

## Paternalistic ideals masquerade as diversity



### LONE VOICE IN THE WOODS

BRET JACOBSON

The University announced the creation of a Center for the Study of Social Change through President Dave Frohnmayer's State of the University speech Wednesday — yet another step in the direction of the supposedly noble goal of diversity. The propriety of a public institution promoting politically driven social engineering must be thoughtfully questioned.

The University obviously believes in diversity, which essentially used to go by the title "Golden Rule." That name worked for several thousand years, though apparently that smacks too much of old-fashioned values for today's modern activists on the go. The recently proposed center and the recently disclosed numbers of minority students and faculty are enough evidence of the school's efforts in this field.

The rationale for diversity seems reasonable. More experiences for students means they will have better critical thinking skills to engage throughout the rest of their lives. Learning about other cultures by putting a human face to the issue also adds an appropriate amount of complexity to issues students will need to deal with later in life. So the rationale is fine, but is it the role of a university to promote one such value over other important ideas?

Make no mistake, diversity is a politically driven attempt at social engineering. It promotes respect, a worthwhile cause, while paying only lip service to other important ingredients of character, such as honesty and integrity. The only time you will hear about the virtues of honesty and integrity come in the form of a prohibition against cheating in the Student Conduct Code, while the volume for diversity issues on campus is blaring. Why should a university have the responsibility, even the right, to prioritize your values for you?

The paternalistic nature of this diversity push is a real concern. In Frohnmayer's State of the University speech, he said, "We are intent on achieving diversity — for the good of our students, for the essential nature of our learning process and for the good of the community."

That is indeed a very sweet effort, but it is not the role of a public university to indoctrinate its students in any fashion with a concerted effort to draw certain demographics to the community. Even while Frohnmayer is clearly a surpassingly intelligent and thoughtful man, it is not wise to concede that he is smart enough to decide for individual students the social lessons they are to learn. It would seem wiser to have bureaucrats stick to budgets and class curriculum.

Such paternalism can often turn into judging which thoughts are acceptable and which are not. Does anyone think that this school's version of populist-driven diversity really allows for all points of views to be expressed? A bias-response team was set up to deal with possible inflammatory

issues, closely resembling the quick-response teams employed by police agencies. There's a troubling visible parallel to the policing of crimes and unpopular ideas.

As a practical matter, while diversity is a good long-term target, there are more immediate concerns that pop up and should receive more focus than the stimulation of social consciences.

For instance, Frohnmayer still lists diversity as his main concern for the University, ahead of the Worker Rights Consortium concerns. Like the President of the United States being called away from long-range efforts to deal

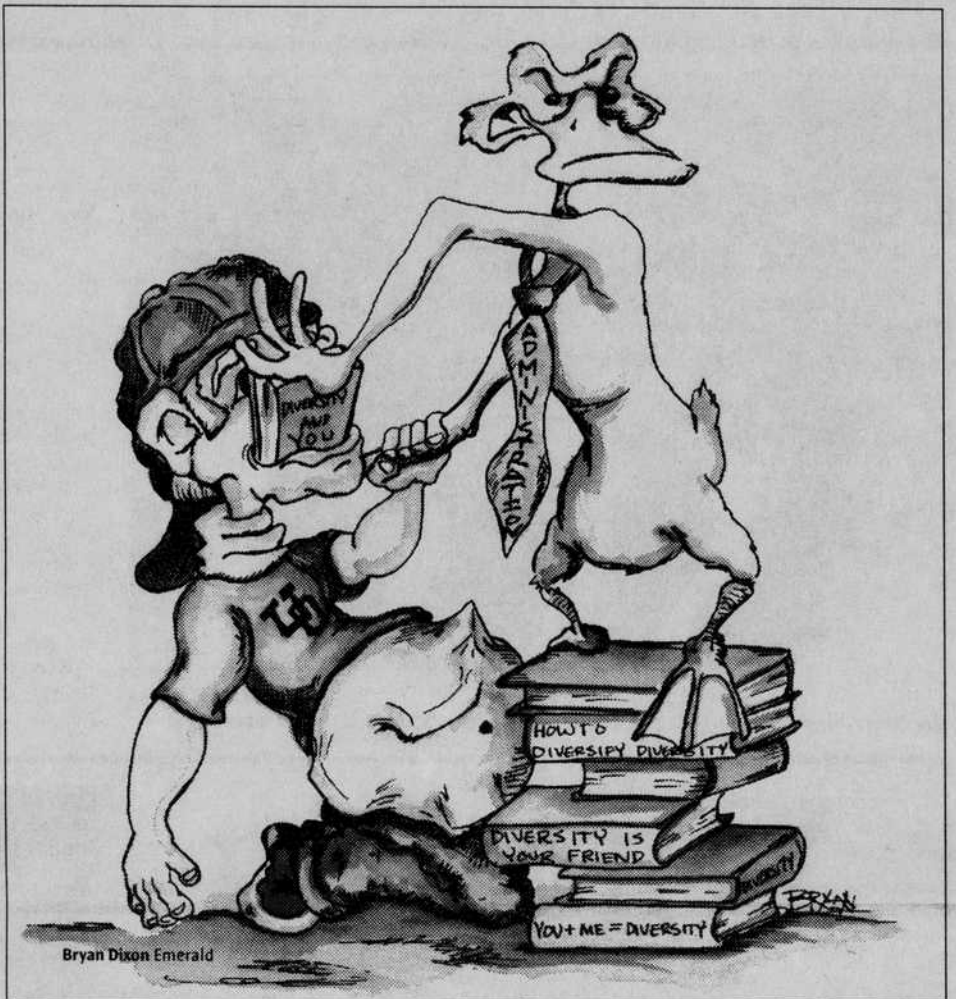
with more time-sensitive foreign affairs, Frohnmayer should have the recovery of Phil Knight's goodwill and hefty coffers and the continued expansion of Autzen Stadium on his short-term radar. When important \$30 million investments in University infrastructure appear

to be falling through, just maybe that should receive heavy concentration.

