

Thursday, February 20, 2003

Editorial

ASUO Executive makes the grade for leadership

As the middle of the academic year rolls around again, it's time judge to the quality of work of the ASUO Executive. We're happy to report that we're impressed with this year's administration. ASUO President Rachel Pilliod is a bundle of energy, excited about the work she does and intelligent in explaining the content of that work to non-"wonky" types like us. We were not able to meet with ASUO Vice President Ben Buzbee in preparation for this report card, and as there are issues of leadership still outstanding in our minds until he has his day in court, we relied on Pilliod as the head of the ASUO Executive. We rated the administration based on its campaign platform from last year.

Legislative issues: A

Many students may not realize it, but an important part of what the ASUO Executive does is to represent students in lobbying efforts from the state level to the federal government. Pilliod has been very active in legislative issues, and under her leadership, Oregon was represented at the federal level through the United States Student Association, fighting for, among many other things, increased Pell Grants in the Higher Education Funding Act.

Also, we were impressed by ASUO's record-breaking voter registration numbers for the November election.

Student leadership resources: B

Pilliod's office has worked hard to replace the defunct Student Activities Resource Office, which was defunded last year. A new proposal to offer resources to students seeking leadership opportunities on campus has been forwarded to Vice President and Dean of Students Anne Leavitt as a suggestion for the president's capital campaign, but realization of this program could be a long way off.

One the other hand, Pilliod created additional opportunities for leadership in the ASUO office and handles requests from students seeking opportunities. That is a concrete accomplishment.

Continuing the work of last year's ASUO Executive: B+

Pilliod's office has kept the energy fee from being increased any further, and we call that a success.

The administration also has continued last year's work on a housing code. While Pilliod said the Eugene City Council hasn't been willing to take on initiatives that could cost the city money, the ASUO has taken over the efforts of the Rental Information Office, which closed last year. The Executive is in the process of publishing a comprehensive rental information guide, as well as making resources available on the Internet.

Health Care: B+

As part of the USSA, Pilliod lobbied in front of the U.S. Congress for additional funding for women's health care. The initiatives died, but giving students a voice is important.

Pilliod also has been working to change the billing system at the University Health Center, which currently requires students to bill their own insurance companies. Regular doctor's offices perform this function, and the Health Center should as well.

Increasing diversity: B

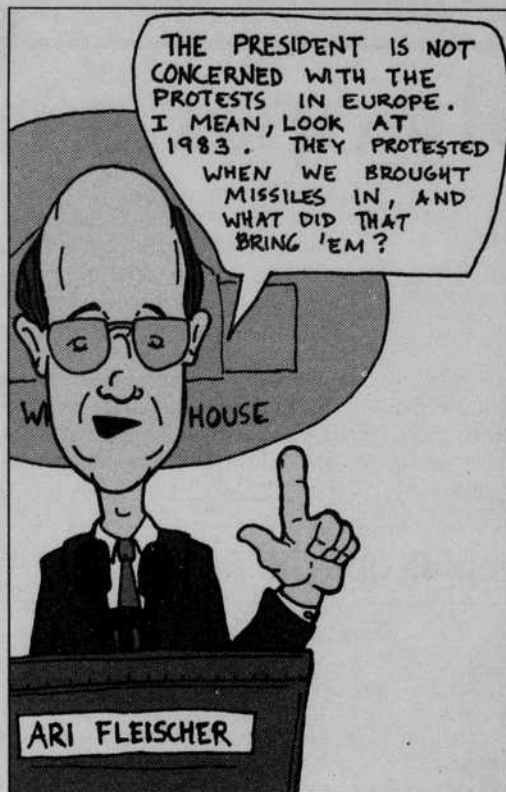
Pilliod told us herself that the ASUO could prioritize diversity issues higher. Her office has continued past events, such as "Weaving New Beginnings," and it joined in the National Take Affirmative Action Day in October. Also, Pilliod has added new positions in her office for multicultural outreach. While we would like to see more, diversity efforts are hard on such a homogenous campus.

Overall: A-/B+

This year's ASUO Executive has been informed, involved and accessible — even in times of minor "scandals." Pilliod has arranged her staff and conducts ASUO business professionally, and it shows.

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. Submission must include phone number and address for verification.



Peter Utsey Emerald

Cold War and peace — revised

Last weekend, Americans in 150 cities organized again to protest George Bush's drive for war against Iraq. They joined several million people in Europe who staged what USA Today called "the biggest protests in modern times."

No longer able to ignore the enormous peace demonstrations, the Bush administration is responding with an odd public relations campaign. It's comparing the weekend's events to demonstrations against staging new missiles in Germany in the early 1980s.

