

# COMMENTARY

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## Editorial

### Needing a decision on ASL now!

The debate surrounding whether American Sign Language should be used to satisfy the University's second language requirement has been going on for years, and the Emerald has reported on it before. However, students have recently brought the issue back to the forefront, and for good reason. The University needs to accept ASL as a second language, and now.

The major question the University has wrangled with and deadlocked on is whether ASL has enough "cultural components" to deem it worthy of satisfying the requirement. ASL is certainly worthy of second-language status. The point of the requirement is to teach students about different cultures and allow us to communicate with new groups of people. ASL accomplishes both of these goals.

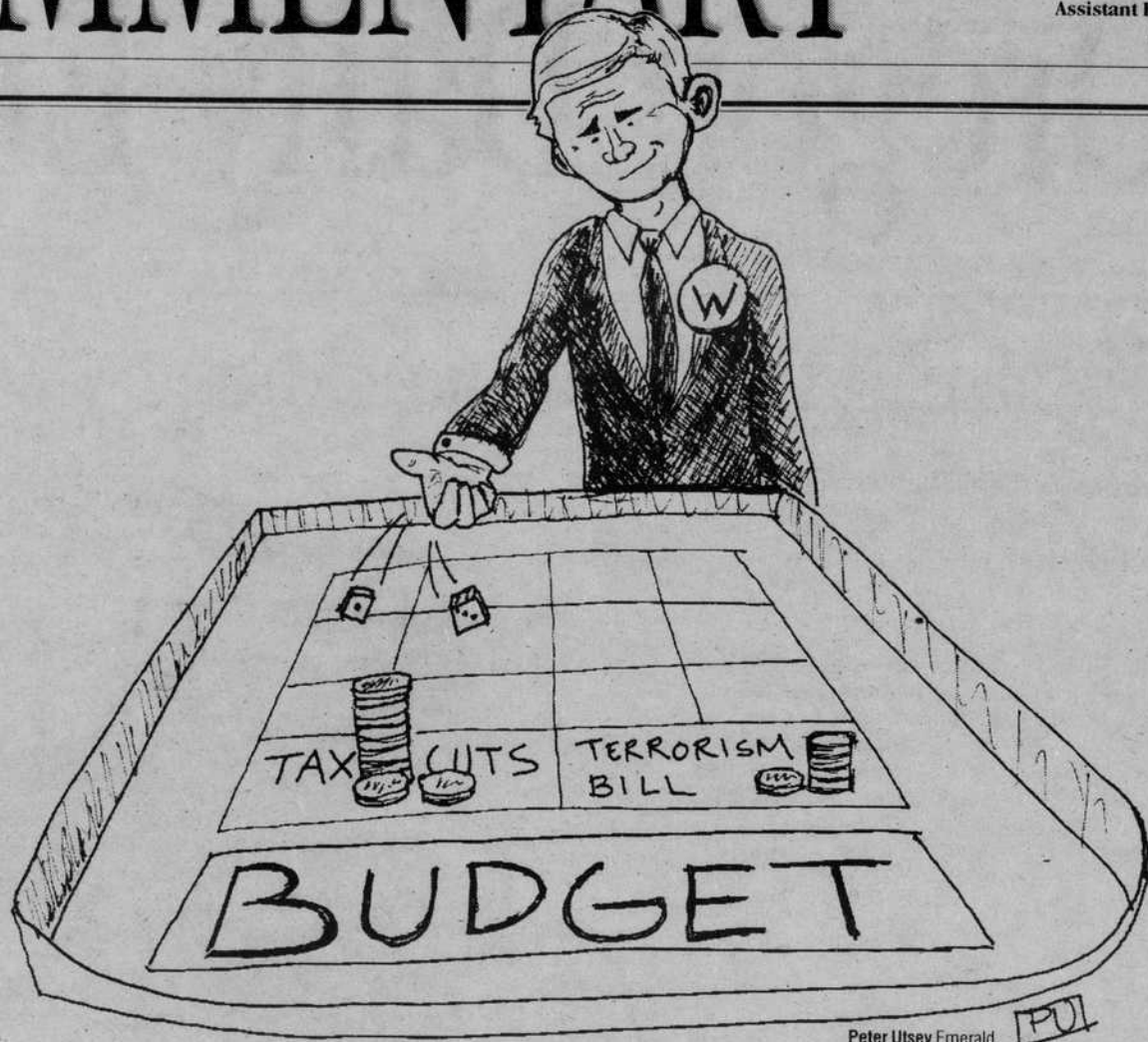
There is definitely a deaf culture for students to discover, and ASL is estimated as the third most frequently used language in the United States, behind only English and Spanish. ASL would also be an ideal language to satisfy the University requirement for students with more visual learning styles, or who plan to work with the deaf community.

