Frohnmayer

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he said.

The three-part series, which began Jan. 23, compared four of the state's seven public universities to a list of recognized peer institutions and other institutions chosen by the newspaper. The report found the OUS to be badly lacking — near or at the bottom of the list — in many of the categories it examined. Oregon ranks 44th in the nation in per capita spending on education, the series reported. OUS has dealt with a severe funding shortage in the last decade. An exodus of top talent, both professors and incoming freshmen, is happening at a higher rate in Oregon than in most other states.

"The fundamental point of The Oregonian series is that Oregon has never consistently invested in its universities," OUS Chancellor Joseph Cox said. "Universities are not developed overnight and with one-time infusions of talent and resource. It is a sustained effort."

Cox took out full-page ads in the newspapers of OUS campuses across the state to communicate to OUS personnel. The series was "unfair to thousands of faculty and staff who stood with us in Measure 5," he said. "I was upset for them because of all that they've given."

The series described the state of North Carolina as having a university system that successfully mixes business investment and state support to drive that state's high-tech economy.

North Carolina got to where it is today after 40 years of "sustained significant investment," Cox said.

Oregon has never invested in higher education like that. In the most recent legislative session, through the "heroic efforts of legislators and the governor" Oregon saw the first increase in higher education funding in over a decade. The $100 million increase brought funding to 88 percent of the average of OUS peer institutions, Cox said.

For Oregon to improve its higher education, that trend must continue.

That trend is threatened by tax-cutting initiatives proposed for the November ballot by Bill Sizemore's group, Oregon Taxpayers United.

The initiatives "would have half again the effect of Measure 5," Cox said.

Frohnmayer calls the initiatives irresponsible.

"There's no doubt that it would have devastating, catastrophic effects on the ability of Oregon to meet its future challenges," he said.

The series made higher education in Oregon sound desperate, but that analysis "flies in the face of all the evidence," Frohnmayer said. Surveys of students and employers who hire University graduates show "great satisfaction here."

"The word 'mediocrity' has no business as a descriptor of the quality of education the students have here, or the quality of faculty who are here," he said.

ASUO Federal Affairs Coordinator Robin Miller was troubled by the report's lack of recognition of some of the state's strongest programs, such as the University's School of Journalism and Communication, the engineering program at Oregon State University, University Zebrafish research and the honors colleges at both OSU and the University.

"I don't feel these programs were investigated," the sophomore political science major said.

She was also dismayed by the lack of student perspectives in the series.

The series failed to recognize how much the OUS is doing with such poor financial support, but Frohnmayer remains optimistic that more support is on the way.

"Higher education in the state of Oregon is an easier sell because people see more closely the connection between brain power — higher education — and the economic health of some of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy. The knowledge economy isn't something of the future. It has already arrived," he said.

Frohnmayer mentioned biotechnology and electronic technology of all kinds as important to the growth of Oregon's economy.

"The second thing that's becoming increasingly apparent is the gulf between the educated and the undereducated — that is the income gap between those who have just a high school education and those who have college or better. Over a lifetime that will amount to millions of dollars. And the gap is growing," he said.

"I agree [with the series] that Oregon universities have been grossly underfunded, especially in the years since Measure 5," Frohnmayer said. "But that's the only major point of agreement."

CD-ROM

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pretty far off base," Moseley said. "We're much better than that."

Moseley said "The UO Experience" is just one of many examples of the world-leading technology education that goes on here.

Freshman journalism major Jackie Reed, one of the students on hand to showcase the CD, agreed with Moseley.

"There are tons of computers for people to use," Reed said. "I'm satisfied with the level of technology at the University."

Not only was the CD a chance for students to gain some valuable experience in multi-media design and production, but most of the voice-over, acting and music included on the CD was done by students.

"The project involved about 50 students, many of whom you can see in acting roles on the CD," Moseley said.

Senior psychology major Amy Juve, who serves as the student director of orientation, was one of the actors on the CD.

"It's cool that I'm able to help students out," Juve said. "There are a lot of questions answered on the CD that I had as a freshman. This CD will alleviate a lot of fears about coming to the University."