"These marches are 1983 all over again," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

From 1983? One look at the photos from across the world tells me that many won't remember demonstrations that occurred 20 years ago. Some Emerald readers weren't even born yet.

In certain ways, 1983 was long ago. Boy George ruled the airwaves. Scientists had yet to identify the AIDS virus. And the Berlin Wall was a visible reminder of a Cold War that threatened to destroy all of civilization.

The threat of nuclear war loomed large in people's lives. How large? A record num-

ber of Americans tuned in for a TV movie called "The Day After," a story about the effects of a nuclear attack on the United States. Among the top films that year was "WarGames," about a teenage hacker who accidentally starts a "game" called Global Thermonuclear War. In real life, Ronald Reagan escalated nuclear tensions when he announced the Strategic Defense Initiative, soon derided as "Star Wars."

In the late 1970s, the Soviet Union had developed the SS-20, a mobile ballistic missile with unparalleled range and accuracy. In response, NATO adopted a "dual track" strategy of installing new European-based nuclear missiles while simultaneously pursuing arms control treaties. This strategy was controversial from the start.

NATO's strategy involved stationing more than 600 American Pershing II missiles in Western Europe. Thus, American nukes were directed at the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Soviet missiles would target West Germany, Great Britain and other Pershing bases.

Naturally, many Europeans were quite unhappy. They had suffered two devastating world wars, and now faced the prospect of being ground zero for the third because the Americans were installing a new arsenal on their soil.

In 1983, huge crowds demonstrated against the American missiles. 400,000 gathered in Hyde Park in London. 550,000 turned out in The Hague. A million Germans formed a human chain.

NATO remained unmoved.

Fleischer argued that the missiles helped end the Cold War. This is partly true. But the anti-nuclear protests also aided the lasting peace in Europe. They told Mikhail Gorbachev that popular sentiment favored nuclear disarmament and encouraged him to pursue arms talks with President Reagan. Moreover, following suggestions of movement leaders, Gorbachev unilaterally halted Soviet nuclear testing.

In 1987, Gorbachev proposed eliminating European short- and medium-range missiles. NATO accepted. He and Reagan signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the first arms treaty that actually reduced the number of nukes in the world.

In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, liberating East Germans from the Soviets, but also freeing West Germans and other NATO allies from the Americans. No longer can Washington exercise its will in Western Europe as NATO's nuclear protector. And here we are today: Europe on one side of Iraq debate, America on the other.

To the Cold War retreats in the Bush Administration who "remember" the '80s as a time when they "beat" the Soviet Union, I say: At the very least, they should share the victory and stand with the advocates of peace and nuclear disarmament.

Contact the columnist at philiphuang@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

It's time to fight against radio that sucks

Guest editorial

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (U-WIRE) — It's 1972. Enter Lowry Mays, aspiring San Antonio banker. Mays co-signs the note to purchase a local FM station as a favor to a local investor. Thirty-one years later, Mays owns 1,225 stations in 250 U.S. markets and an audience of 66 million. Mays is the founder and CEO of Clear Channel, a \$25 billion media conglomerate currently manipulating local entertainment options somewhere near you.

Senator Russ Feingold, D-Wisc., introduced the "Competition in Radio and Concert Industries Act of 2003" bill at the end of January. He is asking Congress to rethink the wording of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,

where the FCC eliminated national ownership rules for radio stations. The bill says that since the Telecom Act was passed, radio station owners dropped from 5,100 to 3,800. Concert ticket prices increased by 50 percent. Now the top-50 radio groups collect 62.5 percent of radio station revenues.

People are starting to connect the dots between owning radio stations and venues in the same area, and are claiming a decrease in local options. Mays says his company takes local flavor into account and sticks it into Clear Channel's many rotations.

Yet, the company has had legitimate legal trouble. Two years ago, Florida officials fined Clear Channel \$80,000 for not telling participants to a radio call-in show that they were competing against listeners from across the country,

instead of locally. The FCC fined Clear Channel \$8,000 the same year for accepting money from a record company to play a Bryan Adams song — this practice is called payola, one of the causes that started federal regulation of the airwaves in the first place. A Bryan Adams song — is it worth it?

Decide for yourself. Listen to a Clear Channel station here and one in your hometown, and see if Mays' claim that his company provides for local listening is true.

If you want at least part of your music and media back, call your senators and ask them to support the bill. Look them up at www.senate.gov. Tell them corporate radio has, and still does, suck.

This editorial was written by the staff of Indiana Daily Student (Indiana U.).