

University

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faculty are a diverse group in the future?

AL: The most important consideration I have around diversity is focusing on never being complacent. The greatest anxiety I would have about feeling we do a good job is that we never thought we could divert our attention and not focus on it. When we talk about diversity, we talk about international students, students of color, students with different geographic origins and students with different sexual orientations. You need to be pretty vigilant and proactive in these areas. I think we have to stay on a high level of diversity. I think our students, both incoming and returning, very much pick the University because we honor and speak about diversity.

PR: The University's leadership is completely sincere and committed to increasing diversity. I came from the most ethnically diverse state in the nation, California, but I find the climate at the University inclusive and tolerant. Much of each dean's council retreats have been devoted to diversity discussions. And [University] President [Dave] Frohnmayer has made a significant commitment to the proposed interdisciplinary center. In my opinion, our challenge is even greater for faculty than for students.

Q: Are you concerned with the ever-growing importance of sports in higher education, and the funding that reflects that?

AL: I see today's incoming student as very orientated toward fitness and participation. And a large number of our students are interested in playing sports on the club sports level or the intramural lev-

el. So often in the conversation about athletics and academics is the juxtaposition of the big sports, which would be men's football, men's, and to a growing amount, women's basketball juxtaposed with academics and it's described in terms of where the discretionary dollars are going. And many people who are worried about the interplay between athletics and academics are worried about the

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associate vice president,
Student Affairs and
dean of students »

erosion of dollars away from learning and to these big money sports. And that would worry me as well if it drained the dollars available for the academy. But those in the business of advancement tell me that the first dollar from a sports fan is often to athletics. But the second dollar and the third dollar is quite possible coming to our academic mission. So if athletics coaxes in a donor dollar that then is distributed toward academics then there is some value even in the big money sports in terms of the contribution it is making to the University as a whole.

PR: Athletics does not detract from the University's academic mission, it adds to it. First, athletic challenges discipline many of our students and foster leadership skills. Second, many University friends and alumni know the Uni-

versity first through athletics, but then deepen their relationship into academic programs. However, in my opinion these benefits do not justify a perpetual subsidy, which occurs at many universities, so I am happy that the University leadership is committed to ending the athletic financial deficit.

Q: What are some of the things the University needs to do to ensure a successful future?

AL: I think we need to believe in ourselves. I think we need to tell our story to incoming students and their families, to the legislature, to our graduates and to the residents of Oregon about what it is the University of Oregon is doing that changes peoples' lives. The lives of the students who are here, the lives of the families that they come from and the communities that they are going off to live and work within are what we need to become much more articulate, purposeful and demonstrative about what a difference in the quality of community life and education can make. And I think we need to be extremely nimble and resourceful and strategic about our dollars because the state dollars are not going around very well for education. Individuals getting ready to come to school today don't have lifetime family savings to give to higher education.

PR: The most important thing the University needs to do is to secure a sizable continued revenue stream to backfill the huge reductions in state funding that have occurred over the past dozen years. This can occur by renewing the Legislature's commitment to higher education, which is the key priority for Oregon's business community, or by expanding the University's endowment very significantly.

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