

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

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**Emerald**

## Have DEGREE NO EXPERIENCE

How many times have we thought, "If only I didn't have classes to worry about, how happy my life would be?" But the mistake many students make is thinking that these classes are the only thing they need to be doing in their college lifetime. So much time, energy and concentration are spent on grades and classes that students don't bother participating in any other activities, such as internships and other outside encounters. Sadly enough, this narrow focus on

scholastic pressures will one day cause even greater stress because outside experiences are the key to success in the post-college life.



Beata Mostafavi

"I wish I had gotten much more involved in outside activities," said Allison Pernerl, a senior humanities major. "I have no experience, and I have no idea what I want to do. I don't even know what I don't want to do. I'm going

into the field empty-handed, and this scares me."

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the stress of the real world.

Imagine sitting in a small office face to face with an employer who is interviewing you for your dream job. I know, we hate to think about that day, but alas it will come. And he or she will ask you why you should be hired. What kind of experience have you had? You think, experience? Isn't my degree enough? Your answer revolves around "Well I liked all my classes and I got A's." Unfortunately that just doesn't cut it.

"It's the ability to be able to talk about experiences that's most important," Career Center Director Larry Smith said. "Interns especially find meaning from their experiences and have a lot to talk about."

Sooner or later our time will run out, and we will be pushed into a world where grades will no longer be the prime stress factor. The time will come when you will finally ask yourself how you're going to apply all this knowledge you worked so hard to gain. Students are on such a mission to graduate that once they do, they finally stop and think "Now what?" Don't let yourself fall into the trap of giving in to the

academic demands so much that you forget about what else is out there and that there are other ways to accomplish your goals in life.

According to Smith, it can be scary for students who don't know what they want to do, but he said there are alternatives.

"A good way to deal with that is by testing ... not jumping in for total immersion but testing different possibilities," he said. "Internships especially are a great way to do this. Seniors who have only allocated all their time to classes reach the point when they think 'whoops,' that probably wasn't the best way to do college."

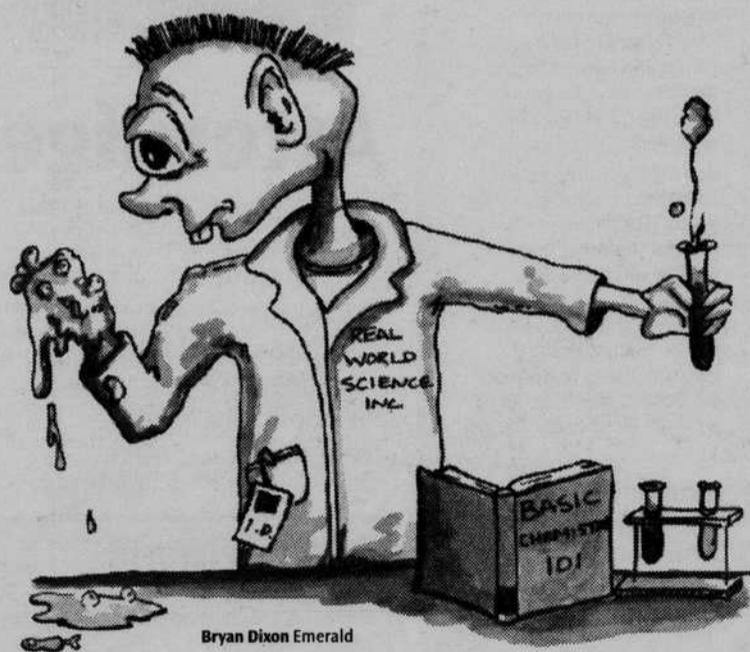
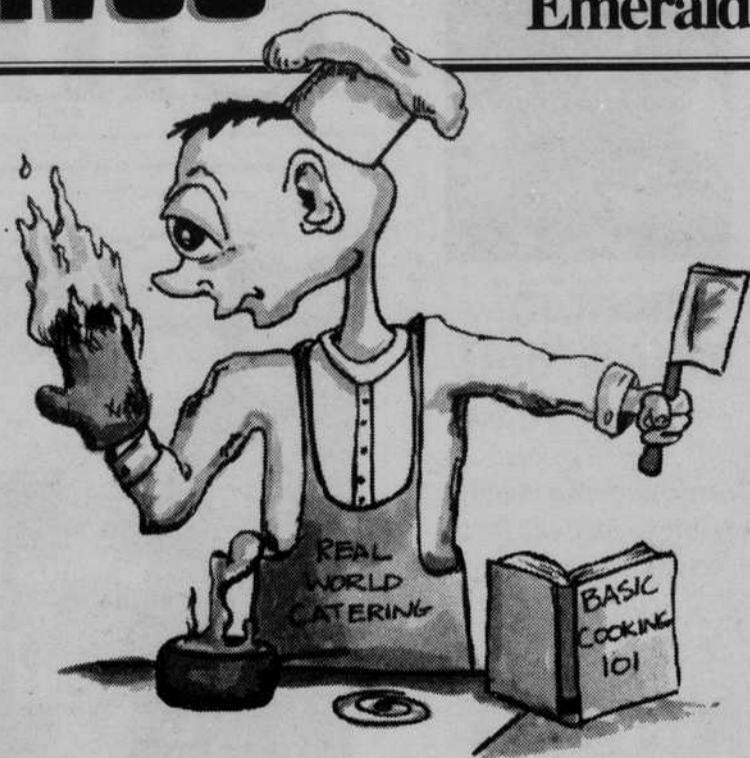
Aside from the fact that a substantial resume is appealing to competitive employers, the experiences gained from outside activities also help students make personal decisions about their future. You may love your classes, but maybe when you're actually working in the field, you'll discover that this is not the route for you. If you're not getting the feel for what you want to do, then you won't really know what it's like, and by the time you do, it just may be too late. Then try taking your blood pressure.

