

JONES

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Yeah, they probably haven't figured out the rules to the road, especially if they failed to grasp the rules of immigration. Garcia comments, "The state ... is basically telling these folks to drive illegally." No, Garcia, I think the message is: You don't have the same rights of other citizens in this country, because you are not a citizen.

What if we applied logic like this to other things in society? I don't have the right to go backstage at a concert, unless I have a pass. I'm sure if my friends and I ran past the guards, they wouldn't turn to each other and say, "What are we going to do?" and show us to the snack room. No, we'd be out of luck and back with the masses.

So illegal immigrants have to take the bus from the home they're living in illegally to the job they're taking away from legitimate US citizens. I know they need to get to work, especially because countries like Mexico, where the second largest source of income is money being sent back from Mexican citizens working in the United States, are relying on them.

Maybe if we put the driver's license office in the same building as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, like one of those combination Pizza Hut and KFCs, both problems could be taken care of at the same time.

Felons and illegal immigrants may be responsible for breaking very different kinds of laws, but there is one law that affects both of them: The right to vote. While neither is allowed to vote in elections, illegal immigrants may have a better chance. Despite their lack of citizenship, often the only identification it takes to vote is — surprise, surprise — a driver's license.

I'm not sure which is worse: Malicious killers having a say in electing officials, or people who aren't even citizens of this country having a say in our country's politics? At least we know some of the felons are probably aware of the issues, because of their quality television-viewing time.

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

PROVOST

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concerning diversity on campus.

"There are real opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed," he said.

He said he has found a strong commitment to diversity initiatives, such as recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color, but some areas continue to offer resistance.

"It's not this overtly racist or sexist place, but there are places where people have never had to deal with people of a different color or ethnic group," he said. "People feel this discomfort that's there."

He said the discomfort stems partly from the small number of students, faculty and staff of color and the sense that they need to adjust to the campus, or what he calls the "invited guest syndrome."

This adjustment is one of the reasons Vincent said creating a "critical mass" of people of color on campus is so important. He said those on campus may feel they need to represent their entire race or ethnic group.

"If a Caucasian student says a wrong answer (in class), it doesn't reflect on their whole race," he said, adding that this isn't the case for students of color. "When you don't have the critical mass, there's a greater tendency to stereotype."

ASUO Multicultural Advocate Mark Padoongpatt agreed that with so few students of color, stereotyping becomes more common.

"That comes with lack of numbers, that comes with ignorance too," he said. "We need to show that there's complexity within us."

Padoongpatt said a larger group of students of color would make many people on campus uncomfortable and would reveal the inherent racism in some pockets of

the University.

"More people would feel we would have to address certain issues," he said.

But Vincent said achieving that critical mass will take years of strategic planning. By the end of June, Vincent hopes to establish a committee of students and faculty members who will form a five-year diversity plan to be implemented in the 2005 through 2010 school years.

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Gregory Vincent

Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity

"I do think that while we're doing that, we'll be able to address some of the chilly climate issues," he said.

One struggle to overcome is the state's lack of investment in higher education, he said. Students of color are overrepresented in the lower income brackets; meanwhile, budget cuts to the University give students less incentive to come here, he added.

Padoongpatt agreed financial barriers keep many students of color, especially out-of-state students, out of the University. He added the University is not solely to blame for its lack of diversity, but that other institutions such as high school and law enforcement systems continue to keep minorities from gaining access to opportunities such as higher education.

"There are other reasons why it's not working," he said.

Vincent said another challenge is recruiting faculty of color, which is vital for creating a comfortable environment for all people of color on campus. He said while the University community appears to be a "good, safe, healthy place to work," the pay is not competitive despite the high standards faculty are expected to meet.

Ethnic Studies Assistant Professor Brian Klopotek, who is Choctaw, said he was attracted to the University's Ethnic Studies program, and the University did offer enough resources to draw him here. However, he said there are negative aspects of living and working in this community.

"I am also consistently frustrated with the level of racial ignorance, racial hostility and defensiveness that comes from people who would characterize themselves as racially progressive," he said.

Vice President for Student Affairs Anne Leavitt said Vincent's time on campus, specifically the open discussions he held with the community in past weeks, has reminded her of how hard current staff members are working to address these issues.

"They just need some energy, some support and some hope," she said.

Vincent said everyone at the University needs to realize the benefits of a diverse campus, which is why he plans to be a constant presence on campus, providing diversity workshops for everyone. As part of his strategic plan, Vincent said he hopes people will begin to think of diversity as a "core competence" that will benefit people in the future.

"We need to be able to work in an increasingly diverse world," he said. "It's in your enlightened self-interest because that's a skill."

ASUO President-elect Adam Petkun said he plans to help Vincent with his plans next year

by asking future ASUO multicultural advocates to work closely with the process.