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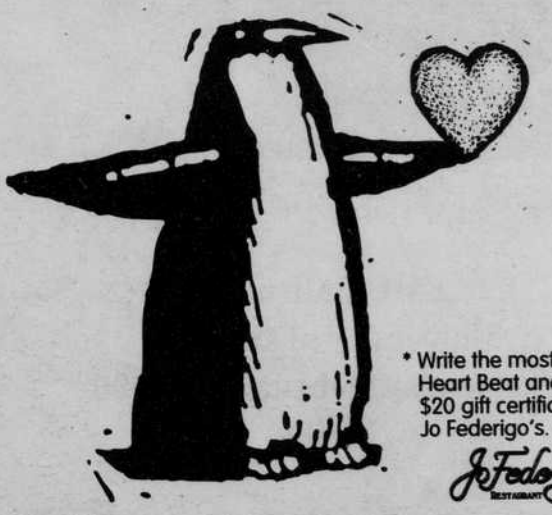

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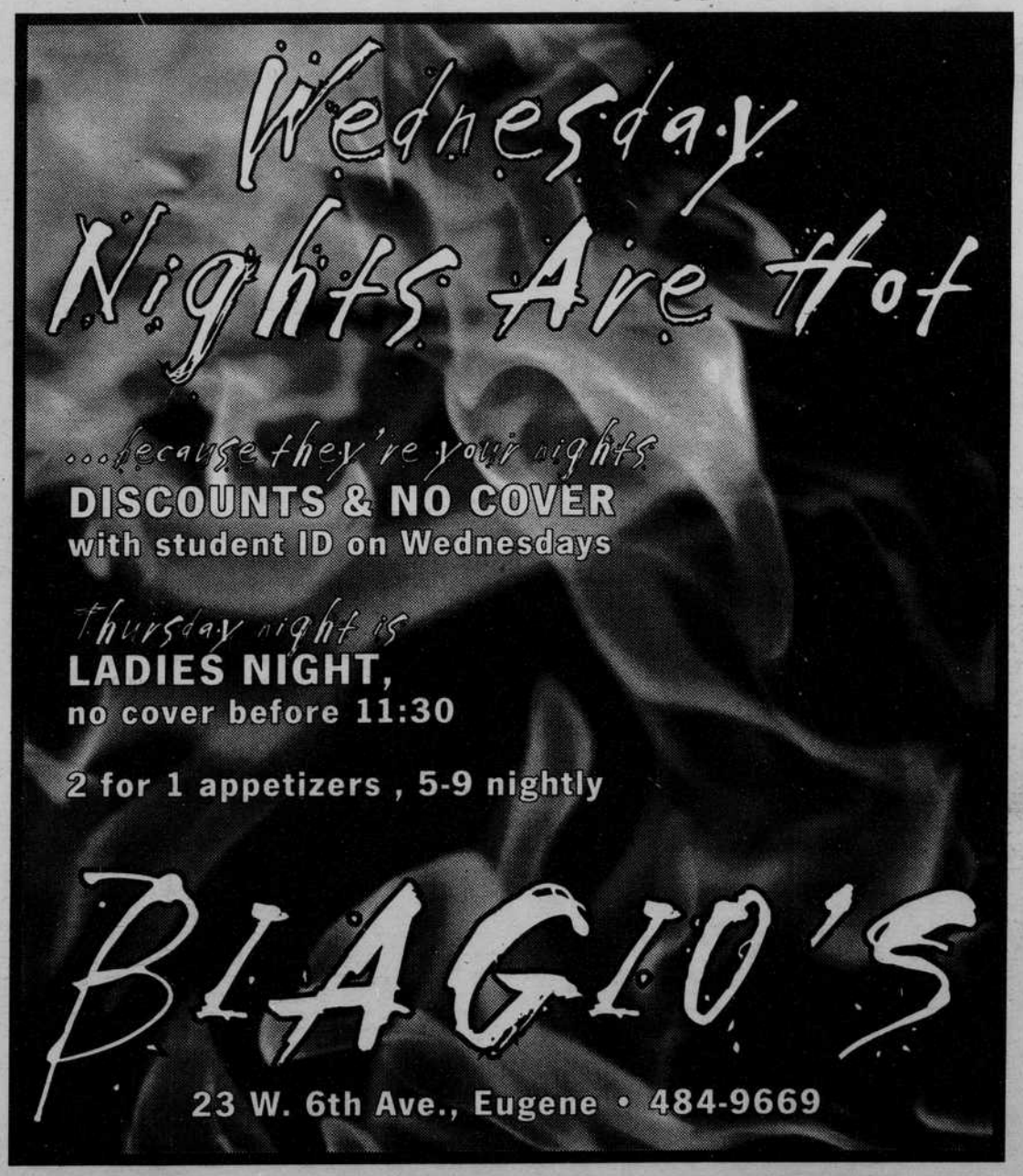

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