

# COMMENTARY

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Friday, May 31, 2002

Yesteryear's Editorial

## No more smoke in your eyes

**E**ditor's note: The policy decision to ban smoking in classrooms and public places on campus had been in the works for 10 months before the ban was adopted. The ban exempted classrooms with less than 20 people with instructor and student approval.

The proposed ban on smoking in classrooms and public gatherings at the University is now a reality. The ban went into effect Thursday and is now a part of formal University policy.

Finally, students can go to

University of Oregon

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class or to a movie in the EMU Ballroom with the assurance that the air they breathe will be free of smoke. Finally, the

majority of students who are not nicotine addicts will not have to breathe the fumes of someone else's habit.

University President Robert Clark is to be commended for making the ban a part of the University policy. It was a necessary step, because non-smokers who, for reasons of health and/or comfort don't wish to inhale smoke, have not been able to prevail upon smokers to confine their indulgence to uncrowded rooms and private places.

Clark's decision was a long time in coming. He originally proposed the ban at the end of winter term. A student-led group was circulating petitions in favor of such a ban in February.

The interim period has allowed for a broad-based solicitation of input on the proposal. The fact that the opinions and evidence submitted to Clark in that time period overwhelmingly favored a smoking ban further solidifies its legitimacy as formal University policy.

It is now up to the University community to put the policy into effect and ask others to observe it.

This editorial is courtesy of the May 31, 1974, edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald.

## Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

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

## Middle East Studies: No money, no priority

GUEST COMMENTARY

William Toll

**G**eorge Beres' guest commentary on the talk by David Zev Harris states very clearly the propagandistic intent of the speaker and the misleading character of the publicity promoting the talk ("Middle East discussion in need of solid University curriculum," ODE, May 22). The promotional literature made me, too, expect a talk that would explain how Palestinians and Israelis have come to their grim impasse. I was not impressed by Harris' defense of state policy. But as Beres proceeded to criticize Judaic Studies and lament the absence of a Middle East Studies program, I found his views condescending and disingenuous.

Judaic Studies exists on this campus not because the University administration gives funding, which presumably could be shifted to some broader program. It exists because Jewish philanthropy has provided the funds, as other philanthropies have provided the

funds for other University programs like the Center for the Study of Women in Society.

At a meeting I attended in the early 1980s, then University President Paul Olum stated he was not interested in having the University commit any funds to Judaic Studies, and the University contributes very little even now. After years of talk by interested faculty with the Schnitzer Family Fund, it finally agreed to provide sufficient money to launch a small program here. Last week it announced it would be doing the same for Portland State University.

Universities, even public universities, should provide an academic setting for students who want to understand more about who they are. This issue was fully

aired in African American Studies, Women's Studies and similar programs 30 years ago. But Judaic Studies does not serve a "small minority of students, most of them familiar with the Jewish Temple." Some of my history students have experience with "the Jewish Temple," others have experiences with synagogues and many have no experiences with either. Classes in Judaic Studies are designed by academic professionals for all students and happily, the number of students enrolling in Judaic Studies classes has grown beyond the "small minority."