Committees have been mulling over the ASL issue since 1994. It's time they come to a decision. There's no reason ASL shouldn't be allowed to satisfy the second language requirement. University officials should give American Sign Language the nod now, so we can start working on the hurdle of finding a department to sponsor it.

### Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com.

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.



Peter Utsey Emerald [PU]

## SPEND MONEY for America's sake

In the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the United States has gone on a spending spree. Government money has been set aside not only to improve security in the airline industry, but also to keep it afloat. Public officials around the country are looking to improve security in food and water systems. The U.S. Postal Service is purchasing new equipment that will protect against anthrax, and health agencies are beginning to load up on medical supplies. Where is all this money coming from?



Jeff  
Oliver  
Columnist

Didn't Republicans huddle a \$200 billion tax cut through the House of Representatives a few weeks ago? Does anyone remember the \$1.3-trillion tax cut President George W. Bush signed in the spring? It doesn't take an economics major to figure out that when you spend more money, you need more money. As precedent shows, this isn't the way America usually heads into war. The typical response to a lengthy military retaliation is to increase

taxes, not cut them.

In fact, the first federal income tax was implemented to fund the Civil War. In World War I, the tax rates in the upper bracket increased more than 70 percent. Under President Roosevelt, 40 million more Americans were asked to pay an income tax. Even during Korea and Vietnam, income tax rates rose.

So while combat bills are beginning to stack up on the Federal Government's desk, \$300 refund checks are rolling into households around the country. This makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

The lack of money the United States has to support its military actions is a serious concern, but future financial strength is also at stake. Economists have forecast that the federal government will spend its full budget created by general tax revenues in 2002 and 2003 and there is a possibility that the Social Security surplus will have to be dipped into.

When you are talking about trillions of dollars, it may be difficult to conceive that America faces the realistic problem of simply being able to put the symbolic bread on the table in the coming years. We were already vulnerable to terrorism, but that risk is greatly compounded when the government has to shut down in

order to simply pay the electric bill.

As summer ended, President Bush's grand economic plan looked like a genius idea. Americans would all have a few extra dollars in their pocket, they would go and spend the money and, like magic, the economy would receive a swift kick in the rear. Now consumer spending is dropping at its fastest rate in 14 years. People don't want to spend and those tax refund checks are just sitting in bank accounts.

However, raising taxes is not the solution because with less money to tax there is less to gain. Raising taxes also creates a major economic risk that could propel the United States into a prolonged recession or even a depression.

Tax cuts, rate cuts and stimulus packages from Congress are actually the best bet for the economy to rebound and ensure the future financial strength of our country. The next two months set the economic tone for the upcoming new year, and we can't be afraid to spend. Americans need to carry on as if nothing happened at all. Our leaders have done their part in setting up the economic revival plans, but they won't work if we don't actually use them.

Jeff Oliver is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. He can be reached at jeffoliver@dailyemerald.com.

## Letters to the editor

### Students should pursue freedom of ideas

I urge all the great students on this campus not to sit quietly and let anti-American ideas be propagated in your classrooms. Your professors can punish you for speaking your mind, especially if you show anger, but a respectful disagreement is the least you can do. America was founded on the ideas that the individuals have rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The government is supposed to secure these rights.

Jack Crawford  
Silver Spring, Md.

### Drug war has failed

The article by Debenham ("There's no hope with dope," ODE, 10/15) has the theme of government propaganda. Please inform the columnist that the drug war is approximately 30 years old, and that it's one of the most failed social policies ever conceived.

Michael Gailb  
New York, N.Y.

### Bloodletting won't resolve this war

Six months before the Red Army invaded Afghanistan, the CIA pumped some \$6 million into the country in support of the

right-wing opposition party. The communists eventually responded to this obvious meddling in foreign politics. At that point the CIA amassed some 30,000 religious fanatics, trained them, gave them guns and pointed them at the Reds.

Years later, when the Red Army was defeated, they and the United States left the mess we know as Afghanistan how it remains today. The aftermath of this conflict led to warring among the many factions, but the one that eventually rose to power was the one that had their hands on all the weapons that we gave them!

The United States is courting disaster, just like in Cambodia. We're propping up

multiple evil dictators in other countries in an effort to get at some thug who was once on our payroll. By the way, is patriarchy in all its forms any different from the standpoint of women?

We as a country promote anorexia, bulimia and promiscuous sexual activity worldwide and feel the right to point the finger at a country whose women cover their bodies out of modesty? This is a war of the powerful against the weak, the rich vs. the poor and man vs. woman, and it will never be resolved with more bloodletting.

Matthew Mulholland  
junior  
fine arts, education