

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Dead Week should be truly dead

Week 10 of fall term always seems to be the most stressful time of year. With the holidays looming and finals a week away, many students on campus are feeling a little overwhelmed. And it's no wonder, since many professors have decided to cheat students by scheduling final papers, projects and early finals during Dead Week.

No exam worth more than 20 percent of the final grade can be given during Dead Week, with the exception of make-ups, according to legislation passed by the University Assembly. Professors are also required to specify Dead Week projects on the class syllabus within the first two weeks of the term. But many instructors break these rules and insist on holding Dead Week finals to get a jump-start on final grading and their winter break.

Although it is convenient and nice to start the winter vacation early, it is taking away valuable instruction time for students and professors. Also, many students stop absorbing new material during the last week of school because they're preparing for the end of the quarter.

Dead Week isn't really dead anymore. Dead Week used to be a week of studying in preparation for finals, and no classes were held. It was "dead" on campus because everyone was inside studying. Now students and professors are bustling around, tying up loose ends.

There is a designated week for professors to give finals. If professors don't want to hold finals during week 11, the University should move to abolish the week altogether. That way the school won't trick itself into thinking students are learning valuable new material up until the end of the term, and we can all go on vacation early with a clear conscience.



Steve Baggs Emerald

An old-fashioned commercial Christmas

Attention, holiday shoppers ... where are you? While I have lamented the loss of the luxury of shopping since I started college, it now appears that even wealthy Americans are keeping a stingy eye on their wallets this season.

According to a recent ABC News poll, people who usually have spent up to \$930 on holiday shopping by this time are spending nearly \$200 less. It doesn't seem like much, but decreased seasonal spending is affecting all kinds of businesses, from large to small. Stores nationwide are being forced to have early sales, even stores that normally never offer discounts. This holiday shopping season is predicted to be one of the longest — but cheapest — ever. And it's expected to

be what the U.S. News & World Report calls "a bargain basement Christmas": Good for our shopping lists, but bad for the already-slumping economy.



Jacquelyn Lewis
Assistant Editorial Editor

Whether it's the pervading gloom-and-doom from the events of Sept. 11 and the recent fatal cases of anthrax, or the high unemployment rate coupled with the economy's dive, who can blame shoppers for being apprehensive? Some might even argue that a season of decreased spending will allow us to get back to a less commercialized, family-based holiday season — the way it is "supposed" to be.

I take a different view. Spending money has become just as much an American holiday tradition as putting up the Christmas tree or lighting the menorah. And as much as we whine that the holidays have become too commercialized, businesses actually depend on this season for a large portion of their livelihood. In fact, most stores rely so much on holiday shoppers, they begin preparations as early as summer.

Many people are employed by these businesses and rely on them for their own livelihoods. If we decide to skimp on our holiday shopping or even forgo gift-giving and other traditions altogether, we may be hurting ourselves more than we realize.

While the state of our country certainly saddens me, and I have compassion for those who lost friends and family members in re-

cent tragedies, I intend to have a regular holiday. If we have the money, and understandably some of us don't, we should still make merry this season. That includes spending the amount we usually spend on gifts, parties and other holiday frivolities. After all, this season only comes once a year.

I'm not suggesting we shouldn't consider giving to charities this year, or that those who are morally, religiously or financially opposed to excessive holiday spending should alter their points of view. I also realize that the "true" meaning of the season would still exist if absolutely no one received a single gift this year. It's definitely important to take stock of our real blessings this holiday season — our families, our freedom, etc. — but at the same time, we shouldn't forget the tradition of an old-fashioned American holiday season. It's the stuff all my holiday memories are made of: The fun of eating too much, drinking too much and most of all, spending too much money; in short, corporate greed and unchecked gluttony. Just kidding.

Emerald assistant editorial editor Jacquelyn Lewis can be reached at jacquelynlewis@dailyemerald.com. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Letters to the editor

ASUO leaders are available

As an intern for the ASUO, I have witnessed President Nilda Brooklyn and Vice President Joy Nair in action.

Working with them has been nothing but rewarding. They are both supportive and take an active interest in the pursuits of the interns. They are helpful, polite and dedicated. Almost every time I am in the office, they are available. In fact, the only time I have been unable to contact them was because of the fact that they had a class or meeting.

In the office, I have witnessed Brooklyn and Nair working on a variety of projects that directly affect students. Currently, they are diligently working to repeal the \$30 energy

fee. This is no small undertaking, and I have been thoroughly impressed with their ability to launch a campaign in such a short amount of time.

My experience with Brooklyn and Nair has been so positive that I will be returning as an intern next term, and I plan to work with the ASUO for the rest of my college career.

Lacy Ogan
sophomore
pre-journalism

ASUO is not apathetic

The ASUO often comes under attack because some people believe it is apathetic. I would like to argue that, in reality, it is quite the opposite.

The ASUO is running a program to combat the \$30 energy fee, monitoring energy use in

campus buildings and deciding whether conservation methods are needed. The ASUO is also working to establish a housing code for Eugene. When necessary, campaigns are always added to protect student rights. Interns and volunteers are integral parts of the process, but without the strong leadership of the president and vice president, nothing would be accomplished.

Nilda Brooklyn and Joy Nair provide that leadership. They are professional, open-minded and fair in their positions, and they inspire hard work and cooperation within the office, as well as with other organizations. The ASUO may be many things, but it is not apathetic.

Jessica Southwick
sophomore
political science

Editorial Policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com.

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