

# Activism

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show support for or disapproval of the protesters.

"It was an excellent opportunity to see a sit-in," he said. "To witness this contest over public space, this was a prime example."

He said the situation provided his students a valuable lesson in the symbolism inherent to all collective movements.

"It wasn't just any administration building," he said. "It had become a space of broader global conflict. ... There's something in witnessing that, that you can't get out of a textbook."

While Dreiling is active in several

causes himself, he said he understands he can't bring his own political agenda into the classroom. He said it's his job to provide only the context for his students to understand political movements, not to inspire them to become activists themselves.

"I don't believe that what we offer is a route to some political truth," he

said. "I think what we can offer is a set of tools for students to create their own, more informed and enriched horizon on social reality."

Daniel Pope, a history professor and head of the history department, has taught a class on American radicalism for 25 years at the University and said he has witnessed several student movements. He also was ac-

tive himself in the movement against the Vietnam War during the 1960s.

Pope said there are two schools of thought on collective actions. The first, and the one he adheres to, is that groups will organize by the merit of their causes. He said those who are drawn to activism are then the ones who most adamantly believe their cause can be successful.

The second school of thought is based on the idea that activists unite through causes because they can't bond with society, he said.

"Their inability to cope with the world leads them to protest," he said.

Even though Pope did not give much credence to the theory, he did acknowledge that people are attracted to collective movements through the people they know.

"You can't say no one is pulled into things because their roommate or friend or girlfriend is involved," he said.

Pope said the most frequent motivation for collective action on campus has been environmental concerns. He said the same kind of fervor for "green" causes that was around in the 1960s and 1970s is still prevalent, even if some of the specifics have changed.

"Oregon is a hot spot for that kind of environmental consciousness," he said.

The recent and spirited protests against international trade can be attributed to this respect for the environment, he said, but also to the prominence of large University donors in the issues.

"When you have a visible and personified target, that makes a resource for organizing," he said.

While Pope said all campus protests have been constructive and positive, he was troubled by what he termed an "anti-humanist view" that he said placed too much emphasis on animals and trees and degraded the human life.

He said when he sees protesters destroying business and engaging in eco-terrorism, he believes it's "dumb and destructive and kind of hostile."

Associate political science professor Gerald Berk teaches a course on political movements in American history and has witnessed protests during his years at the University.

The first occurred shortly after he arrived on campus, and was based on a dispute about multiculturalism. Berk said that even though tempers flared during the protests, the outcome of the movement was commendable.

"My first impression of campus movements and the way the administration handled it was very positive," he said.

Berk said positive dialogue between students and the administration has continued, but he did note a lingering break between students and the administration following the sit-ins over the Worker Rights Consortium.

"It seems to me now that if anything, the gulf between the administration and students is growing bigger," he said.

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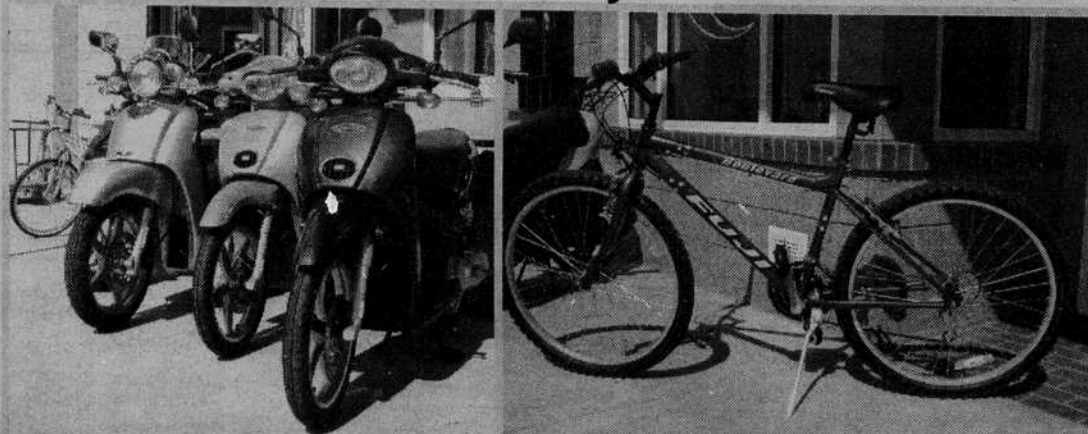


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