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Perspectives

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Emerald

Funding for Freedom

The final word on student fees appears to have been spoken by the U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Southworth case. The judgment to allow student fees to be collected to further the democratic exchange of ideas on campus is the right way to advance that goal, though further language in the court's finding could be worrisome down the line.

In the court's decision, written by Justice Anthony Kennedy, it was decided that the complaining students from the University of Wisconsin proposed a faulty argument when they asserted that their free speech rights were violated by being forced to fund campus groups having different political and religious views. The court believed that universities hold a special role in the democratic process by acting as a public place through allowing all view points to be heard so students can decide for themselves what they believe.

This finding reaffirms the role of schools in the growth of civic-minded students preparing to be good citizens as well as vocationally equipped bread winners. Not only did the court make the right decision, but it made its statement loud and clear by voting unanimously, with Justices Souter, Breyer and Stevens concurring. The real power of this fact is that the idea of free idea exchange on campus crosses the ideological lines of an often divided court and likely ensures that there will not be any change in the interpretation any time soon.

The decision rested on the fact that student groups attain funding through a viewpoint neutral mechanism that is recommended by students and finalized by a board of regents. By ignoring ideology of funded groups, the university can host many viewpoints without being accused of controlling speech. This is remarkably different, it should be noted, from speech actually controlled by a university, which is an extension of the government.

The justices also briefly discussed the differing roles of on- and off-campus activities. While they took no action yet on the flow of money from campus groups to off-campus activities, the court did say that schools can make such distinctions based on viewpoint-neutral rules on the subject. That means that groups could be prevented from using student fees on outside organizations or lobbying efforts. A restriction on the export of student fees would be a good idea because it would keep in line with the spirit of the Southworth ruling, which is to further political dialogue on campus.

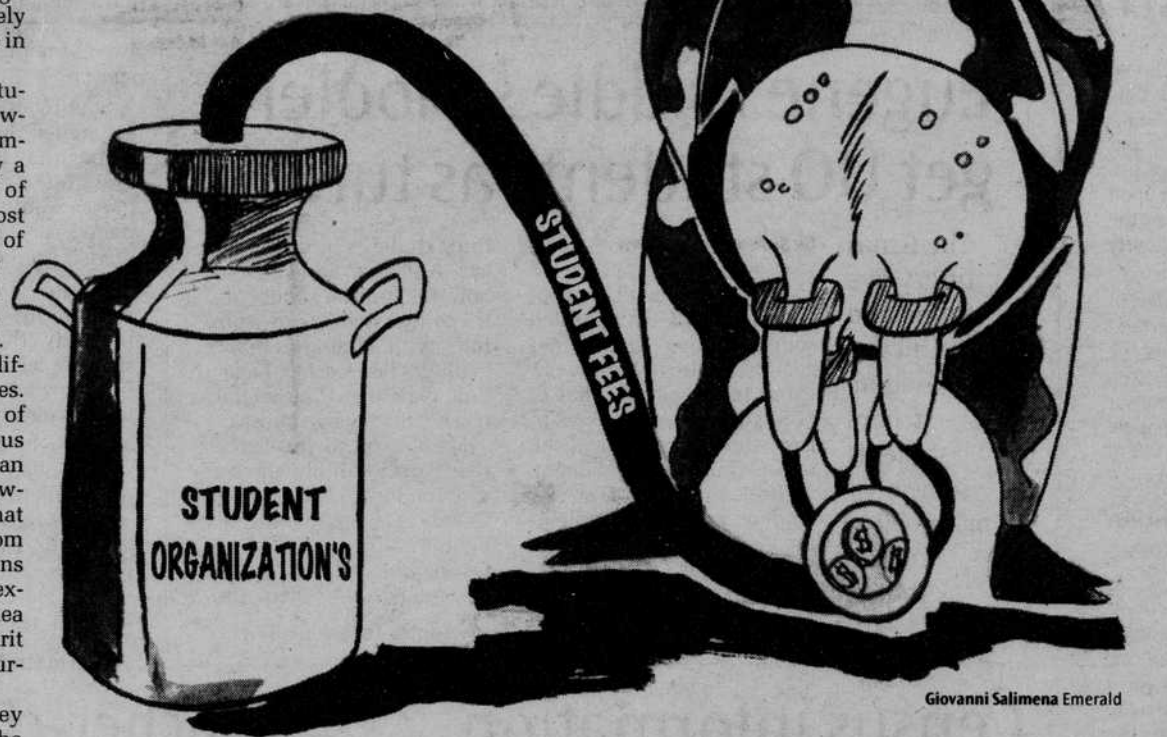
Such restrictions on outgoing money would most directly affect OSPIRG. The group sends off a great deal of money in lobbying efforts. But a restriction on our stu-

