

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

EDITORIAL

Students to grin and bear tuition hikes

So tuition is set to increase — again.

Since 2000-01, when tuition was \$3,819 per year, students have seen an increase of \$500, or 13 percent. From this past academic year to the next, students will likely see another increase, taking tuition costs to \$4,875. Over the full four-year period, tuition has gone up almost 28 percent.

Frankly, as students, we're pissed off. How are we supposed to afford the cost of a college education? We're poor. We're hungry. We're barely making it, and now we have to pay even more?

To get to the bottom of the situation, we let pissed-off college student and Mr. Rationale battle it out.

Pissed-off college student: I was sitting down to my gourmet meal of ramen and ice water, sweating over next year's tuition, when I had an epiphany: I hate the Oregon Legislature and its gross mishandling of higher education funding.

Mr. Rationale: Sorry to tell you, but you don't really hate the Legislature. Representatives and senators are working to adequately fund state services, only one of which is higher education, and they only have so much money to do so.

Pissed-off college student: OK, so if these people are working to help us, then they need to have the intelligence and motivation to find a way to sufficiently fund higher education despite the bad economy.

Mr. Rationale: The truth is, the bad economy can't be fixed by magical number crunching in the Legislature. The Oregon University System has an operating budget for the 2003-05 biennium of just more than \$4 billion. About \$700 million will come from the Legislature, which is comparable to past budget cycles.

Really, what it comes down to is that the Legislature plans funding according to fiscal projections based on state revenues. When the state is in a recession, more people are typically out of work. When more people are out of work, fewer people earn income. When fewer people earn income, the state doesn't collect as much income tax revenue, and thus must make cuts accordingly.

Pissed-off college student: Well that makes sense, but it seems to me that Oregon lawmakers have two options. Get off their lazy asses and start implementing job growth policies and programs or raise taxes.

Mr. Rationale: The thing is, college student, the Legislature already tried that route. In January, voters handily reject Measure 28, which would have reduced the staggering cuts many state services endured. Higher education alone lost almost \$80 million during the 2001-03 biennium. Voters knew of these cuts when they cast their ballot, so going back to citizens isn't a viable option.

As far as job growth programs, perhaps that is a good idea. But job growth policies can't be formalized overnight. In the long run, such ideas will help Oregon's work force, but they won't solve the current higher education crisis.

Pissed-off college student: Well ... well ... voters suck. I mean, what the hell, I'm supposed to pick up these extra expenses on my own? Or with my parents' help?

Mr. Rationale: Yeah, pretty much.

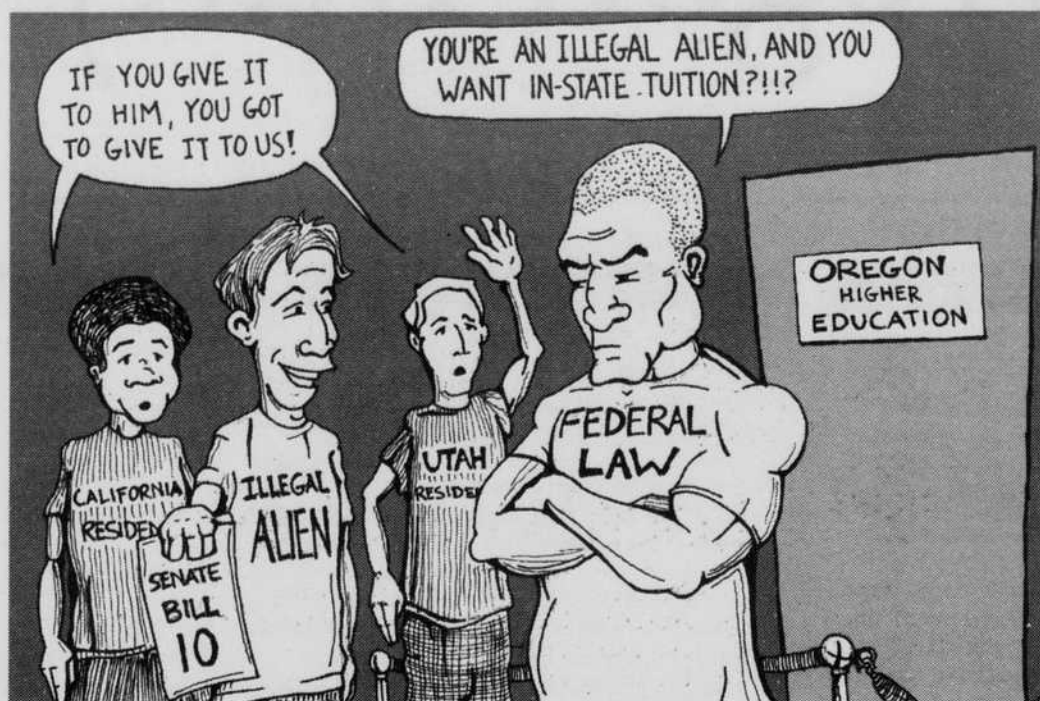
It seems clear that the cost of a college education isn't going to come down anytime soon. Given the fact that the Legislature works to fund services adequately, state resources are pitiful and job growth won't help students now, students will have to grin and bear it.

And pay and pay and pay for it.

It may not be exactly what students want to hear, but after all, we are the ones who benefit from a college education.

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. 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.



ILLEGAL AID

What part of the word "illegal" do people not understand?

