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Perspectives

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(The) Speaking of Politics...

Student governments have always held a special place in my heart. Anything that can make me consent to be whacked in the knees during a school assembly just to get elected has got to have power. Naturally, I lost that high school election, as I had the year before. And I'm quite certain that student government is not for me in college, either.

On the other hand, having never made it to student council as an elected official, I didn't really have much basis to judge that. So last week, I attended the ASUO Student Senate meeting. And for comparison, to see what these fine young politicians have to look forward to, I endured a Eugene City Council meeting last Monday night. I was looking to answer one question: How do politicians communicate?



Jonathan Gruber

Nothing can be accomplished without effective communication. The Student Senate was discussing the EMU budget in last Wednesday's meeting and, frankly, how they communicated was just as important as what they actually said.

At one end of the continuum was ASUO Vice President Mitra Anoushiravani, whose one comment in the meeting reminded me greatly of her demeanor when I first met her in high school debate tournaments: fiery, unabashedly critical of the senators and sickeningly organized (just like a debate tirade). Later, Sen. President Jessica Timpany described her colleague's speech as a "cathartic episode" (Webster's defines cathartic as "purging"). Surprisingly, the senator to speak after Anoushiravani, Spencer Hamlin, calmly outlined a position that differed from Anoushiravani's. That speech differed from all his other speeches, which all reached an unparalleled level of passion, even for mundane or minor subjects.

What was somewhat frustrating at City Council was the apparent importance of long speeches. It strikes me that the older one gets, or the more prominent one's position in government gets, the harder it is to resist taking a big chunk of the public record. Almost all the speakers from the public hit their three-minute limit, and some council members spoke for longer. Senior John Adams, a political science major who attended the City Council meeting as part of the Shadow A Leader community internship program, said, "A lot of people have a lot of things they want to say. Giving them only three minutes — I can understand trying to limit it."

There were, however, many ways in which the City Council engaged in more effective communication than the Student Senate. For one thing, nobody yelled, though the issue of giving EWEB the power to enter the high-speed telecommunications business was one that brought out many opinions. Not that I think a little passion in government is bad, but those of us who are former debaters sometimes forget that presenting people with overwhelming evidence that they are wrong is not the best way to sway their opinion.

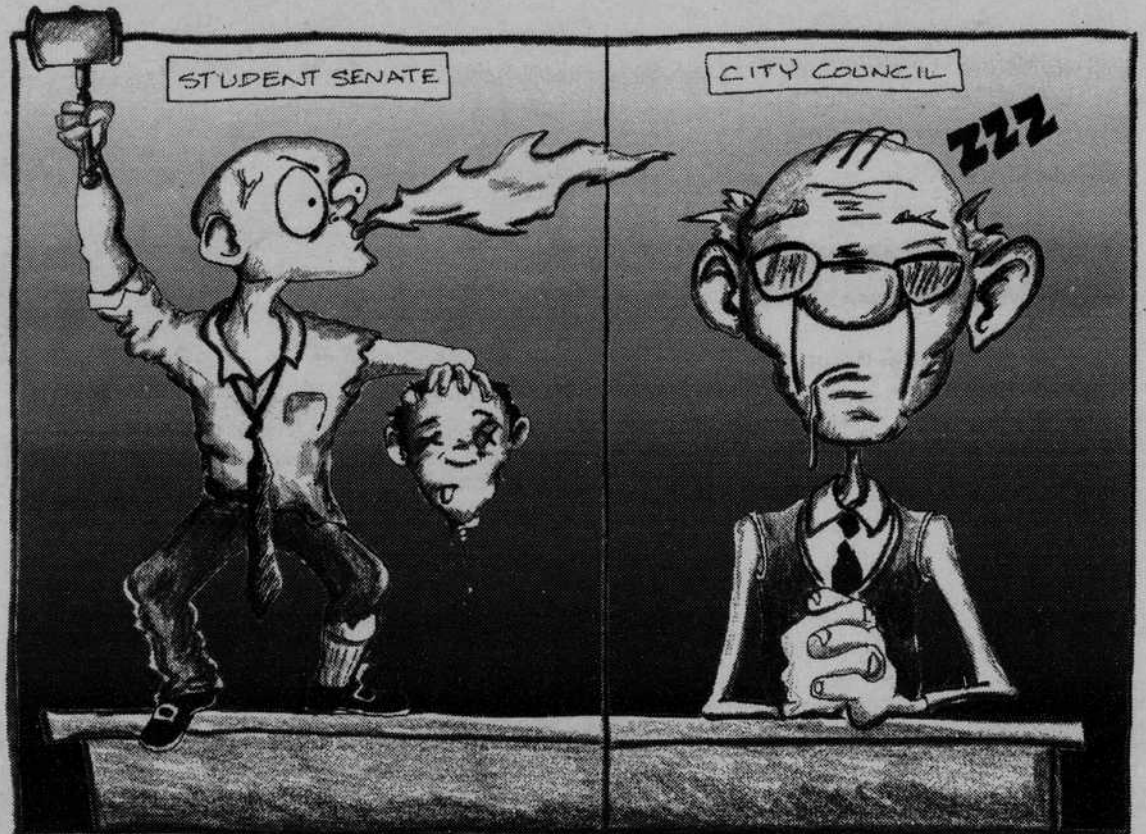
What I did enjoy about both meetings was that people were concerned about the prin-

