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COMMENTARY

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Friday, January 18, 2002

Yesteryear's Editorial

Development of personality

Colleges, by reason of the present-day system of education, turn out types rather than personalities. Their graduates are the product of large-scale production, a condition which has arisen out of the attempt on the part of educational institutions to absorb the heterogeneous mass which yearly comes to them in increasing bulk for higher education. This is the indictment against American colleges by a writer in a recent issue of the Daily Iowan.

This is by no means the first expression of opinion that colleges and universities are failing to turn out personalities. That the student who comes to college with a spark of genius is soon molded into the conventional type has been the contention of a certain class of writers for years.

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Without a doubt the influence is toward the subordination of individuality, and with the ever-growing proportion between the number of instructors and the number of students there seems to be little opportunity for remedying the condition. There are other contributing factors, other than large classes, however, which might continue to exist even if that condition were remedied.

If the college student has aggressiveness he can preserve his own personality. Although the system tends to develop him along conventional lines, he will not be transformed into a "type" unless he is passive.

Of all American institutions the college should be the first to teach citizens to think. Yet there is the same criticism against college students on this score as against the mass of American people. It is not unreasonable to think that Edison's statement that only two percent of the population ever really thinks is not far amiss for those registered in colleges and schools of higher learning.

If students will come to college with an air of agreeable aggressiveness, institutions will be in a better way to teach them to think. And when students learn to think, personalities rather than types will be developed. Mental stagnation and passiveness are the undoing of higher education in America. Until students learn to fight their own battles the contentions of the critics will go unanswered.

Editor's note: This editorial was taken from the Jan. 18, 1923 edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald.



Peter Utsey Emerald

The president's pretzel logic

Last weekend, President George W. Bush fainted and fell from a couch after choking on a pretzel while watching a football game. The president reportedly cut his face and bruised his lip when he fell to the floor and now sports an inflamed bruise on his left cheek. The Emerald editorial board felt like being conspiracy theorists this week, and created the top five "real" causes behind the pretzel debacle:

° The President is seriously ill. In August, Bush had three "sun-in-

duced" lesions removed from his face because they were potentially cancer-causing. Now Bush has another lesion on his cheek. Is this a coincidence? We think not.

° Buddy, the Clintons' recently-deceased First Dog, has come back to haunt the Bush family. Buddy was killed by a car Jan. 2 in New York and may have returned to the White House to wreak havoc in his old "haunting" grounds.

° Kenneth Lay, Enron Corp.'s chairman, is upset about the way the com-

pany's scandal has been covered in the media, and is out to divert attention from himself by creating speculation about Bush's health.

° Bush received "subliminal" messages that said punching himself would be good "strategy."

° First Lady Laura Bush got mad because he was watching football instead of paying attention to her, and socked him.

Editor's note: All of these conspiracies were created in good humor and are not meant to be taken seriously.

Letters to the editor

Erb Essentials is blowing smoke

Unlike the University Bookstore and Lane Community College's bookstore, some members of the EMU Board of Directors appear indifferent to important ethical issues associated with selling tobacco. Instead, revenue was cited as reason enough to continue selling tobacco in Erb Essentials.

Given that University Bookstore tobacco sales were less than 1 percent of total annual sales, the decision to discontinue was apparently less difficult than the one before the EMU Board of Directors. However, appearances can be deceptive.

Profits from the convenience store support EMU programs, but the \$30,000 generated last year in profits from tobacco sales equates to a tiny percent of total EMU income. In addition, with record student enrollment, the EMU should be benefiting from increased consumption and incidental fees.

The University finds itself in an increasing minority. The majority of Pacific-10 Conference schools don't sell tobacco, including the University of Washington, which recently discontinued tobacco sales in three campus outlets, even though they faced losses similar to the University. Similar events have taken place at other colleges.

Tobacco is responsible for more suffering and death than all other legal and illegal substances combined. A decision on campus tobacco sales should've been about severing ties with an inherently unethical industry and establishing an envi-

ronment for students that discourages harmful tobacco use.

It's a shame the EMU Board chose to ignore student health in favor of a small share in tobacco industry profits.

Julia Martin
 Eugene

Puck you

I found Hank Hager's piece ("U.S. hockey team hopes win will unite America," ODE, 1/15) both ridiculous and sexist.

Hager states that "the actions of September have magnified what the men of the United States do in February." He didn't mention that the United States won the first ever gold medal in women's hockey in 1998. The U.S. men's hockey team, however, has represented the absolute worst in sportsmanship in past Olympics, through lack of teamwork on the ice and poor conduct that created an inaccurate representation of the American athlete.

Since when did the horrors of Sept. 11 become the backdrop for someone's "Mighty Ducks" fantasy? The murder of thousands of American citizens created a wound on the soul of our country — a wound that can't be healed with something as minuscule as a sporting event victory.

I suggest Hager choose his words carefully, and pick his sports heroes with even greater caution.

Raechel M. Sims
 junior
 journalism, women's studies

CORRECTION

In the story about the Students of the Indian Subcontinent ("Conflict and the art of communication," ODE, 1/17), the caption that ran with the photo was incorrect. The Students of the Indian Subcontinent will not be celebrating Diwali on Saturday in Agate Hall. The Emerald regrets the error.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

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.

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