dent fee usage would be a good idea because OSPIRG could still pay for students to go lobby in Salem as opposed to sending money to state politicians. And OSPIRG could learn to use its money on furthering its efforts on campus instead of going other places.

There is another less-developed section of this ruling that deals with the referendum process for funding and defunding student programs that could have some logistical problems later on. The court ruled that because the referendum process is decided by a majority vote, it would undermine the free speech protection that the student fee program requires. This could pose a terrible glut of work for the Programs Finance Committee and Student Senate if they alone are forced to determine which groups do or do not get funding.

Despite the logistical problems of the words condemning referendums for student fee allocation and the possibility of restricting student fees from being sent off campus, it is only right to affirm the student fee process and maintain a vibrant political dialogue on our university campuses.

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



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

THUMBS



To no strikes, no one out
Negotiators for U.S. Airways and the Association of Flight Attendants averted a threatened strike by the workers by continuing to work into the wee hours of Saturday by reaching a tentative agreement on a five-year contract with raises for the 10,000 union members.

To recycling in its best form
About 16,000 used American text books donated by Oregon schools and collected by the Oregon National Guard will be given to schoolchildren in the Philippines.



To a needless incentive
Prisons in Minneapolis—where it should be expected that inmates follow rules—are going to pay their residents to fill out their federal census forms. While completing the forms is mandated by law, the prisons will pay \$1 per form.

To a dangerous sign of the times
After the alcohol-related death of 19-year-old Stephen Petz, a freshman from Ferris State University, six members of an unofficial fraternity are facing charges that range from furnishing alcohol to a minor to involuntary manslaughter.

Letters to the editor

Glowing review an insanity

Dear friends at the Oregon Daily Emerald: Have you no shame? I read in Pulse (ODE, March 9) that guitarist Shelley Doty is "whaling" with her guitar. Is all common decency gone from the world? In this supposedly civilized age, whaling has been all but forsaken by the vast majority of our species. But now we hear that Doty is not only engaged in this barbaric practice, she also apparently accomplishes the act with what is supposed to be an instrument of art, of peace and love! And for this, writer Jack Clifford praises her, comparing her to none other than guitar legend Santana! God save us all from our own insanities.

Don Titus
architecture

Donations flowing to wrong spots

At first it seemed absurd to me that leaders at the University could afford to enlarge the football stadium yet argue that they were unable to provide underground or multi-level parking for an additional 2,000 cars. But then I remembered a visit 25 years ago to the campus of Washington State University. When I asked why a visitor couldn't park within miles, I received the explanation that rich donors were willing to put their names on any number of new medical school buildings but not a parking structure.

Peter W. Frank
Eugene resident

Athlete drug use no surprise, folks

While the recent incident with the hockey team is both sad and regrettable, it was hardly unforesee-

able. Administrators can go on and on about forms that were signed and rules meant to be followed, but the plain fact is that drinking and drug usage happen with college students, especially on road trips. The outcome is usually not as tragic; in fact, normally no one gets hurt, and, therefore, no one ever knows. Eventually, though, something has to happen, and unfortunately it ended with someone's death.

I won't demand that teams going on road trips be required to have chaperones or that they not be allowed to go on road trips, but without supervision, poor decisions will be made. Russ Atteridge's death is sad and upsetting, but it is hardly surprising. It was only a matter of time, and I find it hard to believe that those in charge didn't see it coming.

Robert L. Wasson III
former Club Sports executive committee chairman and hockey player