

COMMENTARY

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Yesteryear's Editorial

Questions remain on research-park plan

Editor's note: This editorial was written in response to the community's proposal to build a Riverfront Research Park. After lengthy deliberations, a master plan for the park was approved in 1988, and the first building was dedicated in 1992. Currently, the park is home to several University and non-University research and technology programs, including the Office of Research Services and Acacia International, Inc.

Throughout the 1970s, Oregon, and Eugene in particular, developed a reputation for being anti-business. Late Gov. Tom McCall publicly stated his opposition to new businesses locating in the state, while the state Legislature developed one of the most stringent land-use programs in the country.

University of Oregon
125TH ANNIVERSARY

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But with the statewide unemployment rate hovering around 10 percent, Oregonians have attempted to earnestly develop the state's industrial sector.

The proposed Riverfront Research Park, which is a joint effort by the University, the city of Eugene and local businesses, is one example of this effort.

Proponents of the park, which would be located on land adjacent to the Willamette River, argue that the faculty will pump thousands of dollars into the Oregon economy, while creating hundreds of new jobs. They also say it will enhance the University's reputation as a leading national research facility.

In other towns, projects of this size have traditionally raised community excitement to such new heights that community leaders have bent over backwards to ensure the project's success. City councils conduct uninspired hearings, land-use bodies waive many of their rules, and it all happens so fast that potential opponents are given little time to organize.

We hope that the Eugene City Council and Mayor Brian Obie will consider all of the park's ramifications before they give it their full support. There are many questions to be considered.

The University, which will lease to park developers about 80 percent of the facility's land, must place a stipulation in the lease outlawing any classified research.

A university should not be a branch office for the Department of Defense. We are not in the business of developing weapons. Similarly, no University land should be used for such research.

We hope that University President Paul Olum will fight for this stipulation in any lease, because once the land is leased out, we will have very little control over that lease.

We must also ask: Who will have ultimate control for ensuring the community's safety in case of a major accident at the park? Will the park increase pollution levels in the Willamette River? If yes, then what will be the nature of the pollutants?

Eugene must attract new businesses. Anyone who has recently looked for work in Eugene knows this to be true.

When people are unemployed the tax base shrinks and the community cannot provide adequate services. But this does not mean that we should prostitute ourselves to any new business that offers to locate in our community. Instead, we must carefully examine the pluses and the minuses offered by any new business.

This editorial was taken from the June 6, 1985, edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald.

Equal rights includes checking boxes

Jeff Oliver's commentary "Judging people by the color of their skin" (ODE, May 29) was short-sighted and disappointing. In response to the University of Michigan law school's admissions policy, which allows the applicant's race to be used as one of several deciding factors, Oliver argued that "just because a student checks a different box on their application form doesn't mean she has experience any more valuable than anyone else's." This statement is entirely untrue. If a student checks a box other than "white," and if "she" checks a box other than "male," the student has the experience of being a member of groups that have been deprived of equal opportunity since the founding of this country. Moreover, the student has the experience of being a member of a group immensely underrepresented in universities, law schools and our nation's legislature.

Oliver relied on a Webster's Dictionary and the act of checking boxes in defining diversity and denouncing affirmative action. But the real issue goes far beyond these simple examples. Diversity isn't just good for "improving the quality of education," as Oliver suggested. When a school prides itself in its di-

GUEST COMMENTARY

Vivian Vassall

versity, it prides itself in offering minorities a chance they were never given before. There has been one black governor in U.S. history. And needless to say, there has never been a U.S. president that was anything but a white male. What Oliver doesn't realize is that white males have privilege. They don't have to be afraid of going to small towns or rural areas. They don't have to be afraid of going to college and not fitting in because of the color of their skin. They don't have to be afraid of sharing their dreams of attending law school or becoming a leader.

In order to evolve from the disgraceful status quo, people like Oliver need to look outside of themselves for a moment. They should stop feeling threatened by affirmative action or intimidated by the all-inclusive ethnic student unions. The only reason these institutions exist is to educate and progress without being hindered by conservative skeptics. In order to get to a point where universities can be

