

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

## Show tolerance for intolerant views

Free speech is perhaps the most important element to the Bill of Rights. Protecting speech is a noble cause, especially protecting speech you don't like.

And ignoring that point is the problem with a new proposal that the ASUO Student Senate passed last week. The idea is for a pledge of respect that would state the University's support for diversity, its stance against bigotry and racism and its need for cultural respect. This pledge is non-binding; students don't have to sign it, and it doesn't even take effect until the University administration — read: University President Dave Frohnmayer — adopts it.

And the administration shouldn't adopt it.

Flag burning, Ku Klux Klan rallies, hardcore rock 'n' roll and even grotesque anti-abortion demonstrations are all examples of things we perhaps would rather not tolerate, but we accept them with the notion that even bad speech has a place in a democracy.

But when such hatred is revealed, as it was for instance two years ago with the killings of Matthew Shepard in Montana and James Byrd Jr. in the Texas dragging death, we tend to speak out against it in droves. The shock to our system produces hate crime legislation or promises to teach our children more about different cultures.

And while these sentiments are popular, speech that promotes bigotry or hate is not treated with the same respect.

On the surface, any statement that promotes diversity and rejects bigotry is a good one. We've noticed that this campus could use some more diversity, and in no way are we suggesting that diversity not be a positive issue. The Multicultural Center and all the other programs on campus that work toward diversity — racial, sexual — are much-needed. Tolerance is a good value to have, and past campus events (the notorious e-mail last year that caused the diversity sit-in in Johnson Hall) show us we need more tolerance.

The pledge then is a good idea for some. But that only applies if you agree with those ideals. No one can force a racist to change his or her mind, and constitutionally, the racist doesn't have to. The University shouldn't change that.

Because if the University proclaims some dogma, some guidelines, some pledge to respect all people, it really isn't promoting the diversity of ideas that such a proposal prides itself on. Diversity itself does not mean a diversity of ideas.

And the danger is that freedom of speech will be snuffed out by democracy. The majority of people — or at least outspoken people — on this campus are liberal. And conservative views are often pushed out of the way altogether because no one shouts loudly enough to be heard. To include all speech, we should at least have an atmosphere at our public university

that leaves the door open for it. Even speech we deplore.

Speech and thoughts are now being used against people in the legal system. Hate crime legislation means that killing people because they are black is different than just killing them. The message is meant to be that hatred is wrong, but the alternative message is that people killed because of their race are more important than people killed in a random burglary. We don't know how far to go with this. Should thoughts be important? And should freedom of speech apply to killers?

These are questions we still wrestle with because hate crimes are a problem in our country. But in taking such drastic

measures

to curb hate violence are we in fact policing people's thoughts in addition to their actions?

And in wanting a diverse campus are we in fact legislating personal desires and morals?

College campuses have always been a home to free speech. In the 1960s, that speech was directed at ending the status quo of racism, sexism, anti-gay and pro-government sentiment. Now the status quo is political correctness, suspicion of the government, diversity and acceptance of all lifestyles. Those who challenge this are not unlike the protesters of old. Even if we feel that they are personally misguided, we certainly should respect their right to be so.

Tolerance is good for this campus and for America, but no pledge is going to change the way people feel about one another. If anything, being forced or being asked to accept someone else's priorities could create a backlash. At the very, very least, it should create concern that we are not the liberal campus we pride ourselves on being.

Otherwise, we'd really let people be who they want to be, and we wouldn't decide what they should think.

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



Catharine Kendall Emerald

### QUOTED

"He has the heart of a lion. He has done it for four years, not just one. That's why you love him. He's what our program embodies." — Michigan State men's basketball head coach Tom Izzo, on his player Mateen Cleaves' play in the NCAA Championship game. Cleaves sprained his ankle in the second half but came back courageously to lead his team to victory. The Register-Guard, April 4.

"Microsoft mounted a deliberate assault upon entrepreneurial efforts that, left to rise or fall on their own merits, could well have enabled the introduction of competition into the market for Intel-compatible PC operating systems." — U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, in his ruling against Microsoft in the government's anti-trust lawsuit. The Oregonian, April 4.

"There are not a lot of reasons for people to vote." — Pollster G. Terry Madonna, director of the Center for Public Affairs at Pennsylvania's Millersville University, on the presidential primaries in Pennsylvania Tuesday. CNN.com, April 4.

### Letters to the editor

#### Campus clocks changed

Checking the campus clocks, you may have noticed a change not only in the time, but also in the clocks themselves following the switch to daylight savings time. The newest clocks actually say "daylight savings time" on them. You might ask why the need for new clocks; why not just reset the time?

Prior to last fall, most clocks on campus were connected to a master clock system, based in the Knight Library. The decades-old system was failing and could no longer provide reliable time. The cost of replacing the old system was estimated at \$300,000. Thus, the idea for an inexpensive, easily maintained alternative was born. Two sets of clocks were purchased, one for each time period. The cost to purchase the 700 clocks, dismantle the old system and install the new clocks was \$33,000.

The clocks are battery operated and therefore not affected by any electrical outage. To

ensure that the clocks keep good time, the batteries are replaced every six months, at the two annual time changes. The batteries still have some life in them, and Facilities puts them back to work in pagers and small flashlights, and we also make them available to other departments.

Our goal is to have a minimum of one clock in each classroom and one on every floor of all campus buildings. (Individual departments are responsible for purchasing and maintaining their own clocks.) If you notice a problem regarding the public clocks, please contact Custodial Services at 346-2316 or via e-mail at janitor@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Jerry Dominy  
manager, Custodial Services  
University Facilities Services

#### NAACP targets racial profiling

The Register-Guard for Monday, March 6, on the front page showed a photograph of some students and teachers, both black and white, in Montgomery, Ala., celebrating their unity prior to commemorating the

35th anniversary of the "Bloody Sunday" march from Selma to Montgomery. Here in Springfield on the same day I heard a discussion of racial profiling problems here in Lane County on "Critical Mass" (KLCC). I guess some things changed over the last 35 years and some things have not. One thing that has changed is the relationship of the police and the NAACP.

With that attitude in mind, the NAACP has been meeting with management people from local law enforcement agencies to ensure that the pronouncement signed by the heads of the local law enforcement agencies stating they would not practice racial profiling is honored. The local chapter of the NAACP met in December of 1999 with several members of the local law enforcement community, and we plan to meet again in May.

The Oregon ACLU is in the process of developing a special form to record complaints against racial profiling. In addition to the NAACP and the Oregon ACLU, people can also report these events to the Lane County human Rights Advisory Commit-

tee's staff liaison, Laura Yergan, by calling 682-3153. A subcommittee that deals with issues of this type and is chaired by Fil Soriano (686-7555 x5310) is actively involved in dealing with the issue of racial profiling in Lane County.

G. Dennis Shine  
membership chairman,  
Eugene/Springfield branch of the NAACP

#### CORRECTION

The article "Class syllabi, bios to go up on Web" (ODE, April 4) should have read that the potential presence of syllabi and professor biographies on-line refers only to general education courses. In addition, the headline to the story was misleading by implying the process is already completed or well on its way to completion. The process is still in the early planning stages.

Also, in the Oregon Club Sports roundup (ODE, April 4), Anthony Rethwill's name was misspelled.

The Emerald regrets these errors.