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# COMMENTARY

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Friday, January 25, 2002

## Yesteryear's Editorial Limited admission bailed

For the first time in history Oregon taxpayers have been told that their children cannot enter state-supported colleges unless they meet certain standards beyond mere high school graduation.

The new limited admission policy was revealed earlier this week by the State Board of Higher Education, and will go into effect in the fall of 1958. Prospective students will be required to earn a C average in high school or score 60 percent on a standard college aptitude test.

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Had this plan been used this year, only 9 percent of entering freshmen would have been barred. Thus the proposal is

not revolutionary in practice, but the principle certainly is.

Since Oregon has no junior college system and thus no tax-supported alternative for the student who cannot meet this standard, there is bound to be criticism of the new policy. Some will shout that their government is depriving their children of the right to an education. The fallacy of such an argument is obvious.

There are two good reasons for this action. One is economic. Taxpayers are apparently unwilling to pay for all the quality and quantity of education that would be desirable. Since something must be sacrificed, it would seem that barring the least qualified students would be the place to begin.

Another reason is stressed by President O. Meredith Wilson. He welcomes the decision as a step toward rising academic standards. He prefers barring unqualified students instead of allowing them to overcrowd the facilities until they flunk out, as most of them would.

Whether any organized opposition to the limited admission policy will arise remains to be seen. Meanwhile the Emerald strongly commends the decision as a forward step for Oregon Education.

*Editor's note: This Editorial is taken from the Jan. 25, 1957 edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald.*

## Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries

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.

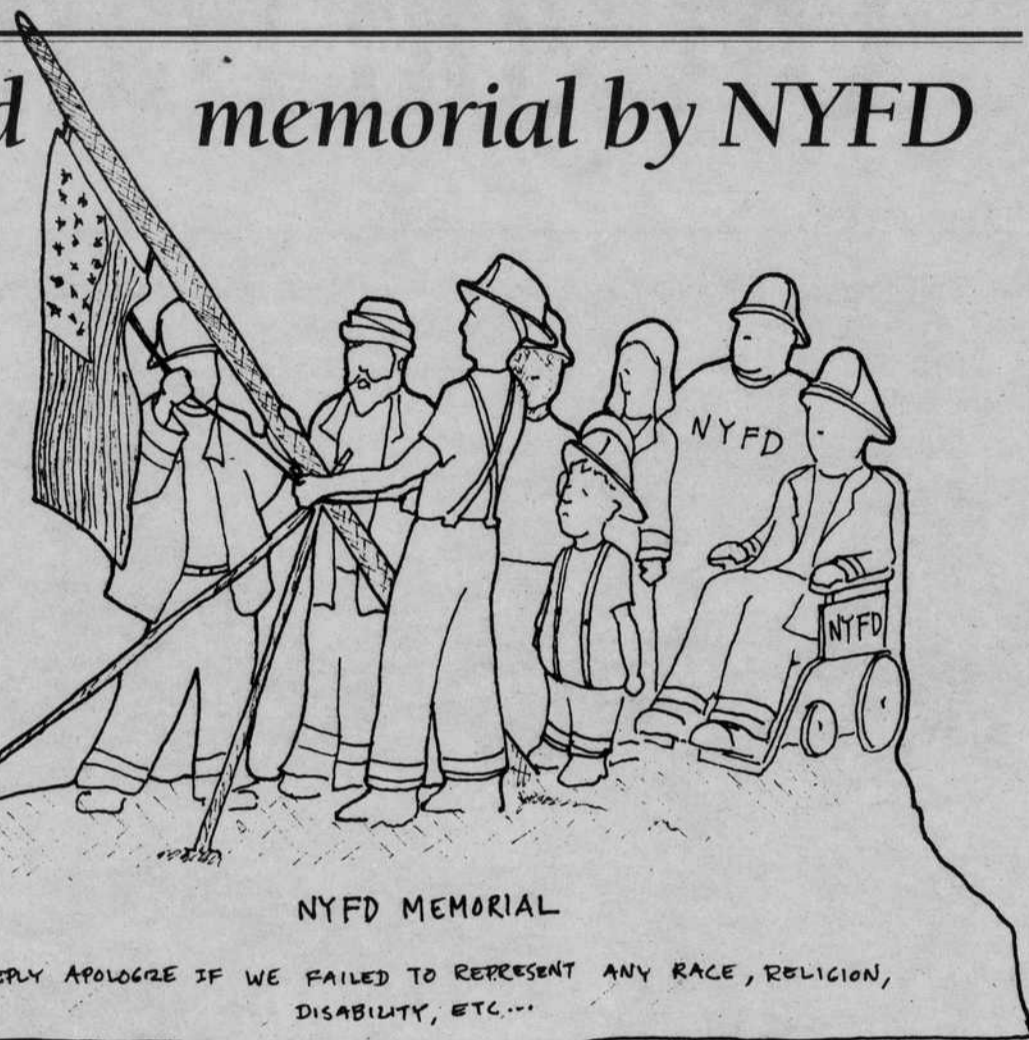
## A misguided memorial by NYFD

People around the world were left with many horrific images in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, but it was photographer Thomas E. Franklin's photo of three firefighters hanging an American flag on the wreckage of the World Trade Center that will surely be placed in history books for years to come.

