

Letters to the editor

Dialogue encouraged

I am one of the "ignorant," "sassy college students" who have been protesting in support of the Worker Rights Consortium. I've also been called "naive," "annoying" and "uneducated." Well, you can now add frightened.

Disturbing, yet expected, was the proud apathy and adolescent cynicism of many University students, the half-true statements sent out from University administration about common goals and shared governance and the general belittlement of causes such as those of workers' rights and democracy.

But nothing could have prepared me for the public response so far regarding Nike CEO Phil Knight's arrogant and bold decision. Instead of denouncing the personal audacity of Knight and the greater indicator of how much control private citizens have in our institutions of public education, the concern is that of appeasing Knight, finding some sort of conciliation.

We should be outraged! This is wrong! In past donations, genuine philanthropic motivations were cited for such things as direct contributions to University President Dave Frohnmayer's salary. Is there any remaining doubt that these "gifts" come with expectations?

Please support the decision made by an entire University community after more than a year of careful deliberation. We must stand firm, in the face of this insolent gesture, before a dangerous precedent is set. Stop pointing fingers at protesters; we are not the enemy. I encourage you to attempt dialogue with me and others so that we can educate each other. I can be reached at the Human Rights Alliance (346-4356, also phlwoods@gladstone.uoregon.edu).

Chad Sullivan
music, history

Knight's temper appalling

I have been a student at the University for almost eight years now, and I was appalled at Nike CEO Phil Knight's temper tantrum in response to the University's joining the Worker Rights Consortium. One of the issues that the students protesting a few weeks ago raised was the undemocratic nature of decision-making in the University because ultimately the University president has the final word on all policy decisions with the University Assembly and University Senate performing a mere advisory function. Well, it appears that Knight feels that not even University President Dave Frohnmayer has the power to make decisions unless they are first approved by Knight. It is preposterous and megalomaniacal on Knight's part to apparently assume that just because he has donated money to the University in the past that he automatically has some sort of veto power over policy decisions made by the University.

It's time for Knight to grow up and act his age. As for the University, perhaps now it will recognize that it is dangerous and counterproductive for a public university to rely on private donors to keep it afloat. The democratically elected state legislature is responsible for funding education, and it is time they assume that role and adequately fund the Oregon University System. To Knight I say, "Good riddance; we never trusted you anyway!"

Johnny Schwerk
class of 1999

Mourning Knight's money

"Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?"

The University is in mourning. Amongst the street fair revelers, there hangs a sullen undertone. Witness the toll that campus democracy has wrought upon us: Look at the cost of our Worker Rights Consortium membership! And yet, who has died? Whom do we mourn? Not Nike CEO Phil Knight—he lives on. I wish him a comfortable life, just as I desire for myself and as do the workers in his factories. We share these goals as human beings.

No, we do not mourn Knight, who was and continues to be an honorable man. We mourn our billionaire philanthropist... nay, his donations... the almighty dollar, my fellow students. Knight's million dollar donations were our Caesar, but we did not kill him; he made one final, tormented speech and walked away.

University President Dave Frohnmayer goes to Nike's court now, deeply regretting that this is a "painful issue" for Knight. Painful indeed—but Knight isn't really the one suffering: The workers, in short, the those not living in our beloved Rome.

"Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves? To every Roman citizen he gives, to every several man, 75 drachmas. Moreover, he hath left you all his walks and new-planted orchards... Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?"

With help from William Shakespeare...

Todd Blevins
chemistry, German

Let's not place blame

It is easy for us to chuckle at those students who protested University President Dave Frohnmayer's reluctance to act in favor of the Worker Rights Consortium. I myself had to wonder how many of them scrutinized Hanes and Gortex (to whom they owe thanks for their underwear and camping gear) for potential sweatshop labor and ask myself if their former hippie/current yuppie parents are footing the bill for these (and other) essential items for the protest.

At the same time, there are limits to my cynicism. I was saddened by how quickly some students blamed the student protesters for the holding back of funds by Nike CEO Phil Knight. One of the most cherished myths of capitalism is that those who profit from it will give back to the community; if this is true, we need not initiate collective action to make sure social justice is served. We only need have faith in the generosity of those with the means to give. In many cases, the myth translates into reality; I am thankful to Knight every time I study in the peaceful fourth floor atrium of the library.

But I also wonder how many hours of underage, underpaid labor went into each ornate tile beneath my feet.

We may live in a cynical age—but that doesn't call for misplaced blame, or the complete commodification of academia. Let's keep this in mind before we automatically blame conscientious students or refuse to compel men and women in power to affect social change with the resources they have.

Shyla Osborn
comparative literature

Olsen impressive candidate

I am very impressed with campaign efforts of Eugene City Council candidate Tracy Olsen for Ward 3.

He is a true professional who will truly represent every person and all viewpoints in his ward. I am impressed at how responsible he is, how courteous he is and how much he truly cares about Ward 3. He has been very present and very active in his ward.

