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New organization works to end alienation of low-income students

■ The Working-Class Student Solidarity offers support and resources for working-class and first-generation college students

By Anna Seeley
Oregon Daily Emerald

While sitting in her political science class, senior Ione Mueller listened while her professor pointed out differences between a low-income student's performance in school and a middle-class student's performance. He asked the class why they thought there was a difference.

"Because poor people are ignorant," one girl said. The professor tried to point out that was not the case, but the rest of the class seemed to agree with the first girl.

"The class assumed everyone in the class was middle class," Mueller said. "I was too upset to even raise my hand to say anything."

This inspired Mueller to create the Working-Class Student Solidarity for other students who feel alienated by the assumption that everyone on campus comes from middle-class backgrounds.

WCSS is an organization for low-income, working-class and first generation college students that

provides support, referrals, resources and educational opportunities to members to assist them while attending college. One goal of the group is to inform people at the University that low-income students do exist on campus, Mueller said.

"University life in general is traditionally a bourgeoisie community," she said. "It is very alienating for students who don't come from the same background."

Mueller created the program by designing an internship with the Women's Studies program. The internship was sponsored by Student Support Services and led to the establishment of WCSS in January.

Mueller said one difference between a low-income student and a middle-class student is they learn to be students later than middle-class students do.

"A working-class student learns how to be a student by the end of college, whereas middle-class students come to college already knowing that," she said.

Physics Professor James Brau said he has been aware of students who work as well as go to school. He said if a student in his class came up to him with problems juggling school and work, he would offer to talk with them on how they can manage their time.

"I probably wouldn't give them a break on turning in assignments, but rather help them find a way to do their work and turn it in on time," he said.

Mueller said WCSS members have talked about how others assume everyone is middle class in their own classes and study groups. She added how scary and frustrating it is for them to say, "Hey, I've got a different experience."

WCSS member Sophie Smith said low-income students "don't really identify that well with the middle class student lifestyle," and the group gives them a chance to exchange ideas and educate themselves about ways to deal with that.

"We are going to incorporate guest speakers, such as professors who are also first generation college students about what they did to get where they are now," she said.

The group meets every Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Multicultural Center. Since its creation, membership has grown, but the group is still looking for more members.

"We are a relatively new group, and I hope membership grows," Smith said. "We are really eager to get more involvement from students."

Anna Seeley is a student activities reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at annaseeley@dailyemerald.com.

Race & Class Crime & Punishment Eugene Weekly Film Festival

October 5-7
Bijou Art Cinemas

To kick-off a two-year examination of issues associated with "Race, Class, and the Criminal Justice System," Eugene Weekly presents this special film series in conjunction with the University of Oregon Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics.

Friday, October 5

- 5:00 P.M. *Dead Man Walking* R
- 7:35 P.M. *Our Song* R
- 9:50 P.M. *The Thin Blue Line* NR

Saturday, October 6

- 3:00 P.M. *La Ciudad (The City)* NR
- 5:10 P.M. *The Thin Blue Line* NR
- 7:25 P.M. *Fury* R
- 9:35 P.M. *Dead Man Walking* R

Sunday, October 7

- 3:00 P.M. *Our Song* R
- 5:15 P.M. *Fury* R
- 7:25 P.M. *La Ciudad (The City)* NR

Single tickets (day of show): \$5

Festival passes (good for all five films): \$20

Passes available in advance at Bijou Art Cinemas and Eugene Weekly.

Bijou Art Cinemas, 492 E. 13th Ave., Eugene; 686-2458

Eugene Weekly, 1251 Lincoln St., Eugene; 484-0519

See the festival program guide in the October 4 *Eugene Weekly* for film summaries or check www.morsechair.uoregon.edu/films.shtml

Howry

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cisco 49ers.

But, Howry says, it's pretty cool to say you played ball at the same school as Rice.

Hayes was a dangerous receiver, Howry says, with many skills and a venerable knowledge of the game. He took Keenan under his wing and taught him the intricacies of footwork and route running.

"He would really help me," Howry says.

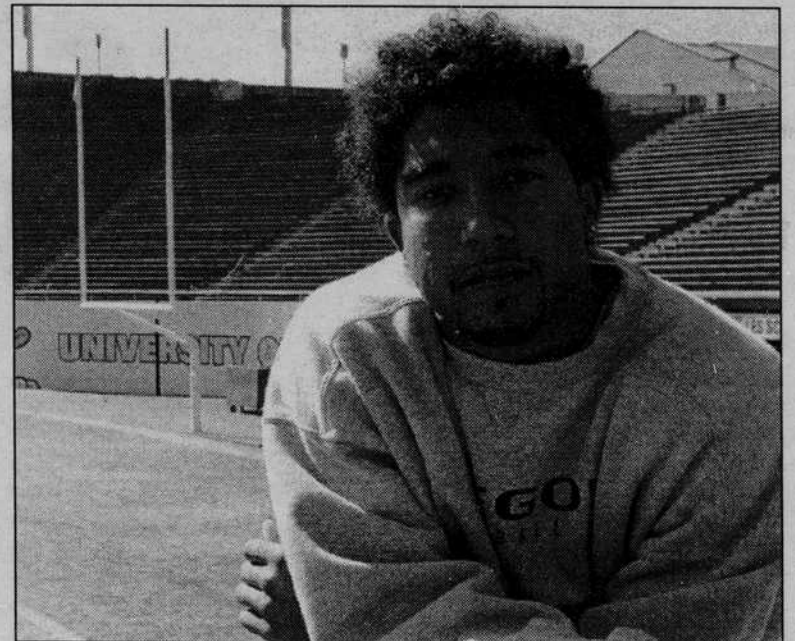
During his sophomore year at Los Alamitos High School, Keenan decided to dedicate himself to football and shelved baseball and basketball. His senior season proved to be a break out year, as he snared 73 receptions for 1,320 yards and 17 scores, earning All-American honorable mention from USA Today.

He wasn't heavily recruited by college programs coming out of high school, he says, because at 5 feet 9 inches and 170 pounds, he's not a prototypical wideout. But his height fuels a competitive spirit that still burns.

"I don't have 4.2 or 4.3 speed, so I have to use every bit of ability I have," Howry says. "I can't be similar (in ability) to a taller guy, I've got to be better. That's always motivated me."

That determination could help him graduate in 2002, his fourth year of college, with a bachelor's in psychology. He's always been fascinated by why people act the way they do, and what makes them act that way.

If professional football isn't an



Kim Samitore for the Emerald

Junior Keenan Howry has evolved into one of the best receivers in the team's history.

option, he'll apply his psych knowledge to teaching and coaching — professions he says are dependent on the ability to understand and connect with others.

But the junior has plenty to keep him busy until making a career decision, with seven games remaining in the Duck's season and a rigorous Monday-through-Thursday study and practice schedule that begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 7 p.m.

He wouldn't trade the long hours for anything, though, he says, because football and college are teaching him lessons he'll need for

the rest of his life.

"Everything isn't always going to be perfect," he says. "How well you adapt is how well you succeed. Pretty soon I'm going to find out what real life is like. Sometimes in life you have to do things you're really not comfortable doing. Just like football, sometimes in a game the other team forces you to do things you don't want to. You've got to be able to adapt."

A skill Howry has learned well.

Eric Martin is a higher education reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at ericmartin@dailyemerald.com.

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