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COMMENTARY

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Monday, March 18, 2002

Editorial

Until campus is safer, learn to self-defend

It often seems like nothing could bring everyone on campus together — not student government elections, not culture nights or rallies in the EMU Amphitheater. But the recent campus attacks near Gerlinger Hall have left almost everyone sharing the same feelings of frustration and vulnerability.

Although no one is pointing fingers, it may be time for the University to seek outside help from national campus safety professionals. The Department of Public Safety is doing its best to keep the campus safe. But the University often receives outside help on issues of diversity and tolerance on campus, and it's only natural we seek the same guidance from experts with experience resolving safety issues on other campuses. Objective professionals can help brainstorm new approaches and ideas to make the campus a safer place.

In the meantime, students, faculty and staff should make an effort to learn appropriate self-defense moves, use common sense and take advantage of underused campus services, such as DPS campus escorts.

The woman who was attacked March 13 by Gerlinger Hall was impressively well-prepared for the attack — she was able to fire pepper spray in her assailant's eyes, hit him with her car keys and run away — but not everyone would have such quick reflexes in this situation.

Generally speaking, when people are attacked their human instinct is to fight back, but defending yourself successfully takes practice. We encourage people to take self-defense or martial arts classes to rehearse these techniques so that they are comfortable using them in real-life situations.

A few simple self-defense techniques, such as kicking or kneeling an attacker to the groin or knee, are very effective. Punching to the face or elbowing an attacker in the sternum or head are also powerful ways to fight back when faced with an attacker. Every part of your body is potentially a weapon, if you know how to use it.

But not all situations are the same, and if you're attacked, you have to do what is right for you. When weapons are involved, as in the March 12 attempted robbery by Gerlinger Hall, the whole dynamic of the situation changes. In these cases, it's important to do whatever you have to do to survive the attack. Sometimes people freeze, and that in no way means those people "failed" to protect themselves correctly.

We hope that the culprit or culprits of these attacks are caught, but some other recent campus attackers have never been found. And that makes it even more important for students to be educated and prepared — to help them be safer.

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.

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GTFs feel pressure, attack on all sides

GUEST COMMENTARY

Paul Prew

I have been a graduate student for nearly five years at the University, developed relationships with a number of administrators and served the University on a number of committees. In fact, I helped to form a Joint Committee on Insurance to help look at issues of mutual interest between the University and the graduate teaching fellows. I have had disagreements with University decisions, but I felt that my voice was heard and that we could make progress together to reach mutually beneficial goals.

Lately, I have felt increasingly under attack. The recent ODE cartoon depicting GTFs as crybabies ignores the fact that we work nearly 80 to 100 hours a week (including course work and research) for less than 20 hours pay (about \$200), and it ignores the crucial point that if we did not receive a tuition waiver, we would be somewhere else. Personally, I would be at Florida State University right now if I knew I would be receiving 4 years straight of pay cuts, after accounting for inflation.

Campuswide, GTFs are feeling the pressure of funding and economic con-

straints. According to the University's 1999 "Process for Change Report," a 33 percent increase in GTF pay would not be "fat." The ability of the University to attract and retain the graduate students it desires depends on the ability to provide incentives that match or outdo its competitors. Given the low rate of pay, Oregon lags significantly behind in this respect. Of particular interest to recruitment, international GTFs must be employed and cannot obtain employment outside of the University. Most must subsist on GTF salaries alone — an income below the poverty level.

