

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511  
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union  
 P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403  
 E-mail: editor@dailyemerald.com  
 Online Edition:  
 www.dailyemerald.com

# COMMENTARY

Editor in Chief:  
 Jessica Blanchard  
 Managing Editor:  
 Jeremy Lang  
 Editorial Editor:  
 Julie Lauderbaugh  
 Assistant Editorial Editor:  
 Jacquelyn Lewis

Wednesday, January 23, 2002

## Editorial

### Now's the time for campaign finance reform

(U-WIRE) CORVALLIS, Ore. — While the tale of Enron's demise is a terrible one, it will hopefully create awareness for an issue that has long been overlooked by the general public — campaign finance reform.

With 71 senators and 188 House members — nearly half of Congress — receiving money from Enron, it should be clearly evident that one corporation went to the cookie jar a few too many times. And now, pie is in the face of everyone involved.

But this wouldn't be such a major fiasco if campaign finance laws were reformed, keeping soft money from large corporations from funding political campaigns. Congress should look at the case of Enron as further evidence of the need for controls on the huge amounts of money flowing into politics.

Campaign finance reform has made headlines before. Sen. John McCain and presidential candidate Ralph Nader are loudly in favor of the idea. But most Republicans and Democrats plug their ears when they realize how much money they could lose if such legislation were to pass.

Enron didn't face the same scrutiny that California energy producers faced during the "crisis" of 2001. This should raise some eyebrows. Now, thousands of Enron employees have lost their life savings, while the Enron brass thought they would come out looking like gold.

Financial demands on those seeking office has grown steadily, forcing candidates to raise more money in hopes to earn the recognition and then trust of their constituents.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, during the 1996 election cycle, candidates in the House of Representatives who raised the most money won 92 percent of the time. In the Senate, 88 percent won. Given such a direct correlation between campaign spending and electoral success, it's not surprising that illegal fund-raising scandals have plagued both parties.

And this scandal proves just that. Both Republicans and Democrats will be victims of Enrongate. Now, we must trust them to fix the problem.

This staff editorial first appeared in Oregon State University's Daily Barometer.

#### Editorial Board Members

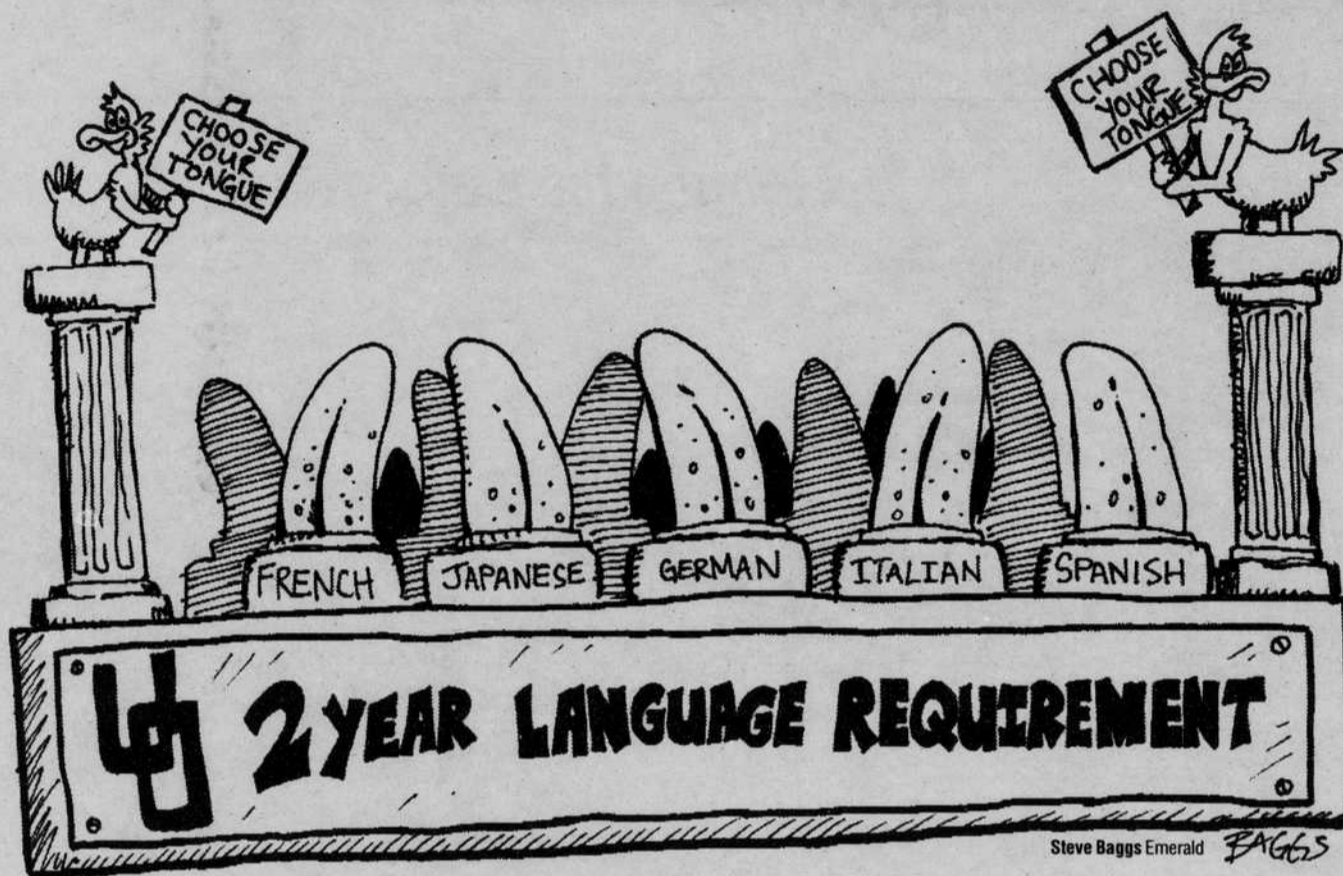
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#### CORRECTION

