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# COMMENTARY

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Thursday, May 16, 2002

## Editorial

### UO president must decide on mascot resolution

University President Dave Frohnmayer is showing poor leadership by wasting time waffling about the School of Law's mascot resolution instead of taking a firm stance on the issue.

The University School of Law's Sports and Entertainment Law Forum resolution, which would prevent University athletic teams from scheduling games with schools promoting American Indian mascots or images, has been sitting on Frohnmayer's desk for little more than a week.

But Frohnmayer has avoided making a decision on the matter and is instead waiting for the NCAA to take up the issue.

Frohnmayer's ultimate decision, whether veto or approval, will have trickle-down effects on the Athletic Department and the University community as a whole. Frohnmayer should stop passing the buck to the NCAA and decide for himself what course the University should take regarding the resolution.

If the University did wait for NCAA action, a national resolution may take months to even draft. Frohnmayer does not need to wait for a national policy to make a decision that would affect our University.

The president's indecision is eerily reminiscent of his hesitance to sign on with the Worker Rights Consortium last fall. Even with the support of the majority of students on campus — and a major 10-day protest on Johnson Hall's lawn in the spring — Frohnmayer remained grossly indecisive about the issue for months, frustrating both WRC supporters and opponents.

Perhaps the new mascot resolution controversy has reminded Frohnmayer of an old adage: Once bitten, twice shy. But just because the WRC resolution wasn't handled well doesn't give Frohnmayer the right to avoid making future political decisions — unpopular or not. After all, determining the fate of the University is part of Frohnmayer's job as president.

The University needs to take a stand either way on this issue, and our University president is the person to make the decision. Frohnmayer should stop dallying and take a firm stance on the issue either way. As the University's leader, Frohnmayer is obligated to lead even in the midst of a politically-charged decision. We hope Frohnmayer takes swift action in the matter and does not disappoint students with the same lackluster leadership as last year.

## 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.

## Alternative media's tactics on EPD's new access policy hurts their cause

### GUEST COMMENTARY

Aaron K. Breniman

Emerald reporter Brad Schmidt did a superb job of reporting on the many differing voices from local media pertaining to the new journalist policies for the Eugene Police Department and should be commended ("EPD adopts new policies for journalists," ODE, May 13).

However, the alternative media, especially in Eugene, hurt their cause by failing to actively participate in the process — in this case with the EPD's Committee on Media Access Issues. The news media's purpose is to inform the public, which is crucial to a democratic society. James Madison once wrote, "The right of freely examining public characters and measures, and of free communication among the people thereon ... has ever been justly deemed the only effectual guardian of every other right." His words have sustained the test of time and, in my opinion, are among some of the best ever written about the relationship between the Fourth Estate and democracy.

But Cascadia Alive! videographer Tim Lewis and other alternative media outlets such as the Eugene Weekly and Eugene Indymedia accomplish nothing — in turn, failing their audience — while also reducing their organization's credibility and accessibility to information by refusing to actively participate in said process.

"Nontraditional media haven't participated in the discussion process because they feel doing so would validate it," said Tim Lewis, a freelance videographer for Cascadia Alive!, a local cable-access television show," Schmidt writes in the article. "Lewis said the new policy won't affect how he approaches his job and added that he won't comply with a need for press credentials. If anything, he said, the policy will just control mainstream media."

The new policies have little to do with attempting to control the media; rather, they aim to ensure that information is available — from a credible source — to the public.

Let me briefly illustrate my point by hitting on some of the benefits the alternative media establishment would have accomplished through their involvement:

First, they could have increased their access to information from the EPD (most likely leading to increased information availability from other government agencies) by making a good-faith effort to positively contribute to the policy process and raise any concerns or questions they had.

Instead of being seen as non-legitimate, sensationalistic outlets always crying "foul," they'd be seen as partners in informing the people, thereby increasing their ability to inform the people of both good deeds and wrongdoings.

Second, they could have increased their image, legitimacy and credibility by participating in the process. Had they put aside the punk anarchist attitudes for a moment and thought about it rationally, they'd have realized that to achieve their end desire — to broaden and increase their audience — they'd have been better off being involved.

Third, through involving themselves in the policy discussions, the alternative media, which typically have far less resources than mainstream media, could have benefited through the proposed press pool that would allow a limited number of media personnel to have access to dangerous or large-scale situations.

Media establishments such as these must look beyond agenda-driven ideology and focus less upon themselves and more upon their readers.

Sometimes you have to give a little. And in this case, the alternative media could have gotten a lot.

Aaron K. Breniman, a journalist and media critic living in Portland, was community editor for the Emerald in 2001.

Steve Baggs Emerald



## Letter to the editor

### University trades privacy for false security

As an independent political scientist and writer, I always appreciate every opportunity to familiarize myself with diverse viewpoints on world affairs, even when I already have my own strong opinion (such as Israeli terror against Palestinians). Therefore, I was curious about a lecture organized by the pro-Israeli Caravan For Democracy, in which "prominent international speakers" were advertised. I wanted to see and hear people with opinions different from my own.

But when I came to the Erb Memorial Union, I was shocked to see that each person planning to attend the lecture had to fill in a mandatory questionnaire and show picture identification just to get inside. There are no words strong enough to describe how indignant I was.

When I expressed this to one of the organizers, she reacted arrogantly and explained that they were collecting information "for security reasons." It's very strange indeed, because during my eight years in Eugene, I've attended hundreds of various lectures on and outside the University campus, and I was never required to answer any intrusive questions or to show ID.

I don't mind answering questions and providing personal info about myself, for example, in order to get a credit card. But since that lecture was a public event, they had no right to force people into compromising their personal privacy. This issue is much wider than just University policy. I hope in this country, people's right to privacy is still at least a little respected and protected, including at our University.

Valdas Anelauskas  
 Eugene