

PERSPECTIVES

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Spring forward

Welcome back to your life in college. With any luck, you're rested and ready for some more learning. With bad luck, you got so incapacitated that you can't remember anything you learned winter term. The Emerald editorial board, in response to a week of slacking, decided to devote today to readers' opinions, in order to catch up on the backlog caused by the ASUO election at the end of the term. Which reminds us, the ASUO general election should be happening any time now. Please take a minute or two to refresh your memory and vote. Our endorsements (Nilda Brooklyn/Joy Nair for ASUO Executive, yes on OS-PIRG, no on MCC) can be found by clicking the "Perspectives" section of

our Web site (www.dailyemerald.com). There are a few other hot topics to watch in the coming weeks: the situation with Jody Runge's contract renewal, the anniversary of last year's Johnson Hall protest to join the Worker Rights Consortium, campaign finance reform in the U.S. Senate, former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's potential trial for war crimes, the upcoming execution of convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, and continued wrangling over higher education funding in Oregon's budget. Keep your eyes and ears open: It's spring, and things are afoot. This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Make the most change by putting your money where your mouth is

The new OUS policy forbidding discrimination in contracting, which is likely to force the University to drop out of the Worker Rights Consortium, has been harshly criticized. But there is good reason to favor a ban on politically motivated discrimination by government agencies. Government discrimination nearly always targets weak and/or despised groups, those who have little political power. There are very few examples in which official discrimination did not benefit the powerful.

While the goal of the WRC is to protect the weak against the powerful, it takes a great, and historically unwarranted, faith in government to believe that a regular practice of official discrimination will, in the long run, work in favor of the weak. It is far better,

therefore, to restrict all official discrimination than to promote it and hope it is always used wisely.

GUEST COMMENTARY

James Hanley

A non-discriminatory standard will not diminish the ability to encourage social change. Those who believe it will are only announcing their lack of imagination. Instinctively turning to government to promote one's goals is not a very creative approach to solving problems. Nor does it recognize where the real power for social change lies — with people who are willing to accept the costs of creating it.

One of the ironies of the coer-

cive approach favored by the WRC is that it suggests an unwillingness to share in the costs of positive social change. WRC supporters want to punish businesses for alleged wrongdoing, but do not want to bear the costs of social change by rewarding them for "rightdoing."

The solution is simple, and is probably within acceptable bounds of the OUS policy: The University should reward its suppliers for improving pay and working conditions. Contractual incentives and bonuses for producing University apparel in shops with favorable working conditions would entice suppliers to enhance conditions because they would be rewarded for doing so. This cost increase would be passed on to consumers of the apparel — that is,

to you and me. Then we could support social change by putting our money where our mouths are.

This plan would also decrease the conflict that has created little but anger and mistrust on both sides. Phil Knight, who has given far more money for academics than for sports, would not have withdrawn his support if this simple policy had been followed. Students would not have had to camp out at Johnson Hall for a week. Advocates of social change would not have had to rely on the doubtful authority of a "democratic" vote on WRC membership in an election in which only 10 percent of the electorate cast votes.

Most important, positive change in the working conditions of apparel laborers would

be happening right now, rather than waiting for the outcome of further political and legal wrangling. Only a taste for conflict would stand in the way of this simple solution. Only a dislike for corporations that is stronger than a concern for social justice would reject this approach. There are cynics who suspect that the WRC supporters' anti-corporate vendetta is more important than actually achieving social gains. Here is a chance to prove them wrong.

Demand that the University offer contract incentives for improved working conditions, and then rush to the bookstore to buy the new, more socially acceptable, merchandise.

James Hanley is an adjunct instructor in political science.

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 your favorite cheesy spring break movie?

Results: 67 total votes

Spring Break — 7 votes, or 10.4 percent

Revenge of the Nerds II: Nerds in Paradise — 20 votes, or 29.9 percent

Weekend at Bernie's — 18 votes, or 26.9 percent

Full Metal Jacket — 20 votes, or 29.9 percent

Revenge of the Nerds II is obviously the right answer. The movie kicks. But hey, nothing says "spring break fun" like a hardcore, gritty war movie. Party on, John Wayne.

This week's poll question

Which movie should have won the Oscar for best picture?

The choices:

Chocolate

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Erin Brockovich

Traffic

I'm glad Gladiator won.

Letters to the editor

Keep your opinions to yourself

There has been a definite theme in my University education: bias. In a school that adamantly touts diversity, it is evident that diversity is something we lack.

In just about every class I've had through the duration of our beloved electoral process, professors have taken every opportunity to take a poke at George W. Bush. When I've gathered the gall to speak up, the reaction by the professor(s) and fellow students has been one of distaste.

If we are going to champion diversity, respect someone who doesn't subscribe to your opinion.

I pay what amounts to about \$40 per lecture. So professors, don't pollute your subject with your opinion. I don't give a crap what you think. I pay this obscene amount of money to learn your

subject, not to hear your opinion.

If I wanted opinion, I'd read the letters to the editor. I want an education. In the meantime, let me learn. I wasn't even sure I should write this letter, for fear of further bias, but it's important to speak up.

J. Thomas Gombos
senior
journalism

A reasonable judgment

Finally, a voice of reason. In regard to Jody Runge, your editorial comments were outstanding.

The rush to judgment by The Register-Guard and Ron Bellamy leaves much to be desired when it comes to fair play and due process. The term "dead coach walking" by Bellamy was one of the most irresponsible comments I have ever seen a sports writer make.

I have followed Jody since she came to the University some eight years ago. She is a winner. She is not touchy-feely, but she

demands perfection and her players respond. The Pac-10 is a tough Conference and Jody — with over 100 wins — has shown that she knows how to coach, recruit and compete.

I do not want to be critical of the players, but we are not talking about teenagers, but rather adults — 21, 22 and 23 years old. These are not children.

It is also a fact that these women are paid athletes in that they have all accepted a free college education in return for service rendered as a college basketball player. I have not seen this mentioned anywhere.

The only accusations I have read pertain to verbal comments in public. I certainly don't think that those are grounds for dismissal of one of the top coaches in college basketball.

Again, a great editorial.

Richard C. Traynham
Class of '57
El Dorado Hills, Calif.