

Letters

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opportunity to say "no." As one of the few voting student members of the University Assembly, I will vote for this resolution.

Levi Strom
senior
sociology/political science

SUVs are bourgeois oppression machines

The problem with the owners of massive SUVs is not just that they are consciously driving a vehicle that takes up multiple parking spots, blocks other driver's views, requires an obscene amount of gas to go a short distance and are so big they limit the driver's view of small children, pedestrians and bikers, putting them in a life-threatening position.

The problem is that these owners are often the elitist upper class who can afford a vehicle that protects only them during a collision with another vehicle. These ego-stroking megalomaniacs seem to think that their life is worth more than the lesser-well-off, middle- or lower-class family who can only afford a small Honda Civic to get around. Well, you owners of SUVs may not feel guilty about taking up an extra parking spot, but you will when your oversized, too-tall bumper plows through the unreinforced upper half of that small Civic, which was meant only to take blows from a standard, lower-placed bumper, and you seriously harm or kill the non-elite occupants inside.

Andrew Whitmarsh
senior
English

Pilliod, Senate rejected student Iraq ballot

Guest commentary

The Commentary section (ODE, Feb. 26) displayed an illustration of the University Assembly lifting its nose to the students, along with words stating that students' views would not be heard on the Iraq resolution this Friday because the University faculty didn't care to hear from the students. This assertion is patently false. Students have not been given the opportunity to vote before the Assembly meeting only because their own representatives in the ASUO Senate and Executive refused to offer the students a bal-

lot on the issue. I know this because I, along with Levi Strom (the only student senator who cared enough to try), met with ASUO President Rachel Pilliod and ASUO Elections Coordinator Andrea Hall in January to discuss ways for getting a ballot to the students in a timely manner before mid-March.

At the meeting, I was told by Pilliod and Hall that it would not be possible to get a ballot to the students before April, due to all of the red tape involved in putting a ballot out. This sounds to me like code for, "Yeah, you can try to get a ballot to the students if you want, but you're not going to get any real help from the ASUO Student

Senate or president." I assert that this was the implied message because both the president and the senate had the power to offer the students a ballot on the Iraq Resolution, via a fast track process not available to a regular student like myself. And both Hall and Pilliod were aware of these fast track options. But your ASUO president and your Student Senate declined to use their power to let the students' voices be heard on the Iraq Resolution.

So there you are. You, the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, have not been given the opportunity to vote directly on the Iraq resolution, not because the University

faculty didn't want to hear from you but because your own elected representatives couldn't be bothered to offer you a ballot.

The best remedy left to you at this point would be to let your 48 student senators know how you feel about this issue, so that they might represent you properly when they vote at the Assembly Meeting this Friday (assuming that they'll even bother to show up). You can visit your elected representatives at the ASUO office in the EMU. And remember when you go that everyone working in that office is working for you!

Paul Griffes is a senior geography major.

Faculty should send message: Boycott Assembly

Guest commentary

The University faculty, a thousand or more Ph.D.s, meets today to "legislate" against war. Their aggregate wisdom will not amount to much more than the modest wisdom of any single one of them, or of the janitors who clean the place afterward. But all of us have a right and a duty to express our political opinions. No dispute there.

It is dubious, however, that an assembly of professors, as such, has any business collectively expressing a view about foreign affairs, or even domestic policy. Doing so also creates a dangerous precedent of claiming urgent need for faculty resolutions that defend the integrity of American democracy and the well-being of the people.

We academics have no higher moral quality or deeper human wisdom, none beyond what can be

found at any church potluck. When it comes to relevant personal experience, in international diplomacy or military strategy, we're also not special. Even great knowledge does not alone determine what is right. Hitler knew more about German history than does any of us.

The author of the resolution uses the same absolutist, apocalyptic rhetoric that people of his persuasion decry in Bush-Republican Washington: "The university must stand opposed to an unconstitutional war of aggression, which will destroy its very soul. If we do not, who will?"

The answer is, look around you, professor, and not just during your meeting. Freedom of expression and the integrity of higher education are already being vigorously asserted by just about anyone and everyone, from the thugs of anarchism and the extreme left (God save us!), to moderate and conservative politicians. Indeed, the latter,

rather than a hall full of professors, are the more effective counterweight to executive excess, since the dogmatic left has made it clear that the president can never win their support and therefore has nothing to lose by ignoring them.

Academics, like all citizens, should energetically exercise their right and responsibility to express their political opinions, but as individual citizens or in groups that exist for the express purpose of political activism. It undermines democracy and the legitimacy of academe to co-opt, as the Nazis did, bodies that were created for other, specifically defined purposes, whether they are faculty assemblies, garden clubs, scouting organizations or sports teams.

To my academic colleagues who believe that a faculty assembly has no business legislating about war and peace, I suggest: There are probably more of you than Professor Frank

Stahl thinks. Some of you, including some with bitter experience in other societies, may support the war. Maybe you think, as I do, that the academic left poses as much of a threat to free expression on our campuses as Professor Stahl claims the "present federal administration" poses from outside them.

But you have no prospect of advancing your views in a close-minded assembly. Voting, even against the resolution, legitimizes the "legislation." So boycott. Walk out before the voting begins. If you thwart a quorum, that sends one message. If not, and those who are left pass their resolution, the lopsided total sends another, sadder message that the public will understand: History repeats itself — first as tragedy, in sham elections in Iraq — and then, in Eugene, as farce.

William B. Fischer teaches German at Portland State University and serves on the PSU Faculty Senate.

Please come

to the **University Assembly Meeting**

to **discuss and vote**

on a **resolution against the invasion of Iraq.**

Today, Friday, Feb. 28

3:00 p.m., doors open at 2:30

Student Recreation Center, 1320 E. 15th Avenue

All University of Oregon Officers of Instruction and Administration and Librarians are voting members of the Assembly. We also encourage students and others concerned about this vital issue to attend.

Concerned Faculty for Peace and Justice