

PERSPECTIVES

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It's OUR park

The West University Park has been sitting idle for too long

ship of the park, but it didn't remain uninhabited.

Drug dealers, vagrants and trouble makers soon moved in, said Eugene Police spokeswoman Jan Power.

The neighborhood crime rate soared from 1,513 in 1990 to 2,490 incidents five years later. In 1996, after tenants, landlords and property owners begged the city, the park was closed.

Now the land sits at Hilyard Street and 14th Avenue, untouched for three years.

West University property is the most profitable and expensive land in Eugene. It's ridiculous to think that this piece of property has no purpose.

It's wasted land.

It's wasted land that belongs to students, and it's time we take it back.

It's simple enough to open the park again, but the only way to keep it open is for students to take ownership, said City Councilman Bobby Lee. Lee is chair of the West University Partners Group that is discussing options for the park.

One option is to open the park with limited hours. Old habits die hard, and it's doubtful that anything has changed in the last three years.

The second option is to have students involved in the park planning. Student involvement is necessary to keep the park safe and student oriented.

The third option is to trade the land with a local business in exchange for land closer to the University. The land the University gains in the exchange would then be converted to a park.

The fourth option is to use the park for student housing.

It's great that there is a group actually concerned with the fate of the park and that wants to give the land back to students. What is discouraging is that students have not become involved in the process.

Ideally, the park should reopen and students should be involved in deciding how it's used. It is our park and letting it sit there is unacceptable.

Perhaps more students would use it if it were closer to campus. One way or another, we need to claim this land for students — not drug dealers, the city or cobwebs. It's our park, and we need to take care of it. We need to become involved in the debate.

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

It's a beautiful Saturday afternoon and you have an hour break between lectures at an all-day seminar. You are dying to enjoy the sun while you eat lunch.

Strolling down 14th Avenue in search of a grassy place to eat, you see a little perfect park. As you get closer, you notice the sign. Under a city order, the park has been closed

and those who trespass will be cited.

This now useless piece of land was actually a student park, although most students are probably unaware it exists.

Architecture students designed the park in 1979 to improve the West University Neighborhood. Students never really decided to take owner-

Letters to the Editor

Free speech, fines

My name is Julie, and I am a woman. I've been raided in this culture, have watched its inner workings and, frankly, I'm not satisfied with where we are as a culture.

It was more than 30 years ago that my parents were able to participate in a movement that made strides in increasing the constitutionally stated rights of human beings, particularly those of color.

The woman's movement had already been set in motion, and it was not long before the wheels of the gay-rights movement would also be turning.

Yet, here I am 30 years later, attending a university that has supposedly committed itself to diversity, and I witness or am the target of racist, sexist or homophobic threats, remarks and harassment every day.

I, as a woman, hate the fact that I am confined within certain parameters because I do have to worry about my safety every time I walk out of the house or down the street.

I choose not live my life in fear, but it still does not change the simple truth that this is a part of my everyday existence.

Now, I took the opportunity on Tuesday last

week to let my voice resonate through the corridors of Johnson Hall. Yet my voice was not heard. My outreach fell upon deaf ears. And, what do I get for voicing my reality and concerns? \$255 in fines and a court date.

Julie Koehler
Cultural Anthropology

Unreasonable demands

I hope I wasn't the only student who questioned the list of demands given by those who participated in the Johnson Hall sit-in (ODE, May 19).

The proposed requirement of incoming students to sign a statement of zero tolerance of racism, sexism and homophobia has no place at a public university.

At a public school, and in America, people reserve the right to have any biases or opinions they see fit.

Of course, hate crimes are detrimental to society and should be prevented, but to deny someone entry into a public university because they don't believe what the majority believes is unconstitutional and hypocritical.

As painful as it may be, a diverse community di-

lectically includes non-diverse ideas. If you're going to get arrested and fined \$255, next time be sure you at least have a rational set of demands. This bovine, uncritical thinking and utopian idealism is exactly what has made my experience at the University a sour, yet laughable one.

Jim Svajgl
English and Religion

Diversity of views?

I'm a bit confused. The group of students that protested at Johnson Hall and demanded that all incoming students must agree with their limited beliefs on race, gender and sexual orientation were trying to improve campus diversity?

How does limiting the range of beliefs of people on campus help to diversity it?

It sounds like hypocrisy to me. This kind of policy would eliminate people in most religious denominations, foreign cultures and conservative political parties from coming to the University. Are we striving for a campus full of students who all think exactly alike? I hope not.

Robert Nobles
Architecture

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"I believe that [the administration] has done more than we are getting credit for." University President Dave Frohn-mayer on the sit-in at Johnson Hall last week.

"Students are pissed, and they have every right to be angry at this point. All year long, students have said 'I don't feel safe on this campus. I don't feel as if there's enough diversity.' Consistently, strategically and thoroughly, students have worked to make positive changes on this campus on all these issues."

ASUO President Geneva Wortman said about the same issue.

"Martin, in an interview with TIME, was so euphoric over his success he bordered on being Roberto Benigni-esque."

Christopher John Farley in a TIME magazine article coining the phrase Benigni-esque to describe incredible emotion. Roberto Benigni, film maker and actor in "Life is Beautiful," jumped on top of chairs and danced around the Academy Awards when his film won best foreign film and he won best actor.

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.