

PERSPECTIVES

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Take the money and run



LONE VOICE IN THE WOODS

BRET JACOBSON

This University is a lot like a student double-majoring in pre-med and theater arts: It needs to pick one direction and go with it.

But as it stands now, this school is caught in a schizophrenic nightmare, unable to decide if its foundation is made of alumni donations and infrastructure improvements or a birthplace for socially conscious activists. There is a dire need for President Frohnmayer to offer a clear vision of which avenue this institution will travel, or step aside for a new leader to do the job.

The symptoms of the schizophrenia are clear.

On the one hand, the irritating rash caused by the constant chaffing of local activists has been nagging us since the early 1960s and shows little signs of going away. If left unchecked, this problem will lead to a socially conscious group of students recognized widely for their convictions and dilapidated facilities.

On the other diseased hand, there's the recent fundraising records set for such projects as the law school, the business school expansion and renovation and Autzen Sta-

dium. Long term, this problem can manifest itself in a more attractive campus with better scholastic facilities and a better athletic program, but the University runs the risk of a "sell-out" reputation.

Clearly, the best course of action would be to further raise funds and improve the infrastructure of the campus. Better facilities make it easier to attract better professors, which obviously leads to a better overall academic environment. And as the quality of education grows, so too does the reputation of the school, further increasing the value of an Oregon graduate.

While some may claim an activist campus offers a good educational atmosphere by examining social issues, it is the nation's top tier law and business and journalism schools, etc., that lead to the best education value for alumni. After all, when was the last time Wall Street or Madison Avenue listed Reed College as their primary recruiting ground?

Leaving the problem alone to fester and to balance itself out is not an acceptable option. The tension between the very vocal minority of activist students and the silent majority of students who believe there is a definite need for better facilities and donor contributions is real and will not mend itself. Until the tension is dissolved, however, no progress can be made in either direction.

And while this little bit of tension can be survivable, the University cannot achieve great standing as either a bastion of social consciousness

or as a modern university with impressive facilities and impeccable educational opportunities.

It would be easy to simply suppose that this tension has been a bother for the last four decades and is just a fact of life that must be taken as cosmic truth. After all, Eugene is probably still the world's leader in per capita hippie population, and it wouldn't be a school year without an unseemly, boisterous demonstration in the name of some animal rights, ecological or humanitarian cause.

That position, however, is utterly and nonsensically defeatist. If this institution had a leader with a clear vision for the future, this unique limbo that is the school's atmosphere could be transformed into a productive, harmonious university. This campus can be a good place for future leaders of the real world to grow and thrive, but that will take a strong will from the school's administration.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Do we want money, stature and improved education, or the pride of a socially conscious body? In the name of progress and peace, maybe it's time to just pick the money and move on so that the University can

achieve greatness sooner rather than later. Solve the schizophrenia and pick pre-med.

Bret Jacobson is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

How will the popular vote turn out today?

The presidential race is always close; since 1824, the winner of the presidency has averaged only 55 percent of the popular vote.

Total popular votes cast in 1824, the first year recorded: 262,284

The number of popular votes cast reached 1 million in 1828; in 1888, it hit 10 million; it totaled 25 million in 1920; in 1952, it had topped 50 million. The U.S. population reached 100 million in 1920, but the popular vote didn't hit 100 million until 1992. Then, in 1996, it slipped back below 100 million.

Number of times the loser of the presidential race has received more votes than the winner: 2, in 1824 and in 1876

Year the widest margin was recorded between the winner and loser of the presidency: 1860, when Abraham Lincoln won with 69 percent of the popular vote. This was only the second time the Republicans had ever run a candidate for president.

Notable third party runs:

In 1892, People's Party candidate James Weaver receives more than a million votes, garnering 9 percent of the total popular vote.

In 1912, Theodore Roosevelt, running for the Progressive Party, and William H. Taft, running for the Republican Party, tied for runner-up with 26 percent of the popular vote each. Democrat Woodrow Wilson won with 48 percent of the popular vote.

In 1924, Progressive Party candidate Robert M. LaFollette took 17 percent of the popular vote.

In 1932, Socialist Party candidate Norman Thomas won 2 percent of the popular vote.