Examples are his efforts in working with Counselor Bobby Lee and local business owners to find funding for the LTD police sub-station and working directly with senior citizens in the ward. He is constantly branching out and talking to residents in the ward—and actually listening to their responses! Olsen cares about Ward 3! He is a true competitor and gentleman that extends his hand to his fellow running mates after a debate—that is running a positive grassroots campaign—and listens to the people of Ward 3.

Ward 3 needs Olsen. Ward 3 is Olsen.

Robb Passon
sales and marketing manager
Computer Systems West, Inc.

Olsen: the right choice

I have been a Eugene native most of my life. While out of state and overseas, I worked for years as a professional for governments. I have also been an active volunteer and a fund raiser for programs for children, families, the elderly, universities and the homeless. I have known Tracy Olsen for the 10 years that I have been back in Eugene. During that time, I have witnessed council, committee and commission sessions in my hometown. It is clear to me that Olsen is the right choice for the city council seat representing Ward 3. He knows our city and the University and is the clear choice to represent all of us.

Olsen combines the energy, intelligence, vision and team player characteristics that we must have on our council to make our city work into the future. We have many tough issues to face. We need council members who will listen to their constituent, develop constructive ideas and plans for the city and work with the rest of the council team to achieve our goals. It is vital that we pull together to make our downtown and

University district a place where all of us feel safe—a place where we want to go on a regular basis to enjoy our town and great campus. Olsen can help make this happen. Olsen is the right choice!

Ron Darling
Eugene resident

Ecoplege beneficial

I am glad to see that OSPIRG is promoting global warming awareness through Ecoplege.com. I encourage OSPIRG and other University students to join the Kyoto Now! campaign of colleges in the northwest, begun in spring of 1999.

University students should push for U.S. Senate adoption of the Kyoto Protocol to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases. Students at Oregon State University, Reed College, Portland State University, Lewis and Clark, Evergreen and University of Washington have been forming strategy, lobbying and educating the public along with non-profits Green House Network, Oregon Green Energy and Climate Solutions this past year.

The northwest is in a great position to become a model for alternative energy. University students should join this effort! To find out more, join the e-mail listserv Kyoto Now! News <Majordomo@kyotonow.org> by sending a message: subscribe kyotonow-news, or e-mail info@kyotonow.org.

Beth L. Newberry
4COLORS list manager

Good riddance to Knight

Fact: Nike CEO Phil Knight is a rich man. [Whether he's great or not], you can make up your own mind.

Although the majority of the student body probably doesn't care whether its University attire is made under "sweat-free" conditions so much as what flavor of Frappachino to have, there was a near-unanimous vote by the University Senate in favor of joining the Worker Rights Consortium. Independent of anyone's thoughts on the ridiculous nature of politics on campus or in the White House, a democratic consensus was reached. It was this vote that divorced the University from our misbegotten corporate bedfellow Knight. Good riddance! This University doesn't need Autzen Stadium

expanded—it needs to be able to pay its people decent living wages.

If Knight is willing to only fork out money that he's guaranteed to see come back to him or that will put his name on more buildings, then may every school in the world join the WRC! People are more important than business, despite what you will be told by anyone and everyone with money for the rest of your life. And we're not married to you, Knight.

Lucas Thurston
linguistics, romance languages

University made right choice

I noticed that the article on Napster (ODE, April 25) included statements by music industry employees and University staff, but lacked any commentary by University students who use or support Napster. Of course, this in no way reflects upon the author of that excellent article—users who will go on record about Napster use are indeed very difficult to find because of legal concerns. However, I think the issues raised by the Napster controversy are important enough that someone should convey the side of Napster supporters and users.

On behalf of University students who use MP3s and Napster, I would like to thank the University for its wise decision not to ban Napster. Several universities across the country have chosen to ban Napster, citing mainly two reasons. One is that MP3s, along with many other Internet applications, may present technical bandwidth issues, especially for smaller, less "wired" universities. The second reason that universities have banned Napster stems from the intense pressure the recording industry has put on them to implement a ban. Some universities, after refusing to implement a ban, have been slapped with lawsuits—a situation that is analogous to universities being sued because they give dorm residents a telephone, since a telephone could be used to make threatening calls. I'm proud that the University has not infringed upon students' rights to free speech merely to protect a corporation's right to revenue.

Cory Coleman
computer science and psychology

Join the campus award-winning newspaper

The Oregon Daily Emerald is now accepting applications for the following positions on next year's news staff:

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MAY 12th

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Applications are due 5:00 p.m., Friday, May 12, 2000. All positions are paid. Applications can be picked up at the ODE office (Suite 300, EMU) or visit our website at www.dailyemerald.com (click on "Employment"). Relevant work samples should be submitted with each application.

Questions? Call 346-5511

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