

PERSPECTIVES

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Autzen plan shouldn't include WISTEC

Perhaps you've heard about the Autzen Stadium/WISTEC debate by now. If not, we'll try to explain it simply. The University, due to Autzen's expansion, wants to build a bus transit station on city-owned property currently leased to WISTEC, who uses the land to raise revenue. There are other options, and we feel the University should build the station on its own property.

WISTEC, a non-profit, educational science museum, rents the land it leases from the city as parking spaces to Duck fans attending home games. This endeavor earns WISTEC nearly \$26,000 per year, some 30 percent of their annual income.

Now comes the first twist. Thanks to Autzen's proposed expansion — and to comply with Eugene's planning code — the University is required to provide additional parking to accommodate those 12,000-plus fans driving to future games. Rather than try to cram more parking into an already well-developed area, the University asked the city to allow an exception to the parking code, if the University would provide for alternative modes of transportation to and from the stadium. Part of the plan is for the University to build a bus transit station and purchase bus service to the games to discourage single-driver trips. The Eugene Planning Commission thought this sufficient, and the University's expansion moved forward.

The second twist is less complicated but more painful. The University has three plans for where the proposed transit station could be built. The University's first choice, however, is to lease the same plot of city-owned land that WISTEC relies on for that income every year. WISTEC currently holds the lease with the city and has options to renew until

2003. The City Council would have to vote to approve the University's transportation plan and allow the transfer of the land from WISTEC to the University. Critics of the University's plans say this would threaten WISTEC's very existence.

A parade of WISTEC supporters spoke at Monday's City Council meeting, and they made it sound like an institution of higher learning (the University) is trying to destroy an institution of science learning. It's not that simple.

City councilors also commented at the meeting, and added twist after twist after twist. City Councilors Nancy Nathanson, Ward 8, and Gary Rayor, Ward 1, expressed concern that WISTEC is relying on funding from an uncertain source. Some of the land WISTEC leases is a grassy lot, and during heavy rains they're not supposed to use the lots in order to protect the park environment. Nathanson also made it clear that City Council is currently supporting WISTEC, by leasing the land at only \$1 per year.

Turning to the University's end of the deal, Nathanson asked why their second option couldn't be adopted, which entails the University building the bus transit station on its own land, leaving WISTEC entirely alone. Lane Transit District has said that this second option is positive for bus riders, because they wouldn't have to cross Leo Harris Parkway before and after the game, but that each option has many pros and cons on many different levels. City Councilor Bonnie Bettman, who represents the University in Ward 3, seemed unconvinced that the bus transit station would actually have the desired impact of lessening car traffic, and asked city staff to find out if any sort of information had been

collected on the efficacy of the bus program.

Many councilors expressed concern for the well-being of East Alton Baker Park, as well. As part of a separate agreement between the University and the city, the University can use some of Alton Baker's parking in exchange for allowing parking on Autzen's lots during shows at the Cuthbert Amphitheater. Part of this agreement calls for the University to maintain the park areas and clean up after the games. Councilor David Kelly, Ward 4, asked city staff to look into whether the city monitors the park land after games to be sure the University is keeping up its end of the bargain.

Is your head spinning yet? Basically, there are a series of inter-governmental agreements between the City of Eugene, the University, WISTEC and the Lane ESD Planetarium, which is housed in WISTEC's building and also benefits from the city-owned land. These agreements go back many years and some are overlapping in their jurisdiction. Perhaps Rayor summed it up best, saying that he's "troubled by this tangle of inter-governmental agreements that are all rotten."

We, also, are troubled by all of these conflicting agreements. The city needs to clear up its ties with other governmental bodies so that its interests are clear and it doesn't get caught in the middle of a mess like this again. And WISTEC would be wise to find a more dependable source of funding.

The University should adopt its second option, take care of its parking problems on its own land and leave WISTEC alone.

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

COMMENTARY

Dave Frohnmayer

Let's move on from FLA, WRC hubbub

Last spring, we saw a great deal of activity around the question of joining one monitoring group rather than another to make sure that apparel carrying our school's name is made under humane conditions.

In the months since then, I have spoken with many, many students — students whose views range on all sides of the issue. I carefully considered every major issue raised in the spring, as did a Senate review committee, in light of recent progress made by the Fair Labor Association.

One important point should not be overlooked. Through many months last year a university committee (students comprised half the members) developed a Licensing Code of Conduct that outlines the University's expectations of companies that use our name and logo on products. This code is what is being monitored. This important piece of work can be found on the Web at <http://comm.uoregon.edu/licensing/coc.html>.

During the past year, I have listened to the views of many people: students, faculty members, hundreds of alumni, trustees, friends and critics of the University. I have heard and studied more about this issue than any other during my time as president. I even attended a founding meeting of one monitoring organization, the Worker Rights Consortium.

And I learned something valuable: Right now, neither the WRC nor the FLA are perfect organizations. Both might make great strides during the next academic year. Ultimately, we should hope for development of an effective "one code, one monitoring system" approach.

But for now, I opted for common sense. I decided to join both.