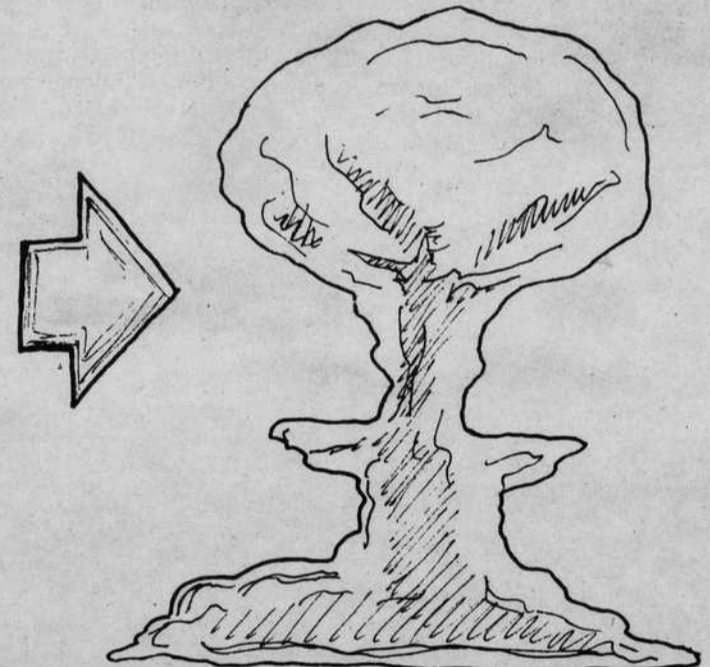
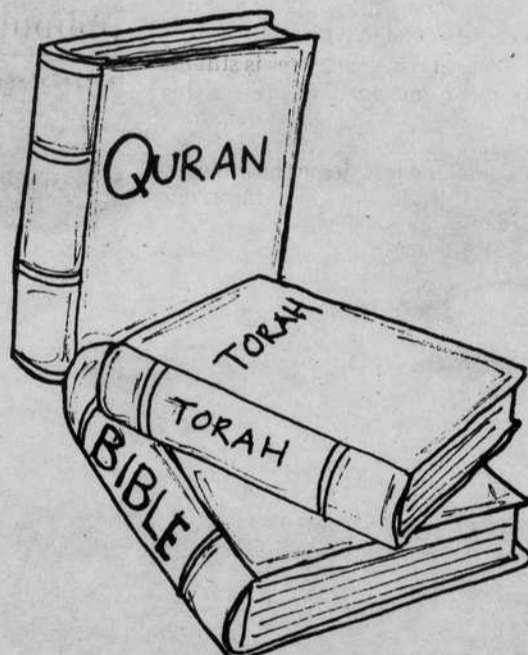
Although pay is a major issue of concern for many graduate students attempting to eke out a living on their GTF salaries, there are other issues of concern to which the University has turned a deaf ear. Recently, a pair of GTFs were berated and harassed by a professor who publicly

blamed them for losing grades for a course. In fact, the professor had deleted them herself. The University argued in a settlement with the GTFs that the professor was in fact wrong, but the contract between the University and the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (the union that represents GTFs) did not cover the issue. Despite the University's admission, officials have since refused any attempts to address the issue within the GTFF contract.

All of these issues have major implications for undergraduates. As their tuition rises and the amount of services they receive does not necessarily increase, they are faced with an environment that is less and less conducive to learning. Pressure is building to increase class sizes, but GTFs are not given more time or resources to deal with the students that they have. Overworked, underpaid, hungry GTFs (I actually had a student who brought food to class for me because I looked peckish) cannot perform optimally to give the quality education undergraduates deserve.

Paul Prew is a doctoral candidate in sociology.

Peter Utsey Emerald



A MEANS TO AN END

Poll Results:

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, www.dailyemerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

Last week's poll question:

How far will the Oregon men's basketball team go in the NCAA Tournament?

Results: 137 total votes

- Sweet 16 — 27.7 percent, or 38 votes
- Elite Eight — 27.7 percent, or 38 votes
- Final Four — 27.0 percent, or 37 votes
- Don't care — 14.6 percent, or 20 votes
- Don't know — 2.9 percent, or 4 votes

Everybody is right so far, and how very sweet it is. But keep voting, because this poll question will stay in play until the Ducks stop dancing.

Letter to the editor

Separate shuttles cost too much

As a student, paying incidental fees like the rest of us, it strikes me as somewhat ridiculous that there are two programs (e.g. Saferide and Night Ride) with a common goal (that of providing safe transportation after dark) yet with separate staffs, separate resources and a separate budget. I have no problem forking over a little cash so that folks can have a safe ride after the sun goes down, but I do have serious qualms about funding two entirely independent projects that could easily be integrated.

Are the women of this campus really so afraid of the men that

they cannot even share a van for 10 minutes? Perhaps an integrated service could have both a male and a female staff member present to ensure that everybody's interests are protected.

If that is insufficient, then I say call DPS. Not only are they in peak physical condition, but the arsenal on their belt is sure to deter most every would-be attacker, sexual or otherwise. To continue the segregation of these transport services only widens the gap between the sexes, fostering an environment of bitterness and resentment, and nurturing our so-called "rape culture."

Besides that, it costs twice as much, and that ticks me off.

Ben Strawn
 freshman
 undeclared