The mug shot for the story "How to spend \$4 million," (ODE, 1/22) misspelled ASUO Programs Finance Committee Chairwoman Mary Elizabeth Madden's name. The Emerald regrets the error.

#### CLARIFICATION

Tuesday's article about the Olympic Torch ("Olympic torch to stop in Eugene," ODE, 1/22) should have read that no University student will carry the torch in Eugene.



## Just say OUI

I am an average American who is aware of my shortcomings. One of these shortcomings is my inability to speak a foreign language with some level of proficiency. Despite three years of French class in high school and two at the University, I can still only speak at what could be described as an elementary manner with such an atrocious accent it makes native speakers cringe.

Despite this, I took issue with the Emerald editorial board's Jan. 17 editorial "No, Non, Nein; In any tongue 'no' to language requirement," that described this University's two year language requirement as "merely a nuisance" and "nothing more than a bother" for students.

I'll admit that I would often swing from bored to frustrated during my French classes. And I'm sure I gave my professors an equal sense of frustration at my inability to grasp basic French. But looking back, I have begun to understand the purpose of the require-

ment for a bachelor of arts degree.

The editorial board stated "language enrichment is counterproductive" when students are required to take language courses. I feel this argument is false on two counts. The first being if that argument is taken further, all requirements are counterproductive based on their nature of being requirements. And secondly, from my own experience, I know I have been enriched by studying a different language. As a journalism student, I found it interesting at times to study a foreign language and I still feel lucky to drop the occasional French phrase, even though it probably isn't completely correct.

I mentioned before that I'm an average American, and that leads to another point in defense of the requirement. As an American, I've been short-changed by our language education. I'm not terribly upset about this because I feel it makes more sense for foreigners to learn English. Yet I feel in light of the United States' poor foreign language education system, it is unreasonable for the editorial board to expect the language curriculum to be specialized for majors because it would entail a higher level of language proficiency. It's a stretch to say

that first and second year foreign language students should be speaking in terms of their majors when they can barely converse on a basic level.

As to immersion programs and years abroad that the editorial board argues is a better way to educate students in foreign languages, I agree these are good methods. But again, one has to have a certain level of proficiency in the basics before they reap the full benefit of such programs. I'm a skier, and when I was learning to ski I went through two methods of instruction. The first was being left on top of the mountain and then told to make it down any way I could. The other was hours of patient and considerate training by my father. My father's instruction proved to be the most valuable, just like two years of slow and careful instruction in a foreign language would prove.

I don't take my inability to speak French as a sign of this school's failed language requirement. I view it as my own problem, but I do see this language requirement as one part of my education, which is this institution's responsibility to provide.

E-mail columnist Andrew Adams at [andrewadams@dailyemerald.com](mailto:andrewadams@dailyemerald.com). His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.



Andrew  
Adams  
Columnist

## Letter to the editor

### Vote to get health care dollars back

The news has been reporting double-digit increases in health care costs in our country. Premiums rose 8 percent in 2000, 11 percent in 2001 and are expected to rise 15 percent this year. These reports say employers can no longer pay for health care. More of the cost must be passed to consumers because care providers have already cut all costs possible. Projections indicate that even

more of us will become uninsured.

Even without doing intentional research, I've found numerous articles detailing huge profits by providers, millions of dollars in executive pay and billions in bonuses. The industry evidently considers these costs sacred because there is no mention of cutting them; this is where our health care dollars are going. With these priorities, it's no wonder that we have the some of the world's highest costs and worst health statistics of all developed countries. We're letting ourselves be robbed blind!

In Oregon, we're fortunate to live in

one of the states that will get to vote on bills creating its own health care plans. Some of them are going to pass in spite of obvious opposition. This is our opportunity to take our dollars from those who use them to line their pockets and to spend them on health care. It makes sense to me, and I ask each of you to please read the common sense proposal ([healthcareforall.org](http://healthcareforall.org)), get registered if you're not and vote unnecessary expense out of our budgets.

Jane Moodie  
Eugene