"They've been part of the drive to have this position hired," he said. "We're going to work really hard to make sure there is a strong voice in the office for students of color."

Vincent, who has worked in similar positions at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and LSU, said he was able to help recruit 25 faculty members of color at Wisconsin and about 30 at LSU, both over about a 4.5 year period. He said he also worked to decrease the racial tension that existed on the more diverse LSU campus.

Vincent said the main method to measure his plan's success here

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Adam Petkun
ASUO President-elect

is simply by looking at the number of people of color on campus.

"You'll just know by the numbers," he said. "Have we increased the number of faculty, administrators, professionals and students?"

But numbers aren't the only way to measure success. Vincent said he wants to ensure that students of color feel they've had a positive educational experience while white students feel they've had a beneficial, diverse experience.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com

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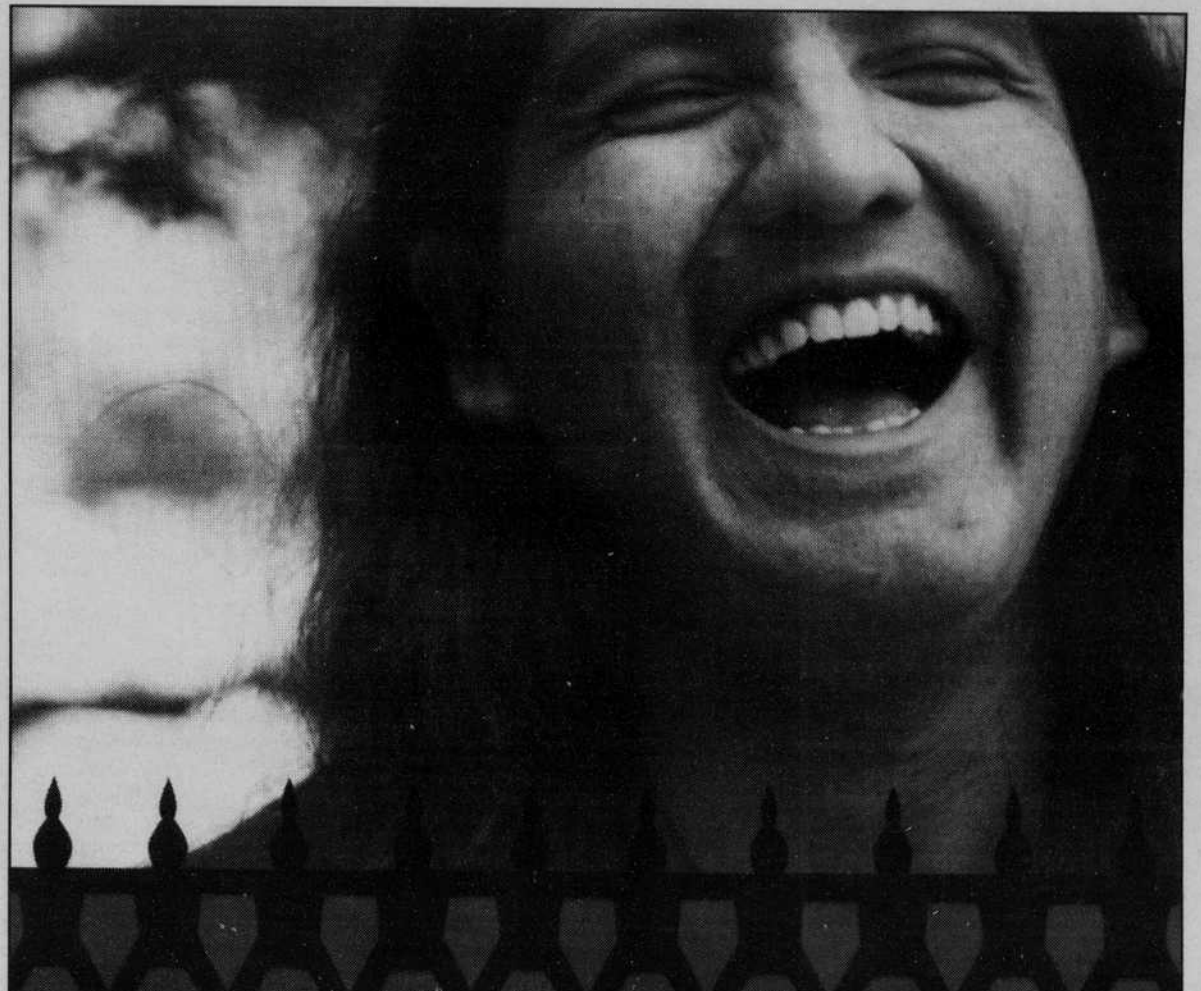
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