

Kiss control of your money good-bye

With the recent news of Linda Dievendorf's termination and the closed-door Clark Document meetings, it seems as though the school year has come full circle. The University began fall term with the news that University President Dave Frohnmayer had joined the Fair Labor Association, drawing the ire of student activists, who complained that students had no input on the decision.

The FLA deal was a high-level University administration decision; it might have seemed natural for the president to act autonomously. However, the two recent events show that now the administration is flexing its muscle over students' incidental fee money. The year has gone from bad to worse.

Linda Dievendorf has worked with students at the University for 21 years. She has been director of the Cultural Forum for 17 of those years. All accounts are that she is a pleasure to work with, skillful and adept at what she does, and that she works collaboratively with students to help them learn.

It was announced last week that Dievendorf's contract wouldn't be renewed — a euphemism for "fired" — after the 2001-02 school year. What reason was given? None. No one would speak on the record about the situation except for Dievendorf, who said that she was given no reasons.

Dievendorf's situation is made all the more troubling by the fact that her salary is paid with student incidental fee money. But students didn't make the decision to terminate her contract. Instead, Gregg Lobisser, an administration-appointed employee on the University payroll, made the decision. And he apparently made it without considering input from student leaders, who have said they were left out of the process. Needless to say, this makes us upset, as it should all students.

Student fee money should be controlled by students. Obviously, students need some guidance, and in positions such as the Cultural Forum, they need a salaried professional to teach them. It would have been perfectly reasonable for Lobisser to have input on the decision, but it is unreasonable and unacceptable the way it happened instead.

Just two years ago, Dievendorf was moved from a union contract to an unstable "officers of administration" job designation. There are many people in similar positions on campus, and none of them has any job security. It's this setup that gives us the most concern.

When employees who work with stu-

dents and are paid by students discover that their jobs rely on the favor of an administration-appointed individual who owes nothing to students, whom will the employees represent? Will they defend the interests of students? Or will they advocate the administration's policies?

In a letter to the editor Tuesday ("Dievendorf is strange counterpart to Runge," ODE), George Beres compared Dievendorf's situation to that of former women's basketball head coach Jody Runge. He found it odd that Runge was forced to resign because students disliked her, while Dievendorf is terminated against the wishes of students and faculty.

There's another comparison to Runge that gives us added concern. Runge was often a critic of the Athletic Department. Dievendorf recently advocated moving the Cultural Forum's budget from the EMU's control to the Programs Finance Committee, which would give students more direct control of their Cultural Forum. Might this have been a motivation for terminating her contract? And if it was, is it possible that Runge's resignation and Dievendorf's ter-

mination could have a chilling effect on the many University employees currently working without a contract? After these two cases, it might be difficult for employees to support students too vociferously or fight the administration too loudly.

And to top off the year, we have the Clark Document discussions. The Clark Document governs how students can use the incidental fee; it keeps the University legal. In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's Southworth ruling, it seemed logical that some changes might have to be made to the document, and specifically to the ballot measure process.

But in keeping with the motif of less student control of student money, discussions about the Clark Document were not held openly, and leaders of student groups — who will arguably be most affected by changes — were not invited to the private table. Instead, a panel of nine was organized, and fully four of the nine were administrators. This is not acceptable. When student money is being discussed, four administrators on a panel of

16 might have been reasonable, and representatives of the largest student groups (in terms of student participation as well as incidental fee allocation) should have been invited. Some of these groups have firsthand experience with incidental fee battles and could have brought a different perspective to the discussion.

All in all, spring term doesn't seem to be faring well for student control of student money. Just a small percentage of students seemed to care about electing their student government — which is in charge of spending the incidental fee. The administration looks to be consolidating its power over the fee. And hardly anyone is standing up to say, "This isn't OK." Well, we'll take that stand. Students need substantial representation in decisions involving their money. Linda Dievendorf should be reinstated. And the campus community should rise up and support her.

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



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Letters to the editor

Don't abandon pets this summer

As the academic year winds to a close, we would like to congratulate the University of Oregon community on another successful year! We have enjoyed great support from University students, faculty and staff through volunteer time and donations. It is this continued

support that enables our work on behalf of abused, neglected and unwanted animals.

Sadly, it is at these times of transition that many animals end up left in the lurch. Although most of us view our animals as companions for whom we would provide guardianship regardless of circumstances, many pets are abandoned each year when people travel, move or change jobs.

We would like to encourage

everyone to accommodate their critters during this busy time of year. Provide support for friends or family members who need a helping hand. And should you find yourself with a bit of spare time on your hands during the dog days of summer, come on by for a visit. Please feel free to contact us if you need further information.

Helen Gold
community outreach liaison
Greenhill Humane Society

Linda Dievendorf should not be terminated

What a shame! Linda Dievendorf cannot or should not be terminated from the Cultural Forum. She is a natural leader who inspires everyone around her. She is part of what makes the University what it is and what it has been in the past.

I worked as a graphic designer for two years with Linda and the rest of the Cultural Forum staff. She

helps give students opportunities they could not get in the typical University setting. I feel proud to have been able to play a part in what I consider a very influential and valuable life experience.

I urge all who read this to take the time to voice your opinions with the EMU and the Oregon Daily Emerald. Bless you, Linda.

Ron Crose
Class of '93
Austin, Texas