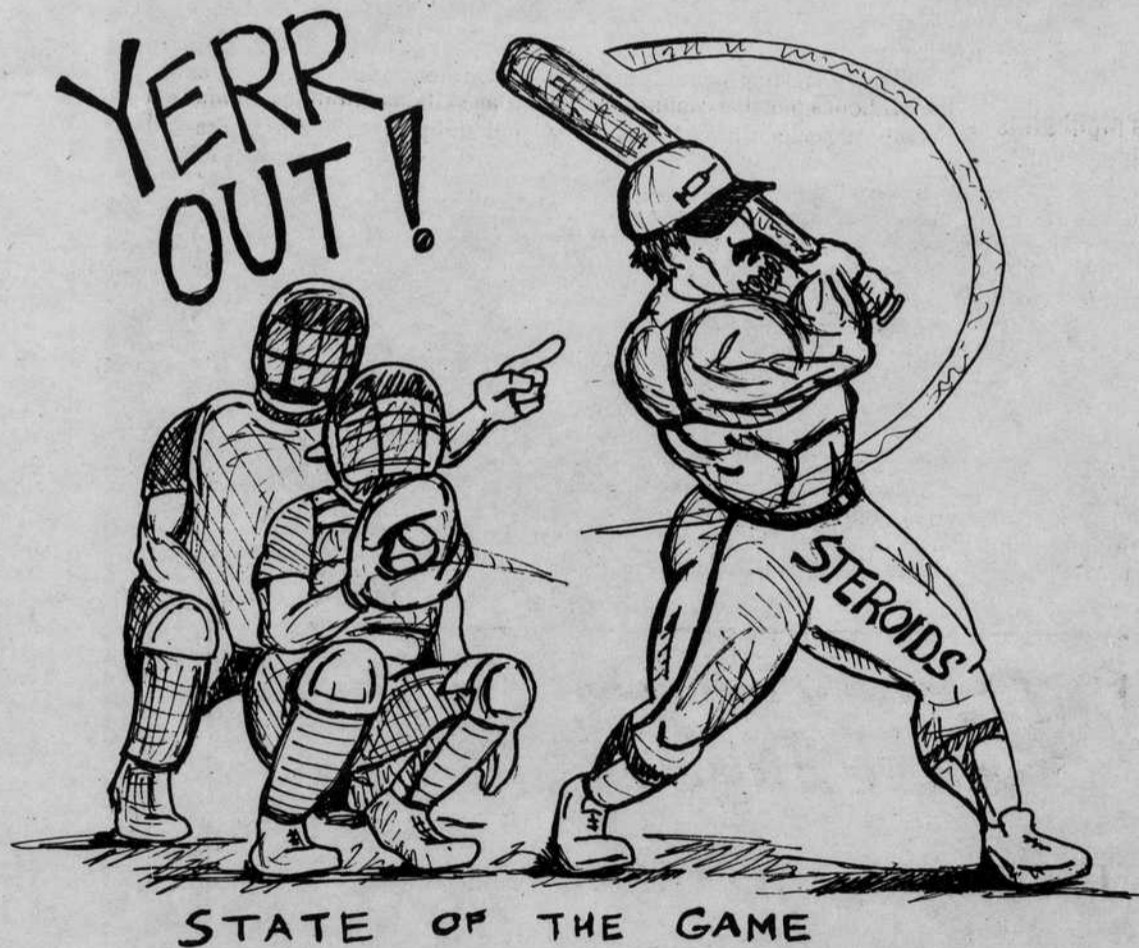
The sad fact that a program in Middle East Studies does not exist here has nothing to do with the fact that a fledgling program in Judaic Studies does. Middle East Studies does not exist here because neither the administration nor the established departments — except Religious Studies — has any professional commitment to this subject area. In the late 1970s,

in a conversation with a former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I was told that the Oregon University System has a division of labor for "peripheral areas," and that Portland State had the Middle East Studies Program. The provincial views of that former dean — an American historian — astonished me, as do the current priorities of the University's social science departments.

Fifteen years ago, the University's various departments showed only limited interest in East Asia. But a commitment by the administration to strengthening "Pacific Rim" studies has dramatically expanded the faculty — and the student body — in this area. Without the commitment of funding by provosts and deans, the departments will not alter their priorities. Unless, of course, they find philanthropists with an interest in the Middle East to encourage them.

William Toll is an adjunct professor of history.

Peter Utsey Emerald



## Letters to the editor

### Close the University 'shopping mall'

Imagine my shock and dismay, when going to my class on the afternoon of May 21, I was forced to run a gauntlet of GMC SUVs and sports cars in front of the EMU, with a loud voice emanating from a mic and rap music from large speakers under the pavilion that usually hosts student dramatic groups, rock bands and other ordinary campus activities.

The voice yelled out slogans for Joe Romania Chevrolet and urged students to sign up for some sort of car raffle. It was obviously a big

sales gimmick aimed at students. Such loudly amplified events make it difficult to talk and hear in nearby classrooms, to say nothing of what they imply about our purpose as an institution.

A colleague reported seeing a similar Chrysler-Jeep extravaganza behind the Education School the same day. What's happening to this "public university"? Is it turning into a shopping mall? Did Romania or the other dealership pay the University for the privilege of selling their products here? Will we soon need commercial sponsors for our classes?

Louise Westling  
professor of English

### Dry greek chapters: Let the wet tears flow

President Frohnmayer's recent implementation of new dry standards is a step in the right direction for University. Many greek life leaders such as Jackie Ray ignorantly claim that the new standards Frohnmayer and other faculty have set are unrealistic and unfair. This completely ridiculous complaint has no basis. As a group heavily affiliated with the University and supposedly committed to leadership and community service, the greek system should already have implemented dry policies.

It seems that greek life needs to

learn the definition of integrity. So what if all greek houses must go dry by December? Are simple standards to turn dry and improve mean GPAs really asking that much from the greek system? If it is the strong group of brothers and sisters that it claims to be, not allowing alcohol in houses should only help their commitment to leadership and community service. Greek life leaders can cry me a river. The standards are not only realistic and fair, but a positive direction for both greek life and the University.

Kevin Kim  
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