

Editor in chief: Laura Cadiz
Editorial Editors: Bret Jacobson, Laura Lucas
Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

Perspectives

Oregon Daily
Emerald

Students in the crossfire

Another botched ASUO election. If you haven't heard the bad news by now, the ASUO Constitution Court ruled that ASUO Executive candidates C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson could stay on the ballot, after a grievance was filed alleging that they broke elections rules and after the ASUO Elections Board kicked them off the ballot.

The reasoning was that the Gabbe and Larson ticket may have been at fault by attempting to influence the elections at the International Student Association's coffee hour. But the Elections Board violated due process and its own set of rules when it held a hearing 73 hours after the grievance was filed. The hearing was required to be held within 72 hours after the grievance was filed.

With that one hour mistake, the Elections Board violated its own rules and missed its opportunity to punish Gabbe and Larson.

The problem is that Gabbe and Larson did break the rules. We recognize that Gabbe and Larson got away with their infraction on a technicality. And to remedy that, we ask Gabbe and Larson to take themselves off the ballot. But the Elections Board broke rules also. And the Emerald recognizes the logical and well-founded decision by the court.

Two wrongs don't make a right. Because what's atrocious is that there are no consequences to the guilty, but there are to the innocent. That's us, the students, who have to put up with this garbage.

It's not like we're trying to say that the 834 of you who voted for Gabbe and Larson are wrong, we just understand that they were the noisiest and most vocal candidates. Having their names in the headlines so often — even if the attention was negative — made Gabbe and Larson almost household names. And name recognition helps win ASUO elections.

So instead of asking you the students to really read up on the issues and vote your consciences — which of course, we think, would set you against Gabbe and Larson — we just ask that the candidates themselves clear up this nonsense.

By dropping off the ballot. And they won't, of course. They'll laugh at the very notion that they should or would. But should candidates who "show questionable integrity," as the Constitution Court says, be leaders of the ASUO? No. The court goes almost so far as to call Gabbe and Larson liars, and if you don't care about the Emerald's opinion, then care about an unbiased court's findings.

They essentially found them guilty but couldn't do anything about it.

You can.

Vote against Gabbe and Larson today and Thursday during general elections if they don't do the honorable thing by taking themselves out of the race.

And think to yourselves about how close they came to being taken off by ASUO's own rules.

Off on a technicality.

It's the ASUO equivalent of catching a rapist with full-proof DNA evidence after the statute of limitations are up. Or the equivalent of a botched prosecution, where you know the perpetrator is guilty but the prosecutor mishandles the guilty's rights.

Actually, it's not just like getting away with a crime. It is getting away with a crime. And despite the ruling, the Constitution Court saw it almost the same way. Worded in the same paragraph describing how they would not uphold the Elections Board decision to drop Gabbe and Larson from the ballot, the court so judiciously stated:

"Mr. Gabbe and Mr. Larson have dodged a bullet. They should not expect to be so lucky next time."

What about students? Have they dodged a bullet? Or are they in the path of one?

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

QUOTED

"It is clear to the court that Mr. Gabbe and Mr. Larson did mischaracterized [sic] the facts and their action on February 4 to the court in their brief."

— ASUO Constitution Court ruling, Feb. 28.

"In a very real sense, every time Mr. Gabbe and Mr. Larson see a copy of the constitution, they should be very thankful that we live under a fair system of government that requires that rules should be followed not only by its citizens, but by itself."

— ASUO Constitution Court ruling, Feb. 28.

"Their [Gabbe and Larson's] actions in this case simply show questionable integrity."

— ASUO Constitution Court ruling, Feb. 28.

"I like the decision because, in a way, it upheld our ruling. In a sense it means, 'Yes, they should've been removed from the ballot.'"

— ASUO Elections Coordinator Ken Best, ODE, Feb. 28.

"It's ridiculous that they can get off on a technicality."

— ASUO Executive candidate Jay Breslow, ODE, Feb. 28.



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

ASUO should not tolerate unethical campaign

COMMENTARY

Jay Breslow
&
Holly Magner

A lot has been said recently about campaigns for president and vice president of the ASUO. Ambiguous terms and definitions have abounded, and issues have fallen by the wayside. The issue of ethics, however, cannot be overlooked in any campaign at any level.

The C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson ticket bought food for the International Students Association coffee hour. Their arguments of justification were insulting to any reader

who understands politics. "The food did not actively campaign. ... We didn't directly say 'vote for us.' ... We were only trying to outreach to voters," they said.

The Jay Breslow and Holly Magner campaign reached out to voters without breaking the rules. We talked to student groups and tried to get our platforms out to as many people as possible. We didn't feel at any point that it would be appropriate to provide food or any other thing of value to possible electors while we were campaigning. Any time you are running for office, your goal first and foremost is to get elected. This should be done with principle and honesty and not at the expense of the integrity of the election.

Ethics play a major role in any public office. The Gabbe/Larson ticket has shown

repeatedly that ethics are not important to them. They simply will do anything to win.

We entered into this race believing that it would be a fair campaign. We have tried as hard as humanly possible to maintain civility and not stoop to the levels of our opponents. Petty grievances and internal bickering in the past have plagued the ASUO. We had hoped that a clean campaign would be run by all of the candidates and that we could get past all of that.

It is up to you now; the students of the University need to step up and say "ENOUGH!" Enough unethical campaigning. Enough political bickering. Just because we are political doesn't mean we have to play politics. What Gabbe and Larson did was wrong. You can't buy votes or

influence an election by giving away things of value. They were not held accountable by the ASUO Constitution Court, but the voters have the power and ability to do so during the general elections. Please get out and vote today. Let's ensure that unethical politicians will have no place in your student government.

Jay Breslow and Holly Magner are ASUO Executive candidates running in the general elections. Their views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

CORRECTION

The story "Gabbe/Larson, Breslow/Magner go to generals" (ODE Feb. 29) should have read: The court said that Greenough, Gabbe and Larson agreed three days meant 72 hours. The Emerald regrets this error.