

Just your average Executive

As midterms approach (yes, they're little more than a week away), the Emerald editorial board decided to take a look at how the ASUO president and vice president, Jay Breslow and Holly Magner, respectively, have done so far in their terms as student body leaders. We offer a five-part grading system: Staffing Ability, Leadership Skills, Administrative Duties, Diversity Efforts and Future Goals (since the term is only half over). Each area will be graded and weighted equally, then averaged for an overall grade.

According to Breslow and Magner's Web site on the Gladstone server, diversity was a top issue for the duo.

"As we work to make change at the University of Oregon," the site reads, "we will consistently work to reach out to all UO students and make sure that the people who work in student government represent everyone at our school." Besides noting that they would work to support "students of color" and "traditionally underrepresented groups," Breslow and Magner said they would improve relations between students and the Department of Public Safety and the Eugene Police Department.

Staffing Ability:

Breslow and Magner have done an exceptional job (especially for being self-professed "new kids" in student government) of surrounding themselves with hard-working, talented leaders. Legislative Associate Melissa Unger, State Affairs Advocate Brian Tanner and Community Outreach Director Christa Shively, in particular, have spent countless hours working for the good of students. Unger is a superior organizer whose unflagging energy helped the University become third in the nation in voter registration last year. Tanner can quote higher education budget numbers from memory. And when the ASUO deemed the City of Eugene's party response fee unacceptable to students, Shively wrote a different version of the code and presented it to the City Council, winning some concessions in the law. One concern we have is whether the ASUO staff is truly representative of all students, or more representative of the "traditionally underrepresented groups" and the activists Breslow worked with prior to his election. Grade for this assignment: A-

Leadership Skills:

Even when talking to Breslow and Magner, it's hard to tell who has ideas and vision and who doesn't. Were the efforts on voter turnout, the party response fee and higher education funding the result of these two as leaders, or the result of smart, effective staff? In either case, Breslow gets some credit for being the president while these events occurred.

When asked if he had an agenda for this year's legislative session in Salem, Breslow spoke of the agenda of the Oregon Students' Association. Is that agenda his doing?

Even if not, there's some more leadership credit for sitting on the OSA board.

One failure: Breslow could not tell us if he had any ideas for ballot measures in this year's student election — not even any topics that interested him. And after the recent decision by DPS to commission officers, Breslow didn't know how he felt about the issue. He said it was wrong to decide on commissioning without student input, but he had no idea how he felt about the increased DPS powers.

More failure: Relationships with University President Dave Frohnmayer, DPS and the EPD have not improved. Not all of the blame can be placed on Breslow and Magner; last year's ASUO leaders also spoke of the difficulties of a relationship with Frohnmayer if you don't agree with him on issues. And local authority agencies have not exactly cozied up to students. Still, a powerful leader either bites the bullet and shmoozes opponents into submission or presents proposals to blow them out of the water. Breslow has done neither. Grade for this assignment: C-

Administrative Duties:

Last term, two students aimed a recall effort at Breslow, citing unfulfilled duties. The charges: He failed to produce the notebook of student government rules and regulations that every ASUO Executive is required to write, he violated the ASUO Constitution by leaving more than 10 positions unfilled in student government for more than 30 days, and he showed political favoritism in the election by repeatedly helping Democratic supporters speak on campus. Breslow responded to these charges and admitted that he didn't make some appointments in time. There is still no Green Tape Notebook of regulations. But Breslow denies showing favoritism in the election, saying that support was offered to both Democrats and Republicans, and only Democrats responded. But filling government positions is an important part of the job. And Breslow's recent failure to get the ASUO Elections up and running on time is worrisome. True, the elections are now on course. But the delay has meant that no serious ballot measures are being presented to students, and Breslow himself has no issues for students to vote on. This is bad. Grade for this assignment: C-

Diversity:

Here we get into a very sticky issue. If we support diversity as defined by Breslow and Magner, then identity politics rule, and we're saying that the interests of "traditionally underrepresented groups" are all there is to diversity. ASUO staff have genuinely done some good work, having mentors call younger minority students to offer support and information, supporting student groups that represent ethnic minorities and organizing the "Weaving New Beginnings" program for minority students to explore their future at the University. But we do not

believe that the sole job of the ASUO is to "help student groups organize themselves," as Breslow told us. True diversity would be finding ways to get groups such as the Greek Student Union and discussing diversity issues on a broader scale than simply isolationist identity politics. Diversity means including everyone at the table, including those groups traditionally over-represented. Oth-

erwise, it's not diversity — it's tokenism and the bad kind of affirmative action. Grade for this assignment: C-

Future Goals:

Beyond "building on a great base" and "having a lot of fun in the spring," Breslow and Magner offered very little in the way of future goals. They'll be working on the stuff they said they wanted to work on,

we guess. But we like to have fun in the spring, so they earn some points here. Grade for this assignment: C+

Breslow and Magner's overall midterm grade: C+

One caveat, though: We hear that grade inflation is rampant on campuses across the country.

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



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