

Tuesday, March 9, 2004

## EDITORIAL

### Dates for ASUO elections must address needs of all students

Even though the annual ASUO elections are several weeks off, the oft-embattled contests are already at the center of some controversy that pits the convenience for the student body and the plans of the ASUO Elections Board against the scheduling constraints of law students running for ASUO office.

The kernel of the issue is this: The ASUO Constitution Court took issue with this year's elections packet because the designated dates overlap with the law school's upcoming Dead Week — the week of April 19. Primaries were originally scheduled for April 12-14, and the general election for April 19-21.

Colin Andries, a law student and ASUO student senator, cited the undue difficulty that he and other law students faced in 2003 when campaigning for office.

"It's really difficult," Andries explained. "Law school finals are your entire grade. You got a lot of pressure from studying for that. I mean, I know people who are in the library from 7 a.m. to 8:30 or 9 at night — that's just the way it is."

And placing qualified students under the onus of a scheduling conflict that evidently discriminates against a segment of the student body based on academic affiliation — law students, in this case — isn't just unfair to a few potential candidates, it's undemocratic.

The ASUO Constitution's loosely worded Section 12, Article 1, demands that "The ASUO Elections shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the best interests of the student body. The elections shall be conducted in a fair, orderly and impartial manner, and the educational atmosphere of the University shall not be compromised, by any member of the ASUO involved in the electoral process."

The planned schedule violates the article's demand that the process be fair, certainly forcing law students running for office into what Constitution Court Chief Justice Michael Harris called "the untenable position of having to choose between preparation for a final examination and their campaign" is unfair and unconstitutional.

If a law student chooses to prioritize campaigning at the cost of studying, the elections seem to unduly compromise the "educational atmosphere of the University." If he instead prioritizes studying for finals, he might not be able to provide enough information to allow voting students to make an informed decision, which is certainly incompatible with "the best interests of the student body." No matter how he chooses, the planned dates indirectly violate the Constitution article.

The court sagely agreed, ordering the board to suggest new dates for the student body's general election that conform to the ASUO Constitution's demands.

The March 2 ruling, however, points to several underlying problems within several ASUO bodies.

Notably, last April, the Constitution Court unanimously ruled in response to a similar grievance that the ASUO Constitution contains no provision compelling the Election Board to avoid conflicts like the one in question; this year's ruling, then, represents a nearly total reversal. At the least, the court should have cited last year's decision in this year's ruling and addressed the apparent discrepancy.

ASUO Elections Coordinator Stephanie Day expressed her frustration at the seemingly contradictory rulings.

"It's really difficult to work with student leaders when their rulings aren't consistent," she said.

Still, the court asked the board last year to avoid the scheduling conflict between the law school's schedule and elections. Even without the court's instruction, fairness to all students should have been reason enough to adjust this year's schedule to accommodate campaigning law students. At worst, then, the Election Board is guilty only of negligent planning.

This year's options for election scheduling are regrettably bleak: Because of constraints limiting the Election Board's use of DuckWeb, the only options appear to be (1) the original dates proposed by the board, which would force law students to choose between studying and campaigning, and (2) moving the election to weekends, threatening to curb already historically low voter turnout.

Next year, the ASUO primary election should be moved to week eight of winter term, and the general election to week nine, so that the schedule doesn't conflict with the winter term Dead Week, the law school Dead Week or reserved DuckWeb time, leaving the election well within the Feb. 1-April 30 range specified by ASUO Constitution Section 12, Article 2.



Steve Baggs Illustrator

## Nerd culture

William Hung is dorkier than Screech at a "Star Wars" convention. But he's more popular than the prom queen. So if A equals B and B equals C, that means A equals C, right?

The dorks are popular. Welcome, everybody, to the era of the nerd.

Hung rose to fame by raising his arms and circling them around his head like a wounded chicken. His now-famous rendition of Ricky Martin's "She Bangs" on "American Idol" in late January is the stuff of urban folklore. He couldn't sing and he couldn't dance, but it didn't stop him from trying out for the glorified talent contest. Of course, the judges stung him like a bee (like every girl in his-story).

"I already tried my best and I have no regrets at all," he told them.

With that one line, Hung sparked the dork revolution. He endeared himself to thousands of viewers who were sick of egomaniac performers and spotlight-grabbing idiots. Sure, he's got teeth that splay off at sick angles and the singing talent of a monkey, but that didn't stop America from dubbing him a temporary idol.

Now, Hung is more than everywhere. There are T-shirts on eBay (one has his picture, the words "like a" and a picture of a horse) and an comprehensive official Web site. The site gleefully celebrates all things

Hung, including several hilarious hip-hop remixes of his "Idol" audition.

Hung isn't the only one leading this pack of nerds. In a wonderful display of sociology at work, NBC tapped into the dork vein with "Average Joe." The show forces a beautiful woman to choose between average guys and



Peter Hockaday  
 Today is Hockaday

hunks. Essentially the choice is personality over beauty. In two tries, the girl chose the hunk twice.

But as contrived and fake as the show is, it sets up a wonderful "us vs. them" dichotomy. It paints nerds as the good guys. You want Brian Worth, the man with a Boston accent thicker than clam chow-dah, to topple Gil, the man who freaked out like a high-schooler when he found out Larissa once dated Fabio.

We root for the nerd because, admit it,

there's a little nerd in all of us. We all sing in the shower or dance when nobody's around. Before, admitting to dorkiness was like admitting you drink coffee at a tea party. Now, because of Hung and his nerd counterparts, it's good to be a dork.

Last week Hung was back on "Idol" for a best-of-the-worst show. He performed "She Bangs" again, this time with hot female dancers mimicking Hung's classic moves. Hung sat down with host Ryan Seacrest. An audience member asked Hung if he was a good engineering student (Hung is an engineering major at Berkeley).

"I'm struggling with engineering," Hung admitted. "I'm struggling with pretty much everything in my life right now. But everybody has to go through struggles to succeed."

This is the nerd revolution. The dorks went through their struggles, and now it's time to succeed.

It's a movie coming to life. The movie, of course, is "Revenge of the Nerds." And I couldn't say it better than the men of the Lambda Lambda Lambda fraternity.

"Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds!"  
 Go nerds.

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

### Fliers distributed irresponsibly

A small portion of the student body may have picked up copies of the Emerald on Monday containing fliers alleging rape at a local fraternity. The inserts — which were not written, sponsored or approved by the Emerald — were promptly removed by Emerald staff in the 100-or-so papers containing the fliers.

The allegations — whatever their merit — should be reported to Eugene Police Department, the Department of Public Safety or the Office of Student Life; they should not be distributed on pieces of



Brad Schmidt  
 Of chief concern

paper and spread throughout campus.

As it stands, the individual or individuals responsible for the fliers have potentially

libeled the fraternity while using the Emerald to disseminate the message. Furthermore, the individual or individuals stole advertising space from the Emerald. While the Emerald would have never approved such material in the first place, the fact that fliers were placed in the Emerald, where advertising could be placed, constitutes theft.

Stop stealing from the Emerald, and please, for everyone's sake, take these allegations to the proper authorities.

Contact the editor in chief at editor@dailyemerald.com.