While the end result of diversity, the respect for others, is obviously a positive goal, it is incredibly unfortunate that this University is arrogant enough to believe it is their

role to prioritize virtues for its students and faculty.

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## Fees place unfair burden on students

The Eugene City Council will vote Nov. 13 — after postponing a decision that was supposed to be made at tonight's meeting — on the new police response fee, which would fine renters \$1,000 if police deal with a disorderly party at the same address twice in a 90-day period. We agree that punishing serious party offenders is necessary, but the response fee action is too broad. When added to the current "party patrol," the Eugene Police Department threatens to use students for revenue generation and to worsen community relations.

Students will party. Some people have big parties, and a few might host shindigs that genuinely get out of control. But every party with more than 10 people is not "disorderly," and students won't stop partying, no matter what strict measures EPD adopts.

So why does EPD have the party patrol, and why do they want the response fee? Purportedly, the party patrol exists to stop situations such as the 1998 Halloween riots. And no one wants hundreds of drunk students in the streets throwing bottles.

Preemptive keg checks and weekly visits from police, however, don't necessarily correspond to "disorderly" parties. Police check on parties with registered kegs early in the evening, to see if the keg is prematurely flowing. This isn't responsible patrolling. EPD shouldn't assume that a party might get out of con-

trol, or that students might not be able to enjoy themselves responsibly.

With EPD using the party patrol as an excuse to continuously knock on students' doors, why wouldn't we think the response fee is just an excuse to continuously collect money? That's the potential of the response fee, and that's why it needs to be revamped.

First, there should have to be an actual complaint called in from neighbors before the EPD can bust parties and fine students. That's not always the case. A loud party with, say, 20 people isn't necessarily a "disorderly" party. Without a complaint, the police shouldn't be knocking on the door.

Second, 90 days is too long to be holding addresses responsible in a campus area. This period needs to be shortened or applied to the names of the people in the house. No one should be fined \$1,000 because a prior tenant had a raucous party.

Lastly, we all share the cost of police services, and in a college town, some services are going to be responding to parties. College students pump a lot of money into Eugene's economy, and they shouldn't be the only ones paying for services we're all supposed to provide. Certainly, serious offenders shouldn't be draining police funds. Adjusting the response fee to fine third- or fourth-time offenders would be more appropriate.

Students do need to understand that it's not acceptable to endanger them-

selves or infringe on neighbors' rights by allowing parties to get out of control. Living in society means respecting each other. But until EPD uses its tools more appropriately, we're not inclined to give them more. How about more preventative interaction between the ASUO and EPD? Why not walk the beat to talk to parties, rather than bust them for tapping their keg 30 minutes early?

There are things students can do, as well. Talk to the ASUO about the response fee. Call ASUO Legal Services to discuss party citations. Contact the Independent Police Review Project at 343-5128 to work against inappropriate police conduct. Call CopWatch at 343-8548 for help filing complaints against the police. And at 7:30 p.m. Monday, go to the City Council meeting, sign up to speak during the public forum and give the council input on police action in the campus area. Student voices are needed to stop the response fee from being used inappropriately.

Penalties are appropriate for parties who regularly cause problems. But the response fee, as it is, coupled with the party patrol, sounds more like a means to collect money than a punishment for genuine troublemakers. It needs to be fixed or scrapped.

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

## Letters to the editor

### Check the facts before making assumptions

I am writing to respond to Mick Briscoe's letter to the editor ("Right to Bear Arms," ODE, 10/20). Briscoe's primary argument in defense of gun ownership was that women need guns to defend ourselves from rape. Here are some statistics regarding women, rape and handguns to counter that assumption:

- More than six out of every 10 rapes occur to children and adolescents under the age of 18. According to the Gun Control Act of 1968, persons must be at least 18 years of age to purchase a long gun and 21 years of age to buy a handgun from a licensed dealer.

- The risks of handgun ownership far outweigh the benefits. In 1992, for every one time a woman used a handgun to kill a stranger in self-defense, 239 women were murdered in handgun homicides.

- Firearms were the weapons used in approximately seven out of every 10 murders committed in the United States in 1994. Nine out of 10 female victims were slain by a male. Twice as many women were shot and killed by their husbands or intimate acquaintances than were murdered by strangers using firearms, knives or any other means.

Guns ultimately do not keep women safe from sexual assault nor any other form of violence. I would ask that men in the gun rights movement who argue for those rights speak from their own experience. Using women's fear of sexual assault to bolster your position is both manipulative and disrespectful.

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