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COMMENTARY

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Wednesday, April 3, 2002

Editorial

Professors should help students buy expensive textbooks

Every term, students flood local bookstores searching for deals on textbooks. With University fees and tuition rising, many students struggle to pay for texts, which seem to get more pricey each term.

It's time University professors pitched in to give students' pocketbooks a break — after all, many professors benefit financially from assigning class texts that they authored. And it's unreasonable to ask students to shell out money each term for books that rapidly lose value and end up being worth a fraction of what they cost. The least professors can do is put copies of their books on reserve at the library for students who aren't financially able to purchase their own.

The Knight Library will take purchase requests from professors and students if the book is not an academic text, such as math or science books — these books are often stolen or become outdated. The library does purchase novels and supplemental readings for University courses and encourages professors to put their personal copies of academic texts on reserve.

That leaves it up to professors to purchase texts for their class out of their own pockets. But while many professors expect students to shell out hundreds of dollars for books, they refuse to make the same purchases to help their students. Putting a \$90 math book on reserve for 200 students works out to less than 50 cents per student. It's a small price for professors to pay, and it would help everyone be able to afford to attend the classes. And it's assumed that professors are in a better position financially to afford to purchase a textbook than students are.

The alternative for professors is to keep allowing copyright violations of texts, or to expect that some students will not be able to purchase or read the material at all. Some students are more likely to borrow and copy entire texts from their friends to avoid having to pay the price at the bookstore — though such copying is illegal.

Putting books on reserve in the library is easier for both students and professors. Students should have the option of reading in the reserve room, and professors need to make these choices widely available. It is unfair to punish students who cannot afford texts by refusing to put books on reserve when the alternative is much more economical for everyone.

Editorial Policy

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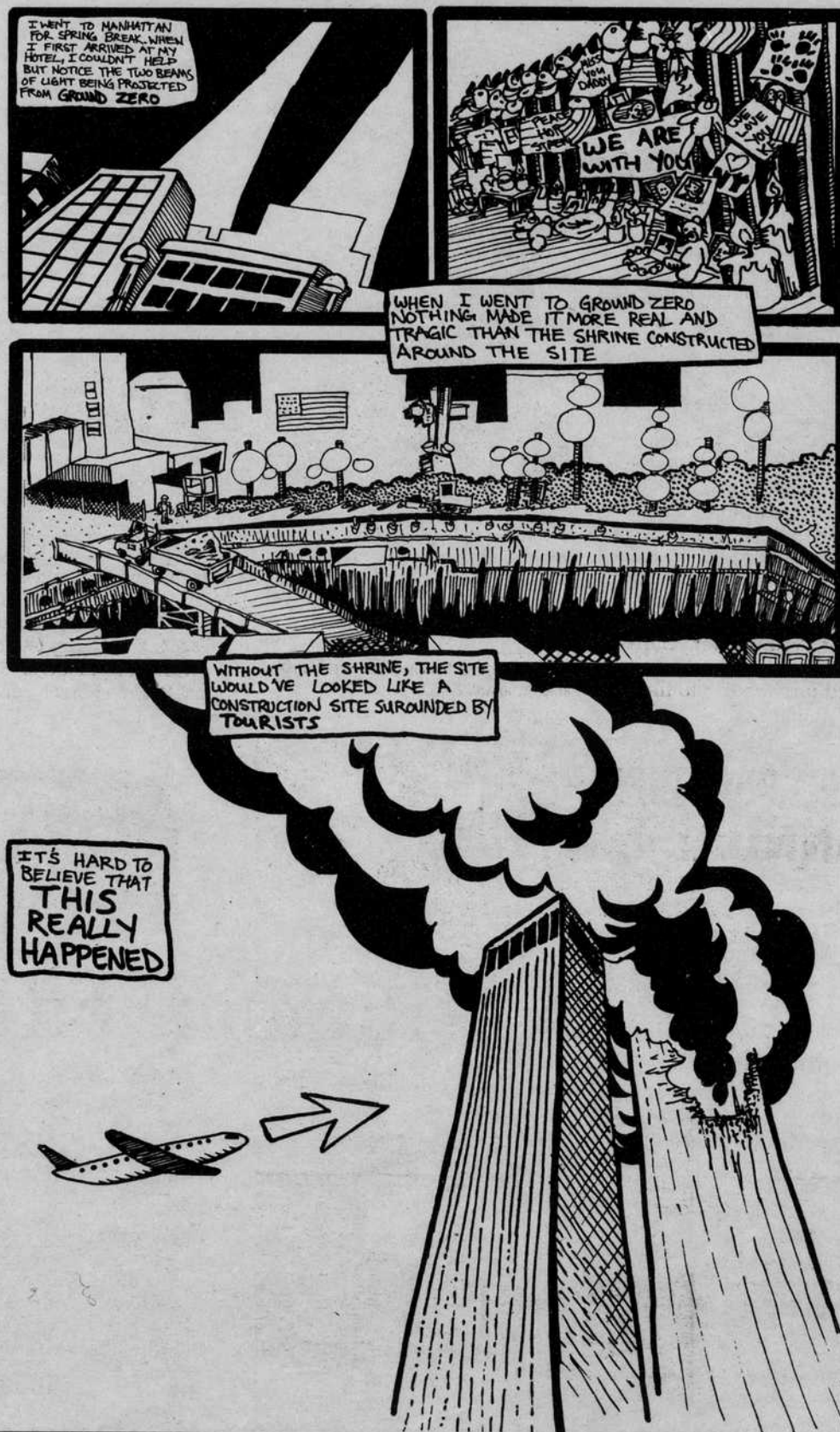
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BY: STEVE BAGGS



Letters to the editor

Requirements fail to diversify

At the University, the matter of their "multicultural requirements" has been an issue of concern for the students. Right now, we students are concerned that our current requirements are not diversifying our education as they were designed to do.

At the current state, students can take such courses as basic music, geography and general biology to fulfill their requirements. These courses do, indeed, educate students, but do they really provide them with diversity? Do they

teach students about racism, other cultures or unified causes?

Our education should be fashioned to prepare us for the future and the very diverse world that we will be working and living in.

Students, faculty and community members need to be made aware of this problem. Eugene and the University have always been prided on being diverse places to live, work and study. But what multiculturalism are our students really coming out with?

Hilary Evonuk
 communication disorders and sciences

No one is permanently rich or poor

Ralph Nader was incorrect to state that corporations control all (ODE, 3/8/02). Corporations are controlled by their owners, not the reverse. Perhaps Nader would prefer that corporations were owned by the government — like the Soviet Union of old, or have corporations were controlled by the government, like Germany's National Socialist Party and Italy's Fascist Party of the 1930s.

In regard to the growing disparity between rich and poor to which Nader referred:

An absolute majority of the people who were in the bottom 20 percent in 1975 have also been in the top 20 percent at some time since then. There are some who remain permanently in the bottom 20 percent. But such people constitute less than 1 percent of the American population.

Real income per capita has risen 50 percent over the same span of time when household income has remained virtually unchanged. How is this possible? Because households are getting smaller. Higher incomes enable more people to afford to go out

and set up their own households. And who should be surprised that 60-year-olds have higher incomes and more wealth than 30-year-olds?

Moreover, that was also true 30 years ago, when today's 60-year-olds were just 30. But these are not different classes of people. They are the same people at different stages of their lives. The whole classes of people who live permanently in poverty or in luxury in the United States do not reach beyond single digits.

Robert P. Kelso
 San Marcos, Texas