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COMMENTARY

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Editorial

UO, taxpayers play the same tuition game

It was alarming to discover on Friday that the "tuition surcharges" students were assessed in the middle of winter term are now permanent. Ah, the joys of euphemisms. Why didn't the University just call them "tuition increases" to begin with?

This semantic game is somewhat familiar, though. Say one thing, do another. And tuition isn't only being surcharged, er, increased this year. The Oregon State Board of Higher Education is working on proposals to drastically increase costs in the 2004-05 school year.

Constantly increasing tuition is worrisome; it moves the University closer to being a private institution that only select individuals can attend. Coupled with the OUS schools' recent push for more autonomy from any state oversight, euphemistically called a "New Partnership With Oregon," Oregon is seeing a slow but sure dismantling of public higher education. Students, faculty and the community should stand up and demand that it stop.

The administration should be fighting harder for students in this battle. Public education is necessary and needs to remain accessible, but we see mixed signals from higher-ups. From one mouth they say college should be open and accessible, and from the other we hear that donors need to be kept a strict secret.

To be fair, though, state taxpayers are playing the same semantic game as our University officials. "Yes, we want state services. No, we won't pay for them." Say one thing, do another. Until that trend reverses, the slide toward privatization will continue, to the detriment of students, the Oregon economy and our nation's democracy.

Punishing dissent is real terrorism

The earliest use of "terrorism," according to the Oxford English Dictionary, meant "government by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the Revolution of 1789-94." Given the changes in the meaning of the word, especially since the war against al-Qaeda and now Iraq, terrorism has come a long way, baby.

Oregon Senate Bill 742, introduced by Sen. John Minnis, R-Fairview, would further shape the meaning of "terrorism," although the effect on civil liberties hearkens back to the word's original use.

SB 742 would create a new crime of terrorism in Oregon, punishable by a minimum of 25 years in prison. And the act that makes one a terrorist, under this proposed law?

"A person commits the crime of terrorism if the person knowingly plans, participates in or carries out any act that is intended, by at least one of its participants, to disrupt" free assembly, commerce, transportation or the educational or governmental institutions of the state. In other words, no protests, no rallies, no outcry — for any reason, for any cause.

Forget about a rally on the Capitol steps against increasing tuition. Forget about peace marches or vigils. Civil disobedience will no longer be tolerated. This is inspiring terror in us, right now. Of course, we recommend that everyone in Oregon speak out against this bill, while you still can.

Not only would this bill stifle free speech and dissent, it won't make Oregonians any safer. On the contrary, telling one's political opponents they don't have the right to speak out creates a climate of genuine terror and fear. Look at any number of dictatorships around the world.

This bill is government by intimidation, saying to dissenters, "Either you toe the line or..."

What's that?

Yes, sir, Sen. Minnis. We'll stop writing this immediately. Sorry.

Empty elections

As Americans well know, it's all too easy to tune out an election — and the ASUO election is no exception. Every year, the civically conscious among us try to excite interest in this charade, and every year they are met with the same response — a resounding collective yawn.

Why is this so? Is it that college students, despite all the strident cries for social justice that echo through the hallowed halls of academe, are actually more apathetic than the rest of our listless, TV-besotted populace?

Or maybe it's that, no matter how much we want to believe that there is indeed a democratic process at work on campus, assiduously attended to by earnest, progressive young souls, we know in fact that student representation is nothing more than a hollow farce enacted by exactly the kind of sniveling, opportunistic social climbers we would expect to run in any election, large or small. A survey of candidate interviews with the Emerald might help you decide.

Typical Candidate Attribute #1: Utter Ignorance of the Position to Which He or She Aspires.

Vincent Martorano, candidate for Senate Seat 8, one of three seats on the Athletic Department Finance Committee, is but one example of this nearly universal phenomenon. When asked what he would do with the budget surplus, he responded, "Surplus? We are projected to have a surplus in the budget?" Apparently he wasn't aware that there is a surplus deliberately factored into the budget every year.