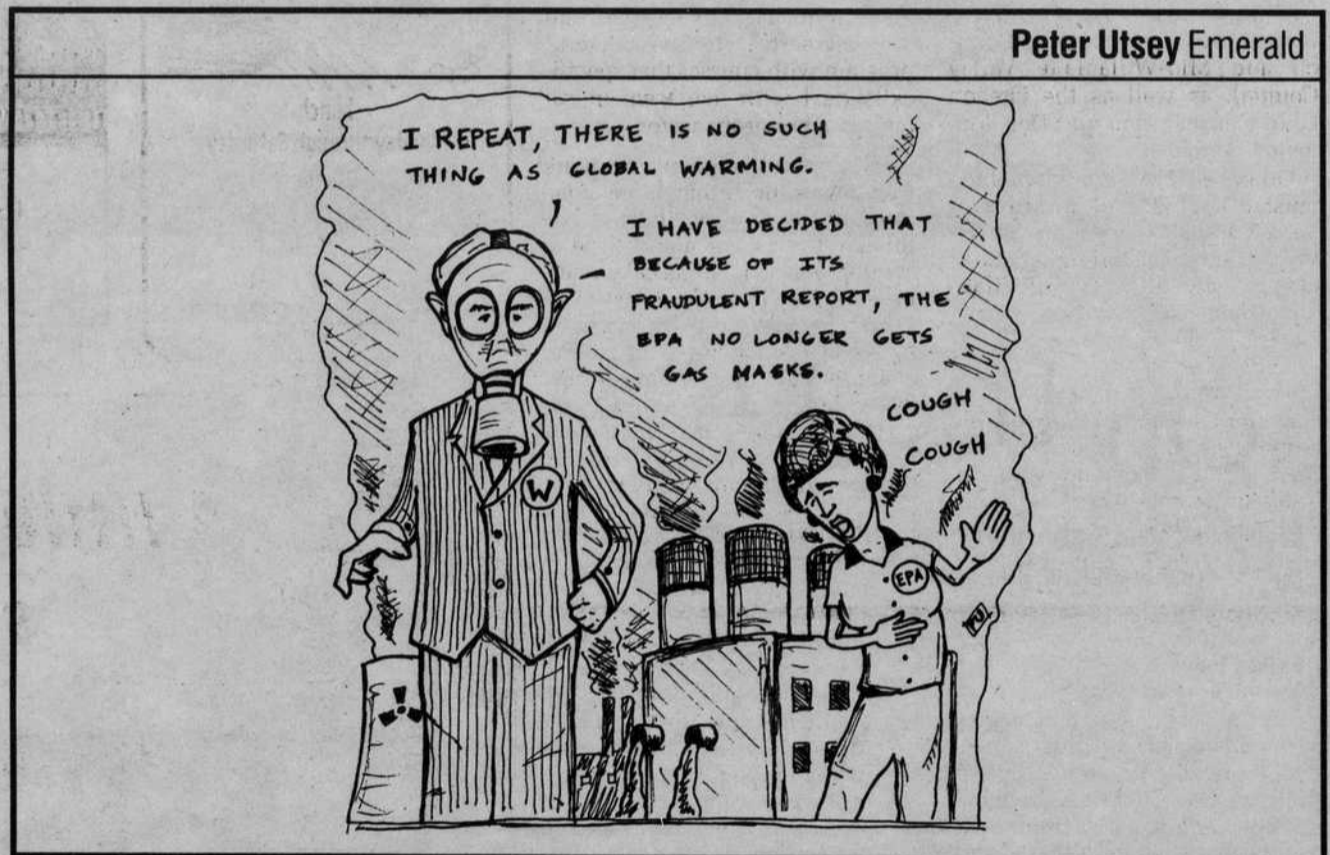
colorblind, they need initially to strive to be colorful. And this requires giving minorities a chance to attend college when they most likely have parents and grandparents who couldn't get a higher education and thus couldn't provide funds and preparation necessary for their children.

If colleges ignore race in the admissions process, they ignore the inequalities that still exist in America. The problem of racial discrimination won't fix itself, and if denied or disregarded, will not change. Women and people of color, being fewer in numbers, have to be allowed in by those in the powerful majority. The Civil Rights movement would not have been so successful if it weren't for white liberals who were willing to give minorities a chance. For some, the boxes they check are doors that, if opened, can liberate them from oppression and completely transform the leadership of our nation.

I know that Mr. Oliver, who was the TA for my ethnic studies FIG, is a good-hearted individual. But it won't be until people who share his beliefs stop thinking in their self-interest that we will be able to achieve diversity.

Vivian Vassall is a freshman pre-journalism major.

Peter Utsey Emerald



Letters to the editor

Don't disrupt the parties

The epicenter of last Friday night's party/riot was only a couple of blocks from my apartment, and truth to tell, I slept right through it.

Actually, being a somewhat "nontraditional" student, I don't go to parties anymore. I hate getting drunk, and I've gotten shy about smoking my young fellow students' dope without reciprocating, which I am almost never able to do anymore — who'd sell to an old geezer like me? Still, I have some questions.

Why should a pleasant gathering of well-behaved young people, who are doing nothing worse than getting drunk and peacefully stoned, be hectorated by some obnoxious cop with a bullhorn and told to "disperse" at 11:30 of a fine Friday night? What gives him the right? And if it comes to that, why not

throw bottles at him? Seems like a natural impulse to me.

Douglas Snow
senior
romance languages

Partygoers must respect neighbors' rights

In virtually every discussion about undergraduate partying and rioting off campus, one of the most important elements is missing. The police do not simply show up at parties. They are there because someone has called them in response to obnoxious, disruptive and/or illegal behavior. Neighbors in my area have endured students urinating in their yards, broken beer bottles, massive amounts of litter, walls vibrating with loud music, cars speeding down streets and more during student parties, large and small. Our peace in

our homes, our children's sleep and our pets' safety have been marginalized by selfish, self-centered, spoiled undergraduates who have no perspective on the effects of their behavior on others.

This is not an issue about big, bad police that won't let anyone have any fun. It is about highly disruptive behavior that negatively impacts the permanent residents of some terrific neighborhoods. While there is no "right to party," as some undergraduates would advocate, homeowners do have the right to peaceful enjoyment of their homes and property, and there are laws to protect those rights. When students trample on those rights with large, loud gatherings, we will call the police to break up those events. When this happens, the partygoers are in the wrong, not the police.

Jane Steckbeck
Eugene