ciples by which governance should occur. In the City Council meeting, some of the issues raised were ones of jurisdiction, rather than simple pragmatism. Is it right for government to ace out private companies in the new world of Internet access? Moreover, is it something that ought to be referred to voters, regardless of whether the council technically has power to decide? In the senate meeting, questions of what the senate rules directed were dealt with in terms of ethics, as they attempted to tease the spirit of the law from the letter of the law. Hamlin objected strongly on ethical grounds to an offer to senators for free event tickets from a group, irrespective of the fact that there weren't any

votes left to be swayed.

Both Student Senate and Eugene City Council meetings are open to everyone, although if you want to attend the senate, you better get there early and be comfortable on the floor of the EMU Board Room. At the very least, every member of these groups has the opinions of her or his constituents high on her or his mind, and contacting them is the best way to let them know what those opinions are.

Jonathan Gruber is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at jgruber@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Elections Board states case for removal from ballot

COMMENTARY

Ken Best

The Elections Board wants to clarify the extenuating circumstances regarding the grievance against C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson. The ticket remains on the ballot until the ASUO Constitution Court is able to rule on the appeal that the party in question has brought forth. The reasoning is that in the event that the court overturns the Elections Board's decision, it will give Gabbe and Larson an equal shot at running a campaign. It is frustrating that decisions from the court take a few weeks to offer an opinion; we do, however, respect the ruling of the court and understand the time constraints. The injunction by the court does not speak directly to the innocence or guilt of Gabbe or Larson.

Their campaign sponsored the International Students Association Coffee Hour Friday, Feb. 4. The ISA Coffee Hour is a weekly event and is always sponsored by some program, which pays for food and refreshments for approximately 100 people.

Melissa Unger, the ticket's campaign manager, paid for the refreshments. And there was a table that held "C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson for ASUO Executive" posters, buttons, backpack signs and similar campaign materials.

Rule 2.4 of the 2000 ASUO Elections Rules states that no candidate or non-candidate can represent or imply to voters that he or she will either provide or withhold "any service, opportunity or other thing of value for compliance with such efforts to promote or propose an election or ballot measure outcome."

We find that sponsoring the ISA Coffee Hour has violated this rule: Gabbe and Larson provided food and beverages, which is decided to be a thing of value, in return for an effort to promote an election outcome — the executive race. The Elections Board finds that the actions of Melissa Unger were on direct behalf of the respondents' campaign and indeed occurred with the candidates' knowledge or permission, that they participated directly in the rule violation.

Gabbe and Larson claim that they at no point orally urged anyone to vote for them

during the ISA Coffee Hour. The board does not dispute this. The purpose of this claim is to assert that the rule in question does not apply to this incident because they did not "... promote ... the candidacy [or] election ... of an ASUO candidate ...," nor did they engage in any "... efforts to promote or propose an election ... outcome."

The following facts are not disputed: It was generally known that "C.J. and Peter" were sponsoring the event, that they talked about their campaign and that various campaign materials were present, displayed and available. Elections Rule 1.5 states: "Campaign material is defined as any matter, be it printed, electronic, spoken or otherwise designed to affect the outcome of an election." Hence, the Elections Board has no choice but to rule that the respondents were in fact promoting their election.

The election rules are clearly defined and upheld by the Elections Board for purposes of democracy at the University. Whether it is a cookie or Corvette, \$40 or \$40,000, giving something of value to electors is a violation of the rules. The Elections Board is responsible for the institu-

tional integrity of the ASUO and desires that the real issues be promoted in this election. We had no other alternative but to remove Mr. Gabbe and Mr. Larson from the ballot.

Ken Best is the ASUO Elections Board Coordinator. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

CORRECTION

The story "Funding granted for Autzen, wanted for WOU" (ODE, Feb. 21) incorrectly stated that the Oregon University System Board of Higher Education approved all the legislative concepts at its Feb. 18 meeting, except one that would exempt donor information from the public record. The board actually approved all the concepts, including the donor information exemption.

Also, the Feb. 21 edition of the Emerald should have included the statement that the Emerald did not print a question-and-answer article on ASUO Executive candidate Joel Rueber at his own request.

The Emerald regrets the errors.