I think it's a good decision that will help us enforce our Code of Conduct as effectively as possible. I encourage you to educate yourself on the issues, if you are interested, and make up your own mind. You can find a starting set of information and links on the web at <http://comm.uoregon.edu/licensing/>.

I hope that our campus can now move on to more important issues. We face many important challenges this year, and we need student energy and voices involved in many of them.

On one of the most important fronts, I commend our student government's ongoing dedication to voter registration. We are known nationally as a campus that gets out the student vote. It is especially important to do that again this year. We are facing some November ballot measures in Oregon that could drastically cut public funding for public higher education. We are going to need every student voter involved if we are to protect our university.

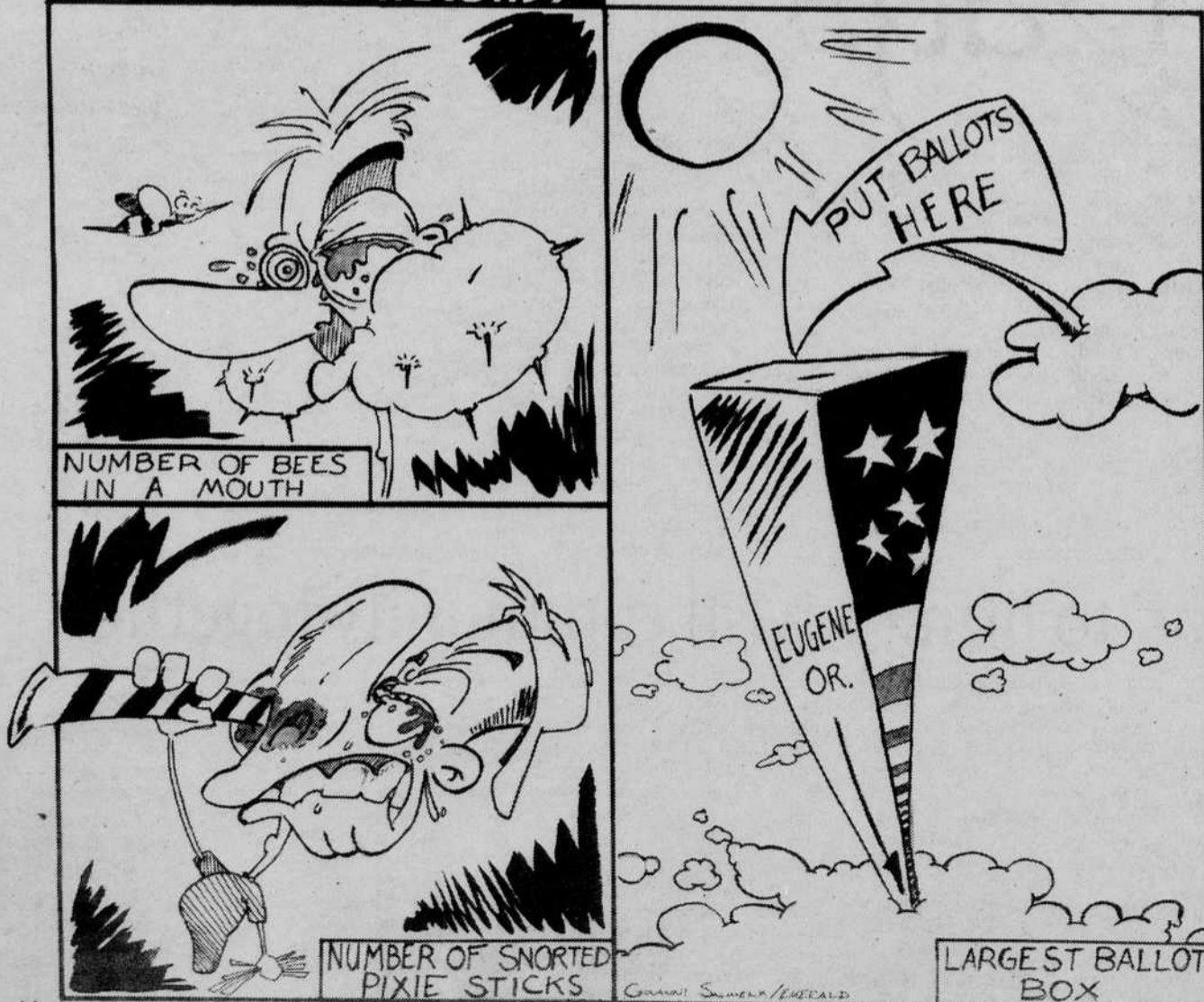
This year's ASUO president and I are strongly committed to getting out the biggest student vote in University history this fall. The threat to higher education is real; the stakes are high. If you want to learn more, or if you want to help, please contact the ASUO office.

It is time to pull together to deal with the real challenges, like this fall's vote, diversity issues, and many others, that will directly affect the quality of education here now and for future students.

I look forward to working with you this year. Please send me any thoughts you have on this issue or any other issue at pres@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Dave Frohnmayer is President of the University of Oregon

Pointless GUINNESS RECORDS



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