Recently, the New York Fire Department commissioned a statue based on the now-famous picture to be placed outside the New York Fire Department headquarters in Brooklyn. Costing \$180,000, the statue was to honor the 343 firefighters killed on Sept. 11. On its face, this generous and compassionate act by the New York Fire Department should be applauded. But their statue was a farce.

Franklin's picture captured three firefighters who all happened to be white, yet when the statue was created, the likeness of the three men in the statue represented three different races. The New York Fire Department's rationale behind the change was that black firefighters, Hispanic firefighters and white firefighters were all killed in the terrorist attacks, thus should all be represented. Thankfully, they realized their attempt at political correctness went severely down the wrong path and last week decided that the statue would never be displayed. Their decision to build the statue in the manner they did should still be chastised.

The purpose of photography is to capture moments in life realistically, and that is what Franklin's photograph does. It encapsulates a moment of truth and innocence that wasn't staged and cannot be altered. Do we go back and change the Iwo Jima statue or replace a head on Mount Rushmore so that they are more racially inclusive? The photograph is a piece of history, and if we go around deciding to change history on the basis of political cor-



rectness then we're deluding ourselves.



Jeff  
 Oliver  
 Columnist

perpetuates the recognition of these two races as minorities.

Our society has many problems, including racism and discrimination. As of late, the buzzword "diversity" has been used in attempted solutions, such as the "diverse" statue erected by the New York Fire Department. If you think that placing the likenesses of a black firefighter and a Hispanic firefighter in a historic memorial makes everything better, think again. In fact, the mere thought of doing this only

People of many different races and creeds died on Sept. 11, but most of them died as Americans. With much respect to the three firefighters in the original photograph, the picture was not about them. It was about a country that not only lost white male firefighters, but also female firefighters and Asian rescue workers. Why aren't they included in the statue right next to the mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, wives and husbands who were also lost?

This isn't to say that a memorial should never be created to commemorate all of those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, or that their racial or ethnic backgrounds should be forgotten. I encourage a memorial, but I would be ashamed to see the New York Fire Department's statue serve this purpose.

E-mail columnist Jeff Oliver at jeffoliver@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

## CORRECTION

The final paragraph of "Commentator, PFC to battle over funding" (ODE, 1/24) should have been attributed to Commentator Publisher Bret Jacobson. The Emerald regrets the error.

## Drug law limits educational opportunities

It's FAFSA time!

If you want federal student aid to help pay for your higher education next year, you better get your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) done as soon as possible.

While filling out your application, though, make sure you complete it thoroughly, neatly, and whatever you do, do not leave Question 35 blank. More than 14,000 students were denied some or all financial aid last year because of Question 35. This question cuts federal aid for any student with a previous drug conviction.

In 1998, the Higher Education Act (HEA) implemented the drug provision (Question 35) that restricts financial aid to students who need that assistance to receive a higher education.

The HEA was originally created to expand federal financial aid programs. HEA has done great work in the past to help students receive higher education. For example, it created the Perkins Loan, Pell Grant and work study programs. But now, the HEA's drug provision is closing the doors on

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Oscar  
 Arana

higher education to students.

The provision punishes students twice for the same crime. Under this provision, students face discrimination in addition to the service, time or fines the criminal justice system already demanded.

Judges have the power to restrict financial aid eligibility as individual cases warrant. The HEA drug provision removes that discretion.

The drug provision also has a discriminatory impact toward students of color. African Americans make up 13 percent of the population and 13 percent of all drug users. Yet, because of racial profiling, African Americans account for more than 55 percent of those convicted of drug charges.

Oregon currently has the highest unemployment rate in the nation. If we want to change that, we must

keep students in college. The surest way to for people to become long-term contributors to the economy is by obtaining higher education.

The average college graduate contributes between \$29,000 and \$38,000 to Oregon's economy in one year. The focus of education must be on providing the opportunity for many individuals to receive a college education. Education is a second chance for many people who want to better their lives.

I am not supporting or promoting drug use. I am, however, promoting and supporting higher education for everyone. Don't ruin a student's future by fixating on their past.

Just think about it: If the HEA drug provision was in effect when President George W. Bush was in college, he might not be president right now. Wait, that's not a good example.

How to help: Please contact ASUO or the Multicultural Center.

Oscar Arana is a junior majoring in journalism.