claimed that the bombing of Serbia is a campaign to assert America's superiority complex on a nation of innocent men, women and children. He even said NATO's bombing of the Chinese Embassy is evidence that the United States is not at all concerned with human rights.

As terrible a mistake as that was to bomb the embassy, it makes a poor excuse to allow Slobodan Milosevic to continue his practice of ethnic cleansing. As compassionate as it was to free the American P.O.W.'s, it does not excuse the genocide of an entire country! To the guy on 13th Avenue, you can be sure I will let my congressman know how I feel.

Brian Goodell
Journalism