Rodrigo Moreno Villamar, running for Senate Seat 4, is another candidate who isn't quite sure exactly what he's trying to get himself into. When asked if he had read the senate rules, which describe senators' duties, he replied, "Yes, but not with my full attention." Well, I guess he won't mind if we tune



him out then, will he?

Typical Candidate Attribute #2: Total Irrelevance.

Spence and Mantel are running for ASUO Executive under the Ultimate Frisbee ticket, apparently because that's the only campus activity either of them are involved in.

Chris Sittner is running for Senate Seat 2, seemingly to exorcise some demons from his past: "I ran for a few student office positions back in grade school and middle school, but that never panned out."

Anthony Kuchulis, running for Senate Seat 8 against the above-mentioned Martorano, has demonstrated stunning leadership ability, having, as his fraternity's social director, the "arduous task of throwing dry parties." As I think all of us can agree, "It is quite a bit more difficult than I had imagined."

Typical Candidate Attribute #3: Reliance on Vagueness due to an Astonishing Absence of Vision.

Mike Martell, candidate for PFC Senate Seat 2, offers us a smorgasboard of empty phrases, ranging from "I don't think anybody really knows" to "It's hard to define" to "I don't know if you can pick one out." Way to take a stand, Mike!

On the other hand, Mena Ravassipour, running for PFC Senate Seat 2, knows exactly what she wants: "equal rights for

all." Hey, what about world peace?

Typical Candidate Attribute #4: Generalized Confusion.

Rick Reed is running for PFC Senate Seat 1. When asked how he would spend the senate surplus, he replied, "Well, I think the best way to do that is to cut costs." I'm not an economics major, Rick, but if you can manage to spend money by saving money, more power to you!

Laura Schulthies is vying for Senate Seat 7. She makes the astoundingly astute observation that athletes "are always in all of our sports that are presented by the University." You know, damnit, she's right — whenever I go to a game, all I see are athletes. I ask you: Is that fair?

So there you have it, straight from the horses' mouths for your contemplation. You might complain that I single out certain people while ignoring others who equally deserve criticism. Please don't take the absence of mention as evidence of endorsement. This column is far too short to get to everybody; you'll have to trust me when I say that I wanted to.

Contact the columnist at djfuller@dailymerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



DJ Fuller
No holds barred

Letters to the editor

Melton-Morales ticket will follow through

This letter is in support of the "It's all about ME working 4 you!" ticket for ASUO Executive. Maddy Melton and Eddy Morales are the most qualified candidates for this position because of their past involvement in the ASUO office and other student organizations.

I believe Maddy and Eddy know what students need and have a platform to prove it. We want real representation, and this is why Maddy and Eddy are for student empowerment. They want to place students in decision-making boards and committees so those students will have more control over their college experience.

Having worked alongside Maddy and Eddy in the ASUO office, I know that they can be counted on to follow through and to work hard. Maddy and

Eddy are passionate about empowering students, and I am confident they will carry out the platform and agenda they promise to implement.

Diana Aguilar
sophomore
journalism and political science

Melton, Morales have a focused, solid platform

In order for a University to run smoothly, we need great leaders. And what better candidates to fill those positions than Maddy Melton and Eddy Morales?

I am supporting Maddy and Eddy for ASUO Executive because they know their stuff. As active members of the ASUO, they have already established a foundation. It is an advantage to students that they are able to build upon such a foundation.

Their platform is amazing. Their focus includes student empowerment, fair housing contracts, law and gradu-

ate student advocacy and supporting international student issues. They include everyone and leave no one behind. Their issues are unique, and you can tell that they have thought things through and strategized everything, instead of having your basic, generic platform.

As the Multicultural Advocacy team of the ASUO, they have always focused on educating students. People should be aware that beyond their platform, they will continue to work on diversity and building bridges among all communities.

They are dedicated and passionate about their work. Now they want to work for us and improve the school we have come to know and love. I am definitely willing to have them work for me — and for all of us.

Shirley Mei Tham
sophomore
advertising and psychology

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. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number

and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.