The 1948 election saw two third-party candidates, each of whom received 2.5 percent of the popular vote: State's Rights Party candidate Strom Thurmond (yes, he's a senator now) and Progressive Party candidate Henry A. Wallace.

In 1968, American Independent Party candidate George C. Wallace received 14 percent of the popular vote, leaving Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey in a statistical dead heat.

In 1992, Independent candidate H. Ross Perot received more than 19 million votes, or 19 percent of the popular vote, and some pundits believe that 19 percent gave Bill Clinton the presidency.

Then in 1996, Perot ran again on the Reform Party ticket, but won only 9 percent of the popular vote.

Source: www.nara.gov/fedreg/elctcoll/ecfront.html

Voter's nationwide face big decisions

The latest CNN/USA Today/ Gallup presidential poll is in, showing Texas Gov. George Bush leading Vice President Al Gore 47 percent to 45 percent, with Ralph Nader at 4 percent. Almost 3 percent of the 2,386 likely voters contacted were still undecided as of Sunday night.

With the news, Republicans are no doubt feeling a tad confident, Democrats are a bit bummed and Naderites are hoping the Election Fairy brings an extra 1 percent for federal funding. (Libertarian, Socialist, Constitution and Reform Party backers have to wait four more years for their voice to make a measurable impact.)

Of course, the numbers don't mean squat, and not solely because of the +/- 2 percent margin of error. The numbers are irrelevant because people across the country still need to, as Rev. Jesse Jackson told hundreds of University students last week, "take [their] souls to the polls."

In Oregon, with its vote-by-mail system, tens of thousands people have already voted and are waiting to see if their choices won. Yet, when it comes to voting, the theme should mimic that oft-used sports phrase: "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." In America, playing the game means voting, and the right to vote ought to be honored with the act of actually voting.

So, if you haven't already done so, take out your voters' pamphlets, get your ballot ready, find a poking implement and punch away. Then tonight, you can watch with true interest as the results roll in. And if local issues don't quite quench your political thirst, keep an eye on these issues from other states:

- In Alaska, voters will be considering Proposition 5, which would legalize marijuana ownership, use and distribution for people age 18 and older. In addition, it would: automatically release people convicted in state court of marijuana crimes; destroy all criminal records of marijuana activities; set up an advisory panel to consider paying restitution to those convicted of marijuana crimes; allow prosecution of those driving under the influence of marijuana; ban mandatory marijuana testing and prohibit Alaska from aiding federal agencies in mar-

ijuana prosecutions. That's a whole bale of marijuana legislation.

- California is also considering drug legislation, but this time the supporters of medical marijuana have moved on to drug treatment. Instead of putting first- and second-time drug offenders in jail, Proposition 36 would provide probation and drug treatment. Martin Sheen, who has been arrested for more liberal causes than all of Eugene's anarchists put together, has been a harsh critic of the proposition, saying that his son Charlie Sheen needed incarceration to straighten up.

- Nebraska's Initiative 416 would not only amend that state's constitution to recognize a marriage as strictly between one man and one woman, but would also invalidate same-sex unions or domestic partnerships performed in any other state. Any couples who've received a same-sex union in Vermont might want to watch the results before moving to Nebraska.

- Massachusetts's Question 5 would establish a statewide single-payer health care system, something Hillary Clinton couldn't achieve nationally. Layers of HMO administration bureaucracy would be eliminated, health decisions would be made by doctors and nurses, and the extra money would be used to provide health care for every Massachusetts citizen.

The race for control of the U.S. Congress should also be entertaining. If you believe the campaigns for president, every branch of the government is up for grabs this year, and it will all be decided, more or less, today.

An editorial in Saturday's edition of The New York Times by Verlyn Klinkenborg gives another reason why today is so important:

"An ideal republic forms in the heads of some voters. Others vote their pocketbooks, their prejudices. Some of us vote the way our parents did, the ways we wish our children might. We vote on single interests and on abstract principles, for reasons that are sometimes cogent, sometimes not. Even if there were no more pressing reasons to vote, there is always the one inviolable reason, which is to preserve the possibility of voting."

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