

COMMENTARY

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

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Editorial

Enrollment cap, rigid academics could help fix overcrowding

With record numbers of students streaming into universities across the nation, problems with overcrowding in classrooms and residence halls are worsening. At the University of Oregon alone, next year's applications are expected to top 10,000, although only 3,200 freshmen are usually admitted from the applicant pool. The University should consider implementing an enrollment cap in the future to prevent campus buildings from bursting at the seams.

The University accepted 8,600 freshman applications for 2001, and the Office of Admissions projects total student enrollment could reach 20,000 next year. While it's great that so many people are interested in the University, and while every student should have an opportunity to attend college, having 20,000 students on campus is bound to cause some logistical problems.

Overcrowding in classrooms is already a problem for some professors and students. It's tough for faculty to give personal attention to each student when there are so many who are vying for help. And with a number of building renovations happening on campus, many courses are being displaced, leaving larger classes to be packed into smaller rooms that are unsuited for their size. An enrollment increase would also cause residence halls to be even more cramped and exacerbate the parking situation on campus.

Obviously, growth isn't always a good thing. The University should continue to enforce application deadlines stringently and be stricter about academic probation — the students who have been admitted here should take it seriously and take advantage of the myriad academic resources available to help them do well in school. If they aren't willing to put in the effort to succeed in their classes, maybe they should reconsider being here in the first place.

Deadline and probation enforcement, combined with an enrollment cap, could help alleviate classroom overflow and help keep class sizes down. The University needs to either start being more selective about its applicants, or build larger buildings to keep up with the demand. And with higher education budget cuts looming, the latter is not likely to happen.

Editorial Policy

This editorial represents 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.

Editorial Board Members

Jessica Blanchard editor in chief	Julie Lauderbaugh editorial editor
Jeremy Lang managing editor	Jacquelyn Lewis assistant editorial editor
Patricia Hachten community representative	Golda Portillo community representative
Leon Tovey newsroom representative	

Teaching vs. killing: Do the math

President George W. Bush recently announced plans to boost defense spending by \$48 billion. Big surprise, no? The proposed 15 percent increase will include a pay raise for military personnel and money for the newest high-tech toys, like the unmanned drone that scorched several as-yet-to-be-identified "white-robed men" in Afghanistan on Feb. 4.

Something is seriously off here. Is it robot planes (think of the Aerial Hunter Killers, or AHKs, from "The Terminator") with the ability to shoot missiles at people without identifying them first? Machines that can kill on their own, without a human finger on the trigger or a human eye behind the cross hairs? Well, yes, these things are a tad bit eerie, but they are signs of the times. No, the problem here is the simple paradox of paying people more to do less.

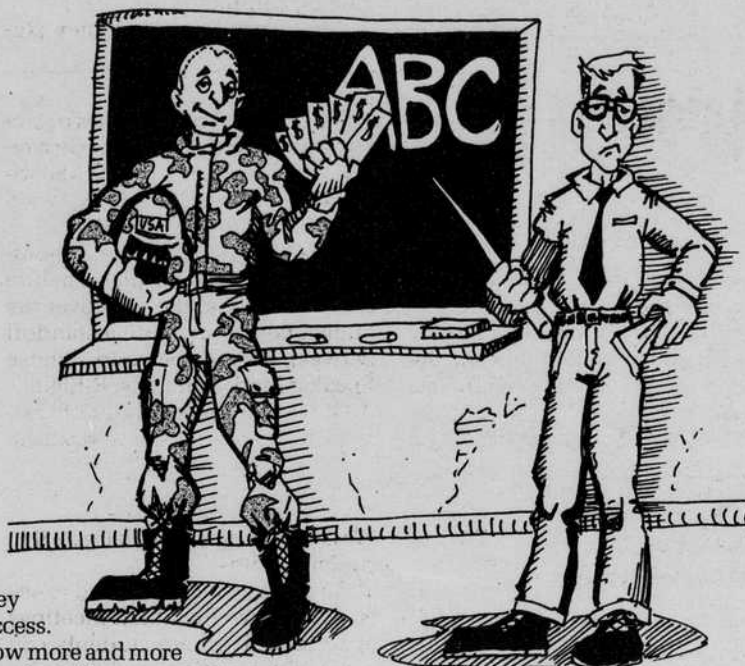
At the same time, Bush wants to cut funding to schools that don't meet certain standards, meaning if a teacher's students don't perform up to par this year, he or she might not have a job next year. "Accountability!" he cries — like a good Republican should.

