

PERSPECTIVES

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Brooklyn, Nair for ASUO exec

Wow, what an election season. While on a shortened timetable, the race for ASUO president and vice president has been hard fought. The Emerald editorial board predicts a close primary and general election, at least if our own discussion of the candidates is any indication.

All of the serious contenders are reaching out to student groups and fighting, as last year's U.S. presidential candidates did, for the moderate center. The fact that so much attention is being paid to the issues is a credit to the candidates and has already produced one clear winner: students, who will have an engaged ASUO Executive no matter the outcome.

So far, three tickets have been jockeying for the lead position. Bret Jacobson and Matt Cook are running as the outsiders who will represent everyone and bring creative thinking and professionalism to the office. Eric Bailey and Jeff Oliver are self-professed insiders who say they know how student government works, so they know how to improve it. Somewhere in the middle are Nilda Brooklyn and Joy Nair, who currently work in the ASUO office but are not insiders in the traditional sense of student-government wonks.

After much debate, we support Nilda and Joy, in both the primary and the potential general election. They will do the best job on the issues we considered the most important: representing every voice on campus; renters' rights, which involve more than passing the buck to private interests; reaching out to the administration, while not kowtowing to it; working hard to improve relations with the Eugene police and campus security, as well as challenging city councils who don't appreciate the students; and fighting for improved access to education for everyone.

Overall, we think the top candidates' various plans for most of the issues pan out to about a tie. All three tickets are working to address students' main concerns, and they all have good ideas. We applaud everyone's effort and hope it carries through into action for the next ASUO president.

But the issue that dominated our discussion, in the end, was diversity and student representation in the ASUO. The candidates have been spending a lot of words explaining how they would open the doors of student government to everyone.

There seems to be some sentiment on campus and on the Emerald editorial board that the current Executive was run by and for a few liberals and minorities to promote their very liberal causes. This description is arguably exaggerated, as the current office has done work on a variety of wide-interest issues, but it was expressed by the candidates and a few students at the debate. Bailey and Oliver, for one, mentioned that some people, and Greeks in particular, don't feel welcomed in the ASUO office. If true, this certainly needs to change.

Now we get into difficult territory. People will be mad at us no matter how this is written, so here goes.

The notion that the straight white person's viewpoint is not heard or represented at the University is peculiar. It's difficult to go anywhere on campus (or in Oregon, for that matter) without running into the dominant majority perspective. At the University, supposedly a bastion of exploring alternate viewpoints, the dominant majority may find itself confronted with opposition, but it's still here and represented.

The point of diversity and multiculturalism is not that you get your views heard in proportion to your population. Under that theory, the minority viewpoints in Oregon would be all but silenced. Instead, every voice must be listened to on an equal footing, regardless of its minority status.

With that said, we feel that Nilda and Joy are in the best position to ensure every voice IS represented. They have worked with a wide range of student groups and understand how to represent the often-silenced interests. They can use that knowledge to engage everyone.

It is imperative that not a few, not some, but every interest has a place in student government. We strongly suggest that Nilda and Joy make sure the Greek system and the politically conservative are welcomed in the ASUO office, and we will be disappointed if they embrace the divisive forms of diversity into which University politics sometimes slips. It's not enough to reach out to only those people one is comfortable with or used to. The effort must be made to bring opposing opinions together to talk.

As a final note, we hope Bret and Matt make it to the general election, if one is required. Of all the candidates we didn't endorse, Bret and Matt have



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the best ideas and the most challenging views on issues. The discussion they create is indicative of the entire idea of diversity on campus, and we hope they continue to argue the issues throughout the election process.

We encourage you to vote for Nilda and Joy, but don't just take our recommendation — meet the candidates yourself, ask questions, make suggestions and be an active voter. And no matter your choice, please vote. Voting is available around the clock on

Duck Web, from today through Thursday. Student government makes decisions that affect us all and handles a lot of student money. It pays to be informed and involved.

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

Editor's note: In the interest of fairness and full disclosure, readers should know that Bret Jacobson is a former Emerald editorial editor and columnist.

