

Rule #1: PLAY FAIR



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

In the wake of the International Student Association Coffee Hour sponsorship, C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson must have a bitter taste in their mouths. Now their judgment has to be questioned while their ASUO Executive candidacy rightly has been thrown out of the race because of vague ASUO Elections Board rules, pending appeal at the ASUO Constitution Court.

Gabbe and Larson paid \$40 to sponsor the event at which they spoke promoting their campaign, and many may believe such a small sum isn't even worth the attention it has been getting. That notion, however, ignores the role of the college experience, which is to provide a precursor to the real world on a smaller and safer scale. A smaller scale in this case may be a seemingly minor campaign violation that should have real consequences and be examined just as thoroughly as we'd all like to believe infractions on the national level are scrutinized.

Even if one was to assume in good faith that Gabbe and Larson acted with good intentions, the abilities and judgment of the two must be examined before they should be elected. Both have a wealth of experience in student government politics. Gabbe is a student senator, regional director of the USSA, was president of summer senate, among many other positions. Larson has been co-director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance and ASUO outreach director. Both know the ins and outs

of local politics, and for them not to have foreseen these problems is cause for serious concern about their fitness to govern.

The fact that the incident happened at all suggests a few conclusions about their decision making, none of them very good. Gabbe has said the campaign constantly checked the legality of campaign tactics and was surprised by the grievance. One possibility is that they at some point came across the rule but didn't understand how it affected them in the coffee hour speech. The other likely possibility is that they understood the coffee sponsorship was a violation but thought the indiscretion was small enough that it wouldn't ruffle any feathers. The ramifications of any of these scenarios bode poorly on the Gabbe/Larson ticket right now.

If they didn't study the rules enough they may be prone to only partially researching the projects they wish to undertake. If they came across the rule and didn't understand it, that would suggest an incapability to grasp tough, important subjects that certainly pop up for the ASUO executive. If they believed the violation was small enough not to grab attention they might be willing to cut other corners, a very distasteful idea for a student government that will file a grievance over the difference between gray and grey.

To decide the punishment for elections violations, this situation included, is a very tricky conundrum. On the one hand, of course the rules must be obeyed and enforced; while on the other hand punishment has to be proportional, measured and lawful.

Because the rules of the elections board are ambiguous at best in their listed sanctions, there really is not much wiggle room for deciding the fate of Gabbe and Larson. The two could have been fined, limited in how much they could campaign or they could have been removed from the election all together, including a write-in campaign. A fine would have been too little punishment for the action and limiting how much campaigning is allowed is a grotesquely inappropriate slippery slope. That only leaves removal as the best current sanction.

While it seems rather harsh to kick the two out for this particular indiscretion, that punishment is the best decision until a more appropriate and clarified version of elections rules are fleshed out for future elections. Gabbe and Larson have been removed from the ballot but can still be written in at election time and can campaign just as they normally would have with posters and buttons. The two still have a chance to be on the ballot pending a constitution court decision on the elections board ruling, which is a very important function in the machinery of student government.

This entire situation is unfortunate for everyone involved. The functioning of student government has hit an ugly public relations bump, and students may not get their full choice of possible executive candidates. The elections board needs clearer rules and accompanied sanctions for the future, but for now the removal of Gabbe and Larson from the ballot is the best possible action out of the limited options.

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

Letters to the editor

Executive coordinator needed

I would like to express my concern with the outcome of the recent ASUO budget appeal hearing. The result will indirectly affect every member of the campus community. The Programs Finance Committee chose to deny a request allocating funding for the position of executive coordinator in the ASUO office.

The position, which has existed in the past, improves the effectiveness of student representatives by minimizing technical paperwork that would otherwise become the responsibility of our elected officials. The position would cost each student only 42 cents per term. This is a small price to en-

sure the efficiency of the ASUO and consequently all other campus programming. What is the purpose of electing officials if they are only going to be consumed by endless amounts of paperwork? Wouldn't the students of this University prefer that their representatives occupy their time addressing the issues that we are most concerned about? I would.

I find it hard to understand why the committee chose to grant the appeal in the first place. The justification of the decision on the basis of a benchmark and/or threat of too much administrative influence is illogical and contradictory. The only genuine protection students have against overwhelming administrative control are our student representatives, but who will represent us while our they are busy doing paperwork?

Heather Mitchell
environmental science

Candidate misquoted

In your recent article on the decision of several ASUO Executive candidates to limit campaign spending (ODE, Feb. 7), statements I made to my fellow candidates were misrepresented.

I met Autumn DePoe's challenge by saying "I refuse to spend a penny of Righty's money!" This is indicative of my refusal to cater to right-handed interests in my campaign for left-handed rights.

Yet in your story, it was indicated that I "pledged to not spend a dime" on my campaign. To the contrary, I fully intend to spend money — just not money raised by whoring my principles out to well-heeled right people. My campaign is funded solely by and for my sinistralateral brothers and sisters.

Daniel Atkinson
ASUO Executive candidate

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To flying high once again

The NBA.com Slam Dunk Contest returned this year after a two-year hiatus to dazzle amazed onlookers. Toronto's Vince Carter won the contest with gravity-defying dunks.

To the best cure, prevention

Thanks to a grant from the Oregon Health Division, Lane County Public Health Services is recruiting clients to pilot an HIV Prevention Case Management program that will last 18 months. The program will involve one-on-one counseling for those clients with risk-reduction needs.



To the suspension of cooperation

Only 72 days after its inception, the power-sharing of Northern Ireland has been suspended. London suspended the province's government because of concerns of whether or not an Irish Republican Army disarmament offer is real.

To much ado about little

While students can't seem to get together on a plan to cover bike racks around campus, the University Design Review Subcommittee approved a recommendation to increase covered bike parking for staff members. The addition would only add 13 spots. And students can't seem to get any.