Why not use the same principle with the military? If soldiers shoot civilians, dock their pay. If they drop bombs on the wrong house, dock their pay. If a company, division or squad botches a mission, cut its funding. How about this policy: No Osama bin Laden this month, no budget next month. Accountability for soldiers! America is strapped for cash and in the red, so why not?

Because it won't work, that's why. If a group of people can't get something accomplished with the amount of money they have now, chances are they won't be able to do it with less. No matter what the

task, money equals success. So we throw more and more money into the military, expecting our social, economic and political interests to be successfully defended. And when they are not, the solution is always the same: even more money. Sadly, this solution is rarely applied to education, except perhaps in the wealthiest households.

But teachers have never been able to compete with soldiers in America. Let's say I wish to pursue one of these two options: education or Army, teaching or killing. If I choose the former, I must spend some \$100,000 on at least a four-year college education. If I choose the latter, I actually get paid to go to school, up to \$50,000 if I want it. A first-year teacher can expect to make around \$2,100 a month. A first-year soldier makes about \$1,170. Score one for the teachers, right? No, not after considering what that money must go toward. The teacher is responsible for his or her own food, clothing and shelter. A soldier has none of these worries. That \$1,170 is money in the bank. A teacher, on the other hand, with a house payment, a car payment and all sorts of insurance, is probably going into debt every month.



Steve Baggs Emerald BAGGS

The military offers free health care, cheaper child care, free training, furthered education and — God, this is sad — infinitely better job security, especially with Bush in office. The choice is no choice at all. In the United States of America, the richest, most powerful nation on Earth, killing people is still a more lucrative business than teaching them.

I'm not saying soldiers get paid too much; I'm sure they earn every penny — and then some. I'm saying teachers get screwed. We, as a nation, consistently place more value on the people who defend our children, in a very indirect manner, than the people who very directly raise our children. For seven hours a day, five days a week, 36 weeks a year, teachers are responsible for the next generation of America. I can't even begin to put a price on such a monumental responsibility, but I know it's a whole hell of a lot more than \$2,100 a month.

E-mail columnist Aaron Rorick at aaronrorick@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

Nike cares for its contract employees

GUEST COMMENTARY

Vada O. Manager

The recent article, "Lecture series on sweatshops to unveil Indonesian report," (ODE, Nov. 13), raised questions regarding Nike's labor practices in Indonesia. I would like to provide clarity for your readers about Nike's business in Indonesia and in the other 52 countries, including the United States, where our products are manufactured.

First and foremost, Oregon students, faculty and staff should feel confident knowing that products with the Ducks' logo, whether made in the United States or abroad, were made under well-established standards and regularly monitored working conditions. In addition to external independent monitoring, Nike currently has more than 30 employees dedicated to ensuring that the workers at more than 850 contract factory sites throughout the world have good wages and a safe, fair and healthy work environment.

Nike offers good wages, benefits and desirable jobs in countries where wages are low and jobs are scarce. In many cases, entry-level workers earn more in cash and allowances than local governments require. In addition to fair wages, most workers also receive benefits such as housing, transportation, on-site health care and meals. With these addi-

tional benefits, Nike's contract factory employees in some countries are compensated equal to — or better than — other professionals, such as teachers, police officers or farmers.

In Indonesia, Nike engaged in a transparent assessment of our operations with an independent entity, the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities. Although some disturbing issues were identified in more than 4,000 interviews with workers at nine factories, a couple of irrefutable facts emerged from the academic-based research. An overwhelming majority of the workers expressed satisfaction with job skills training and recreation services at the factory. A majority of workers also reported satisfaction with their relationship with supervisors and managers.

As the economy struggled in Indonesia, Nike also increased wages more than 40 percent for entry-level Indonesian factory workers. Periodic independent university studies have shown many workers earn enough to send funds home to relatives and dependents.

In July 2000, a Wisconsin State Journal reporter provided this view of a Nike contract factory in Indonesia: "The factory in Tangerang with 5,355 workers is modern and clean, better than some I have seen in the United States. In a country with an economic crisis, 30 percent unemployment and 60 percent of the people living below the poverty line, jobs here are very desirable."

In addition, an editorial by the Asian Wall Street Journal in March 2001 regarding the Global Alliance study provides further insight into Nike's efforts in Indonesia, stating in part, "The truth of the matter is that many corporations are responsible employers that now demonstrate proactive concern for workers making their products. Nike deserves applause for being a leader in standards for others to follow."

Nike can and will continue to make improvements in the way we do business in the United States and abroad. Please visit our Web site at www.nikebiz.com for an online factory tour, the newly published Nike Corporate Responsibility annual report, and the most current information about Nike's corporate responsibility programs.

Vada O. Manager is the director of Global Issues Management for Nike.