

# PERSPECTIVES

Editor in chief: Jack Clifford  
 Managing Editor: Jessica Blanchard  
 Newsroom: (541) 346-5511  
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union  
 P.O. box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403  
 E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

EDITORIAL EDITOR: MICHAEL J. KLECKNER opededitor@journalist.com

## State board proves money conquers all



### DIARY OF A MALCONTENT

MICHAEL J. KLECKNER

I am so mad at the state Board of Higher Education for its decision about labor codes of conduct. The University can no longer demand anything from companies it does business with, except that they follow the law. Geez, that's responsible. What a way to set an example for students.

So the University will now cut off ties with the Worker Rights Consortium and the Fair Labor Association. Great. Let's have no standards at all!

I'm not just mad because we lost. Student activists and sweatshop slaves lost big time, that's true. But I'm more intelligent than that.

I'm mad because this decision happened without public input. And the state board knew that and did it anyway.

If the state had engaged in a discussion about what role state universities should have in determining whom they do business with, and then we still lost, I wouldn't be so upset. But instead, the board made a decision, which is strictly political, without public input and called it "politically impartial."

This "neutrality" is the part that

bothers me the most. The board said that state universities must do business in a "straightforward and politically impartial manner" — as though that would equal neutral action. But it doesn't.

By removing from the equation concerns about how businesses operate, we are making a very strong political statement. We're saying, "All that matters is money. Money, money, money."

And that's sick. And it's wrong.

Economics likes to term political concerns "externalities," as though they don't mean anything. But they do. The decisions we make with our money are always political, and the "externalities" always have real ramifications. If we buy Nike shoes, we're saying we think it's acceptable for Nike to hire a crappy factory that mistreats its workers, and Nike does nothing to change the situation. That's very political.

University President Dave Frohnmayer, the state Board of Higher Education, Chancellor Cox and every elected politician in Oregon should feel shame. Because the message they're sending to young people across the state is that nothing matters but money. Make a lot of money, by any means necessary. Maybe that



should now be, "Buy any means necessary."

How do we expect young people to grow up with a sense of morals, ethics and humanity if we tell them that those concerns are

irrelevant? What are we teaching our youth?

Everyone involved with this decision should be ashamed. The rest of us should be outraged, and we should speak out. Otherwise, we're acting "politically impar-

tial," and then we're guilty, too.

Michael J. Kleckner is the editorial editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at opededitor@journalist.com.

### Letters to the editor

#### Recommendation illogical

The Emerald's Monday recommendation of OSPIRG's ballot measure is short on reason and long on rationalization.

The first and most important argument against funding OSPIRG is the group's complete and total lack of accountability. The Emerald claims that this matters to them, but it is apparent that these concerns are secondary to their support of OSPIRG's causes. Which is more important? Following the rules or being politically correct?

The Emerald asserts that OSPIRG has "made strides toward greater accountability in recent years." What strides? OSPIRG has done no such thing, except publish a handful of meaningless, contradictory estimates of how its money is spent. These "budgets" are about as accurate as a Florida re-count, and yet the Emerald bought OSPIRG's claim of accessibility hook, line and sinker. The editorial board should be ashamed for such gullibility.

The Emerald is justified in calling upon OSPIRG for greater "transparency" and an "end-of-year financial statement," but if the Emerald believes that OSPIRG will ever submit to such indignities, they are deluding themselves.

If OSPIRG wanted to be accountable, it would go to the Programs Finance Committee with budgetary information. But it doesn't, because as long as the fraction of campus that votes rubber-stamps its funding request, it doesn't have to.

If the Emerald wants accountability from OSPIRG, they should have recommended a "No" vote. Endorsing its ballot measure while demanding "that it become more

transparent" only compounds the problem. Until the student body tells OSPIRG to shape up, it won't.

**William Beutler**  
 director of communications  
 Honesty campaign

#### Intolerance rampant, uncivil

Walking into the Klamath computer lab the other day, I noticed an ASUO election poster for Bret Jacobson and Matt Cook. It was well designed, with their stance on issues, such as better relations with the Eugene Police Department and disassociation from the Worker Rights Consortium.

The poster had a picture of the candidates, complete with a small swastika planted on Bret's forehead. I want to thank whoever placed that swastika on the poster for giving me one more reason to believe this is the most intolerant, one-sided university imaginable.

I have been angered by the ignorance of conservative views by the majority of this University. Bret and Matt were not exactly speaking from the right in their campaign, but perhaps the bitterness of the University attempting to dislodge itself from the joke of an organization that is the WRC is catching up to a disrespectful and irresponsible group of people.

Voicing opinions through letters and speeches has always been a civil way of coming to solutions. Placing random swastikas on campus leads to bewilderment and anger.

I do not know Bret and Matt, but I can only assume their moderate stance on some issues led someone to animate their posters with a symbol of hate and genocide. I don't

believe Bret and Matt were intending to become the Gestapo, but were running a clean campaign for what they believed were the best interests of the University.

Let's celebrate that by listening to the views, not magnifying the intolerance.

**Gregg Schiveley**  
 senior  
 environmental studies

#### OSPIRG gets results

One glance at the headlines, one toxic swim in the Willamette or one look at your tuition bill should alert you to the need for change in Oregon. You may wonder why no politician is resolving these problems. Unfortunately, it takes public pressure to get politicians moving and to help them make the best decisions. You have to get involved or lend support to someone or something that will get involved for you.

That's why it's important for people to support OSPIRG and vote yes. OSPIRG gets results — protecting millions of acres of forests, saving students money, monitoring polluters and raising awareness about issues that could mean life or death on a global scale. I recently became involved with OSPIRG as a volunteer as a way to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

People complain that OSPIRG spends money hiring non-students and off-campus staff. The problems we work on aren't limited to campus. We can't put a bubble around Eugene and clean only our air and water. Practical solutions to real problems require the aid of expert staff at the University and around the state.

We can argue about incidental fees until the last old-growth tree falls on Oregon and

the last fish floats to the top of the Willamette. Or we can work together as students within an established organization to make real changes. I encourage everyone to vote yes for OSPIRG — it's more important now than ever before.

**J.J. Burkart**  
 senior  
 journalism

#### Vote yes for the environment

I'm writing to encourage people to vote in support of OSPIRG this week.

It's an easy choice. Vote yes for OSPIRG if you want to see forests preserved, clean rivers and wild places in Oregon and America saved. Vote no if you want more clearcuts, dirtier water and the degradation of the environment.

Don't let the campus right-wing muddle the argument. It's as simple as that. OSPIRG is fighting for a healthier planet. A loss for OSPIRG in this election only means one less level of defense for the environment and the world we live in.

At this point, OSPIRG needs support more than ever. George Bush is in office and Gale Norton, the secretary of the interior, is ready to return us to Watt-era environmental policy. OSPIRG is one of many groups that we need to fight on a statewide level to help protect what little is left of the wild spaces in Oregon.

Why do you think the right comes out so strong against OSPIRG? It's because OSPIRG is effective. Fight 'em tooth and nail. The health of our planet is at stake. Do the right thing. Vote yes on OSPIRG.

**Willie Thompson**  
 sociology  
 senior