Senate Bill 10, which would offer in-state tuition rates to illegal aliens, not only reduces opportunities for U.S. citizens and legal immigrants, but also directly conflicts with federal law.

Title 8, Chapter 14, Section 1623 of the Immigration Reform Act of 1995 states: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State ... for any post-secondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit ... without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident."

What this means, in simple terms, is that in order to legally offer in-state tuition to illegal aliens in Oregon, as Senate Bill 10 seeks to do, we would also have to offer in-state tuition to residents of all states. I don't see this happening in, oh, say, the next trillion years.

With funding for higher education falling lower and lower, and more and more students enrolling in the university system, capping enrollment is becoming the only way to maintain the quality of education that we, as students, expect and deserve. It doesn't take a higher education to realize that if enrollment is capped while we encourage and allow more illegal aliens to enroll, the space still has to come from somewhere. And where it comes from is denying admission to equally deserving, but legal residents.

Moreover, this approximate \$10,000 per year break in tuition for illegal aliens has to come from somewhere. You and I, as students, have already absorbed a \$114 per term cut in financial aid and a 19 percent permanent tuition surcharge, and we are looking at

a potential 11 percent tuition increase next year. Are you ready to also take the bite for the estimated \$780,000 loss in tuition revenue if Senate Bill 10 passes? I didn't think so.

Proponents of the bill drag out various emotional catch-phrases as justification for breaking federal laws, the most popular being that it will help illegal aliens become productive citizens. I think the first step to becoming a productive citizen is to become a citizen. Oregon State University, for instance, already offers the opportunity for resident aliens to apply for resident status — after they receive their green card.



Jessica Waters
 Reality check

The government spends millions of dollars annually on efforts to control illegal immigration into the United States. Senate Bill 10 is a direct slap in the face to those efforts, offering a financial bonus for breaking laws of the United States. Illegal aliens, by definition, are living in the United States unlawfully, yet Senate Bill 10 would make them — for tuition purposes — residents of Oregon. Anyone else see a discrepancy here?

Also, as illegal aliens, these students would not be eligible to be employed legally in the United States. So we are to provide reduced-cost education to them to be qualified for jobs they will not be able to take? And don't tell me it is unfair to make these

poor people serve in low-paying jobs because of lack of education. Supporters of allowing illegal immigrants to live and work here have told us for years that it was only right because they did jobs that we, as Americans, didn't want to do. If we educate them to fill upper-level jobs, then I guess that justification is gone, now isn't it?

I guess some would say this makes me a racist, isolationist bigot. Well, luckily, I don't listen much to name-calling. What it does make me, however, is a U.S. citizen who believes our laws are implemented to be followed. Take all the emotional blather out of the argument, and what you are left with are the existing laws. If you don't like the laws, change them, don't break them. There are plenty of laws I don't like, but with citizenship come responsibilities as well as rights. Notice, I said WITH citizenship. The individuals we are speaking of are not citizens. They have broken the law, and because of bleeding hearts and political correctness, we want to reward them? I can think of plenty of citizens who would appreciate and deserve rewards without having broken any laws.

Sure, I feel bad for anyone in unfortunate circumstances, and I wish everyone could get everything they want. But this is the real world, and I'm not talking MTV. I'm talking hardscrabble, work-your-butt-off, nothing-handed-to-you reality. So think twice before you support giving your financial aid, your seat in class and your future to someone who will not follow the laws that you, as a voter and a citizen, have helped determine — let's hope you've been voting!

Contact the photo editor at jessicawaters@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

King would not approve of street renaming

As a Eugene native and Centennial Boulevard area resident, I am opposed to the renaming of Centennial Boulevard. After canvassing the Chevy Chase and Chase Village area for 10 hours, resident opposition to renaming was overwhelming.

To rename Centennial Boulevard is to devalue the original intent of those it honors — Eugene's pioneers, their families and natives of Eugene. Our city is built upon the legacy of the Oregon Trail. Those who traversed the expanse to settle Eugene were rewarded with 1859 statehood and the naming of Centennial Boulevard in 1959.

Given our city's present financial situation, renaming Centennial Boulevard makes absolutely no economic sense. Monies will not be spent to create real job growth or to feed the hungry, but will in-

stead be needlessly spent by our city for new signage and by businesses and residences to change their addresses.

To rename Centennial Boulevard appears to be a political maneuver endorsed by few residents that has been unjustly repackaged as a racial issue. The city was making strides toward honoring Martin Luther King Jr., when in the early 1980s it renovated and renamed Grant Park to Martin Luther King Park. However, because the trend is to name major roadways for important historical figures, the city should also follow suit, but in an action that does not create hardship for local residents. While it is crucial that we must create and promote an ethnically diverse community, Dr. King would be offended by our recent undemocratic attempt to honor him. A corrected attempt must foster history, budget constraints and all constituents.

Margaret A. Cluman
 Eugene

Legislators should stop dodging real fiscal policy

Please! Not Again. Two weeks of hearings for an already "discredited" sales tax proposal? This time should be best spent "solving" Oregon's budget crises.

The political act behind this — so as to say at a future date legislators tried to solve the "crises," but Oregonians turned it down — is quite apparent.

For goodness' sake, do what's right and forget about tax increases and get down to the business of cuts, cuts, cuts, moratoriums and spending limits. Yeah, it's going to hurt, but that's life. Live it! The rest of us have to.

House of Representatives Speaker Karen Minnis, R-Wood Village, and Max Williams, R-Tigard; Get on board!

Tony Valeri
 Eugene