"Outside experiences such as internships expose you to all kinds of people and situations," said Smith. "They will help you answer questions you may have about your future plans. For example, what are the career paths within different organizations? How are decisions made within these organizations? What are the characteristics of people within a certain organization? What's the style and manner of an advertising agency as compared to that of a bank?"

These four years can be a great stepping stone to get to where you want to be someday. Most students convince themselves that they don't have time for anything but classes, but if that's all you do, you've wasted a lot of time in the long run. Apply for internships, work for groups that relate to your major or join a campus organization. Just do something. Gleaning knowledge from experiences will pay off when that man in the black suit asks you why you are the qualified candidate for the job.

Learn Pernerl's lesson, and get the experiences as early as possible.

Beata Mostafavi is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. She can be reached via e-mail at bmostafa@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

### Letters to the editor

#### Looking for accountability

As the days of the elections and outcomes for the ballot measures have come and gone, we are now left to wonder how the democratic process at the University will play out. The ballot for Workers Rights Consortium, a monitoring body that enforces cooperative codes of conduct, passed with 3/4 majority. It's awesome to see that students are taking a stand to end sweatshop labor. If the University adopts the WRC, we will be working in solidarity with students at other universities, human rights groups and labor groups to empower workers internationally. We voted yes for the WRC, but it is not us who makes the decision, it is University President Frohnmayer. We need to be sure that he is ac-

countable to the students, listen to our voices and join the Workers Rights Consortium.

Jamuna Golden  
undeclared

#### Company or democracy?

With the student elections now ending, we are once again beginning the game of trying to decipher the role and importance of the student votes and wondering whether they will be taken seriously. The administration now and in the past has said that the students are uninformed and uneducated to the issues and therefore their voices should not be taken into account. While this is the norm these days in the university system, I think it says something quite significant about the ways in which these institutions are run.

If a university student body functions under a democratic structure and if a ballot measure passed by that body receives 3/4 of the votes and deals with a decision that only the administration at this time can make, then it would appear that our self governing and democratic university is just a superficial veil held over the student body. That while we may have minute control over the ASUO, the University itself is still run by a few people who aren't students, which has the appearance more of a company than of a democracy.

I hope this trend of dismissing student voice as naive and unimportant will not be renewed this year by the administration. If it is, however, hopefully it will be met with more resistance and action by the student body.

Devin Dinihanian  
fine arts