

## This year, let's change the system *together*

Well, classes have begun and the Johnson Hall lawn isn't covered with students. That possibility still exists, however, because of recent news.

University President Dave Frohnmayer announced Tuesday that the school has joined the Fair Labor Association, and that decision, as well as the timing, has left some students angry and raised questions about the decision-making process at the University.

When Frohnmayer signed on with the FLA last week, the issue hadn't been discussed with the student body, the University Senate or any student group, at least not formally. Frohnmayer says he discussed the issue with scores of community members through e-mail and phone calls over the summer.

Frohnmayer also said that he contacted many members of the University Senate and the ad hoc committee formed to work on the apparel licensing issue, and everyone he spoke to said joining the FLA was a good idea. He added that many of the issues surrounding the FLA were voiced last year during the process to join the Worker Rights Consortium.

Perhaps his timing was off — would it have been so difficult to wait for an announcement when fall classes were in session? — but his decision doesn't reek of conspiracy. If Frohnmayer were trying to slip this decision past the interested parties' radar monitors, he would have signed on with the FLA in July, when virtually no one

was on campus. He didn't, and we're satisfied that his intent was not devious.

Last year, however, Frohnmayer made it very clear that a decision of this magnitude required a painstaking, detailed process to ensure that everyone's voice was heard in the appropriate forum. The decision was put to a vote of the students. The code of conduct was written and the University Senate approved the decision to join the WRC. Frohnmayer wrote in a March 29 column published in the Emerald that "the answers must be found by all of us, working together." Responding to criticisms of just how painstaking the decision was becoming, he said, "Shared governance is not a recipe for delay. It is a blueprint for success."

If this is true — if power on campus is shared by many groups, if a careful process is necessary to hear all the voices in our community and if shared governance is a blueprint for success — then why was the decision to join the FLA made by one man from on high? It would have appeared much more inclusive to let the University Senate vote on it, to consult the ASUO and have a forum or meeting to formally discuss concerns now, in the appropriate forum. If Frohnmayer is right, and a majority of the campus community supports this decision, then the outcome would have been the same.

There is much to argue about in relation to the legitimacy and effectiveness of both the FLA and the WRC, but those arguments can be explored elsewhere in today's Emer-

ald, both the print and on-line version. The University is now a member of the FLA, and there is much work that can be done to improve and watch over this organization. No organization is perfect, and the FLA offers some opportunities for change, either working through the University (which gives input to the FLA's Advisory Council) or by pressuring more companies to join and be monitored.

The question for students is: Where can the most change be made? Is it sitting on the grass, screaming and yelling, and demanding that the world operate the way we want, with no compromise and no input from the offending parties? Did it work when we were nine years old? Certainly there is a time and a need for getting attention by refusing to cooperate. But, that isn't how you build an entire society. Try that and they call it fascism.

It may not be properly radical enough, and it may not appeal to the urgency of youth, but we can speak from many decades of life and institutional experience and suggest that more will be accomplished by enjoining a process and trying to make it reflect one's values than by sitting outside and demanding one's own way. Democracy demands compromise. We don't want a world that looks like any one special interest group's demands.

With that said, we applaud students for being opposed, as we are, to sweatshop labor. We applaud students' efforts to organize a group like the WRC and to stand up for their beliefs. Students should now focus

some of their energy and frustration on improving the campus decision-making process. They could now enjoy the FLA's mission and work to change the organization. They could now build the WRC into the powerful, capable monitoring organization that everyone wishes it already was. Or they can stand outside the walls and demand that the world conform to their wishes.

We hope that whatever the students choose, it's productive and helps build a better society. We're not entirely sure that the University joining the FLA will accomplish that, but we're convinced that ruining the Johnson Hall lawn again won't attain that goal. Certainly, the way the FLA decision was made doesn't help anyone in this situation.

Whatever the answers are, they must be found by all of us, actually working together.

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

### LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.

### Letters to the editor

#### Remembering a friend

A major part of the "college experience" is meeting and establishing relationships with friends. These are the friends you will know and love for the rest of your life. College friends are life-long friends. These are the people who will be in your wedding party someday; they are the friends you will drive across the country with three screaming kids in the car to visit; they will be there for you for the rest of your life.

Our friend Kristi was one of the life-long sort, but we will never be able to receive pictures of her kids every Christmas, nor will we be able to toast her being a gorgeous bride, this is because Kristi is no longer with us.

On July 3, not yet a month after her graduation from the University, Kristi Lynn Ward died in a car accident. Even if you did not know her as we did, chances are if you met her at a party or even sat next to her in a crowded lecture hall, she made you smile.

Kristi was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority where she played a leading role in establishing the sorority's philanthropy, "The Milk Off," and was elected to the position of New Member Education. As a Spanish major, she was a participant in the overseas program in Queretaro, Mexico. As a friend and classmate, it was a privilege to experience her love and loyalty.

Some people say "everything happens for a reason." We say it was nothing but a tragedy. As for where she is now — we believe Kristi is with all of us. She is in our hearts and minds as we return to school or work, or settle for a new job in a new city — as she would have been doing in just a few short months.

We miss you and will never forget you, Kristi.

Anne Argento, Lauren Engel, Amy Horton,  
Sandy Murphy and Betsy Scherzer