Letters to the editor

Shame on sexism

I walked out of the candidate debate on Thursday night with a sick feeling in my stomach. It was not due to the lack of quality candidates, but rather the words of one candidate and the reactions he elicited from the audience. It doesn't take any intelligence to offend people.

Tasteless humor is possibly the lowest form of comedy. However, it is not the misogynist and demeaning nature of the message of the specific candidate that outraged me, it was the audience reaction.

We sat in that room, and every one of us let it happen. As men, when we see such blatant sexism, it is our responsibility to stand up and say something. It is an embarrassment to the ASUO and this University that nothing was done and nothing was said as the role of women on this campus was completely dismissed.

We would all be outraged had the content been racist in nature, but for some reason the objectification of women is considered lighthearted and funny. I hope that in the future, all people in this situation, including myself, will have the strength to stand up and speak out against such degrading messages. None of us did on Thursday, and it is a shame on all of us.

Jay Breslow
 ASUO president
 senior
 psychology/Spanish

Make a difference and vote for OSPIRG

I am writing to say that I absolutely

agree with Eric Pfeiffer's editorial ("OSPIRG: A model for citizens," ODE, Feb. 20). Having groups like OSPIRG here at the University of Oregon and all across the state makes a difference both on campus and off.

Having worked closely with student groups and governments around the state and around the country, I have learned that it's important to not only work for the issues students are concerned about on campus, but also to build statewide student movements off campus as well. OSPIRG is an amazing example of this. When you combine all the student activism from OSPIRG chapters statewide with the expertise of their professional staff, it makes a serious difference for the public interest.

Just one example of the good work they do is the campaign to "Clean the Willamette River." Students on campus are researching polluters, monitoring streams and organizing grassroots campaigns while at the same time OSPIRG's toxics staffer, Rhett Lawrence, works with the Department of Environmental Quality and the governor to enforce the current clean water protections we already have.

Students and staff working for Oregon is a one-two punch that just doesn't miss. So I encourage you to vote yes for OSPIRG in the upcoming elections, because our education and our environment need our help.

Tim Young
 junior
 political science
 member of Oregon State Board of
 Higher Education

Having fun with candidates

During their interviews, we asked the candidates three really, uh, important questions. Hey, it's more information. More information is good, right? Here's how everyone answered:

Mac and cheese or ramen?

Eric Bailey: Mac and cheese — if it's really cheesy.
 Nilda Brooklyn: Ramen.

Sho Ikeda: Both at the same time.

Bret Jacobson: Ramen.

Eric Qualheim: Ramen; I can't afford mac and cheese.

Brad Schatzel: Mac and cheese — if it's Kraft.

"Who Wants to be a Millionaire" or "Jeopardy"?
 Bailey: "Millionaire"; it makes you feel smarter when they mess up.

Brooklyn: "Jeopardy."

Ikeda: "Jeopardy."

Jacobson: "Jeopardy"; it's a classic and based on real knowledge occasionally.

Qualheim: "Jeopardy" has a much better theme song.

Schatzel: "Jeopardy."

Amihotornot.com or mullets-galore.com?

Bailey: I use amihotornot.com.

Brooklyn: Mulletsgalore.com.

Ikeda: Amihotornot.com.

Jacobson: Amihotornot.com.

Qualheim: Amihotornot.com.

Schatzel: I'm not familiar with them; I'll go with the mullet.

The correct answers are actually: Mac and cheese, "Jeopardy" and amihotornot.com, but no candidate got all three, so you can't base your vote on this little poll.

Poll Results

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll and the poll question for next week. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, www.dailyemerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

Last week's poll question

What is the most important issue in the ASUO election?

Results: 77 total votes

Diversity — 15 votes, or 19.5 percent

Campus safety — 8 votes, or 10.4 percent

Renters' rights — 12 votes, or 15.6 percent

Incidental fee — 18 votes, or 23.4 percent

Relations with authorities and decision makers — 24 votes, or 31.2 percent

This one was all over the board, with no critical mass. We hope the number of votes in our poll doesn't foreshadow the election turnout. Vote on Duck Web!

This week's poll question

I think University professors get paid:

The choices:

Too much

Not enough

Just right

Don't care