

PERSPECTIVES

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Money down the drain

Imagine this: A new group called the University of Oregon Gun Club has just been granted a \$128,000-per-year budget from student incidental fees. The group brings a few

speakers to campus, sponsors some gun-safety classes and a couple of internships. But 95 percent of its budget is sent off to the National Rifle Association to help pay for lobbyists writing and researching for pro-gun legislation.

Does this scenario aggravate you?

Well if it does, you are opposed to paying incidental fees to support groups and causes that you may not agree with. Incidental fees have been around for years to help fund student groups, but ever since the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Southworth vs. the University of Wisconsin* about a year ago that told the university to uphold its fee system, all hell has broken loose. Before the ruling, the University of Wisconsin did not give any money to groups that endorsed political or religious views, but now all groups are allowed access to these funds.

The more than \$500 per year, per student incidental fee pays for things that students may not have realized or even known about. During the lovely fall season, many people show up to the ticket counter in the EMU to show their Duck pride and get their football tickets. I know when I first started getting tickets, I had a refreshing feeling thinking that I was getting something free for once, but then I was let in on a lit-

tle secret. Those tickets have already been paid for by students through incidental fees.

This may not be a problem for those students who wish to partake in the chaos known as a football game, but for those students who attend the University for exclusively academic motives, it could be objectionable. Have you ever showed up to the ticket booth to find out that all of the tickets are gone? Well, you paid for a ticket that does not exist.

Students should not have to pay for sports tickets if they choose not to attend the events, or want to attend but cannot because the tickets are gone. Why not just have students buy tickets when they want them?

Most of the student groups on campus accept incidental fees. Some of them include the College Democrats, Justice For All (an anti-abortion group) and Students For Choice (a pro-choice group). Even if you do not politically support the views of these groups, you are supporting them financially. Maybe instead of accepting these fees, the groups should charge dues. That way, people who do not want to get involved don't have to pay for it.

One of the most controversial groups, when it comes to incidental fees, is OSPIRG. The Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group receives \$128,000 of our money from fees, and the way it's used stirs up a debate. According to the Jan. 31 issue of the Emerald, OSPIRG sends the \$128,000 up to Portland to pay for statewide causes. Student members of OSPIRG at the University take advantage of the resources and staff for local causes, but most of the money pays for office space and staff to work on legislation

This is the first in a two-part debate about student incidental fees.

Today: Lisa Marie Catto argues in opposition to the fees.

Friday: Jessica Blanchard argues in support of the fees.

that OSPIRG supports. The problem with this picture is that barely any of the student dollars stay here on campus. Can you imagine how much cleaner this area would be if OSPIRG kept the money here? Instead of asking for donations to help clean the Willamette River, why don't they use the incidental fees they get? Students do not need to be paying for things that are being done elsewhere.

Another group that gets student money is The Insurgent, a very liberal campus newspaper. Recently, the newspaper ran an insert from the Animal Liberation Front, which included instructions on how to break into laboratories and cost laboratories money without getting caught. The Insurgent also included the names and addresses of several biologists and research scientists who conduct tests on animals. Do you want your money going toward these kinds of activities? I know I don't.

What if a Nazi group or the Ku Klux Klan wanted to come to campus? They would have every right to these funds, and students would be supporting racially dis-



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

criminating activities.

Incidental fees are fundamentally wrong. We live in a nation which prides itself on freedom of speech, and it is a sad day for our country when students are not allowed that freedom but are forced to pay for activities in which they do not believe or do not wish to partake.

Lisa Marie Catto is a member of the Col-

lege Republicans and is the student community representative on the Emerald editorial board for winter term. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. She can be reached at lcatto@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Editor's note: The Emerald received \$132,870 in student fees for the 2000-01 budget year. The newspaper is currently appealing a 25 percent cut in funds for the 2001-02 year.

What's a game without the fans?

GUEST COMMENTARY

Marissa Jones

After reading Peter Hockaday's article "Homegrown Attitude" (ODE, Feb. 1), I must admit that as a Duck fan, I was a little angry. When Luke Jackson said his hope was to win the rest of the season's games, Hockaday replied by saying, "Sure, Luke."

Hockaday thought the Ducks couldn't beat Arizona, but as a fan, I knew the team had a good chance. The previous weekend in California brought two losses, but the Ducks improved many things and started working well as a team. Back at McArthur Court, the Ducks played an amazing offensive and defensive game, upsetting Arizona and proving they could win the rest of their games.

I'm sure Hockaday would call the win lucky, using the Arizona State game on Sunday to prove his point. The Ducks' loss to the Sun Devils, who had only won one Pacific-10 Conference game, shows the Arizona

game was just a fluke, right? There was one big factor, however, between the Arizona and Arizona State games: the fans. On Thursday, Duck fans packed the student section, but on Sunday, there was an empty balcony, a semi-full Pit crew and a few students in the corner section.

All those Duck fans who I thought believed in the team must have had other things to do, and the majority of those who did find time in their schedules left before the end. After the game, head coach Ernie Kent thanked the fans who stayed through the whole game and apologized for the team's performance. Ernie was apologizing, when really the fans should be apologizing to him. Giving up on his team at the half? Not showing up for the game?

One thing to point out is the student tickets for the Arizona State game were sold out. When a student picks up a ticket and doesn't use it, it hurts the team and doesn't use it, it hurts the athletic department generally. The athletic department sells the ASUO tickets to the football and basketball games at discounted prices. The unused ticket could have been sold full price to someone else. Not using tickets wastes our student fee, loses money for the athletic

department and raises ticket prices for students in the future. The Athletic Department Finance Committee and the athletic department are always in negotiations about student tickets. The less students show up, the worse we look to the athletic department. They'll start to sell tickets to us at regular price and even reduce the quantity if students fail to use them. Do you want to have to start buying season tickets and sitting in assigned seats?

There's nothing like the "running of the bulls" to get that good seat in The Pit. What makes Mac Court so special is the fact that, as fans, students have the opportunity to help out the team. If they jump up and down enough, fans can actually shake the opponent's basket. Students make a difference, and their support helps out the team. There is no place in the country like Mac Court, and students have four years to experience its glory. Don't let the years pass by without bothering to take advantage of student tickets. Don't miss your chance to be the sixth man. Don't miss your chance to be a real Duck fan.

Marissa Jones is a sophomore business and journalism major at the University.

Letters to the editor

Statement inaccurate

The front page article on Friday ("Just debate it: forum addresses labor issues," ODE, Feb. 2) reported on a forum where a number of professors, including myself, discussed their views on the University's involvement in groups monitoring overseas operations of the University's apparel licensees. While I found most of the article to be a balanced report of the proceedings, I was dismayed to read that, according to the article, "all agreed the University should become a member of both the Worker Rights Consortium and the Fair Labor Association." This statement is false.

My own personal comments indicated that I support the University's membership in the Fair Labor Association (though I don't think it is essential), but I do not support membership in the Worker Rights Consortium. Other presenters at the forum expressed a diversity of opinions on the Universi-

ty's membership issue with these organizations, which were incorrectly summarized by this statement in the article.

Anyone interested in seeing the full text of my comments may access them at the following Internet link: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~bruceb/fla_wrc.html.

Bruce Blonigen
 associate professor
 economics

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