

Tuesday, May 25, 2004

EDITORIAL

ASUO dates should keep law students represented

A minority of students on this campus have been marginalized, inconvenienced and even downright not considered in important organizational decisions at the University. This year, they numbered some 497, some 2.6 percent of the 19,450 students enrolled in the University as of winter term.

These students — those enrolled in the University's School of Law — pay some of the highest tuition at the school (\$15,202 for residents annually, \$19,122 for non-residents). But in many important ways, they're treated more poorly than their undergraduate colleagues.

Witness, most recently, Senate President Ben Strawn's motion to censure Sen. Colin Andries, a law student, for non-fulfillment of duties, including missing a Senate meeting during the law school's Finals Week to study.

No decision was made on the censure; however, that missing a meeting to study was among the factors motivating the censure motion points to another conflict unfairly imposed on law students: Should a law student, who also serves the campus as a legislative representative, risk damage to their grades, or instead risk condemnation for negligence of job duties?

Another example was this year's embattled ASUO elections: The ASUO Constitution Court rejected the original elections packet because the scheduled election dates overlapped with the law school's Dead Week.

The unfair and poorly planned timetable forced law students "to choose between preparation for a final examination and their campaign," Constitution Court Chief Justice Michael Harris said, calling the dilemma "untenable."

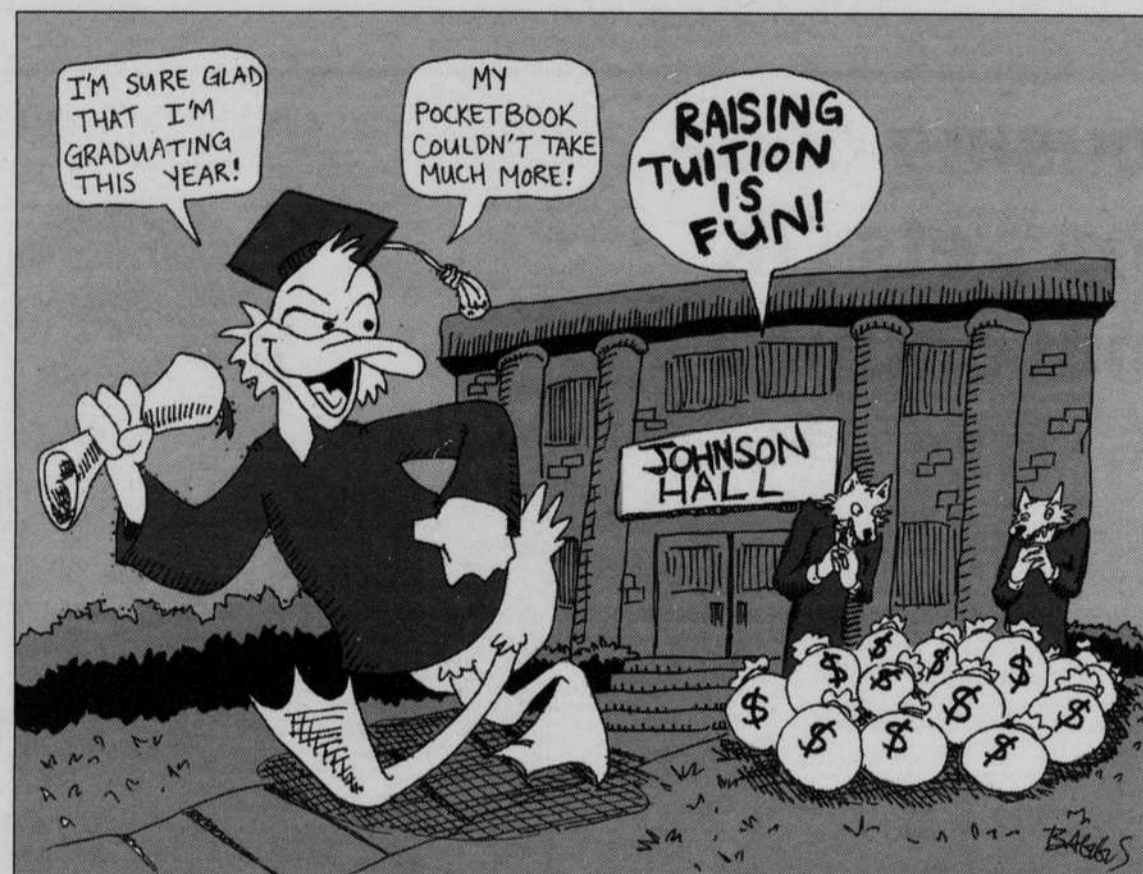
Indeed, the Constitution's Section 12, Article 1, vaguely maintains that, "The ASUO Elections shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the best interests of the student body. The elections shall be conducted in a fair, orderly and impartial manner, and the educational atmosphere of the University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

Were this a result of ignorance alone on the part of the Elections Board, this marginalization might be more tolerable. But the same issue arose during last year's elections when the Court ruled that the Elections Board should avoid overlapping elections with the law school schedule again. Evidently, the Board paid little heed, and the Emerald Editorial Board urges the incoming ASUO government to avoid this frustrating conflict.

Many of the problems associated with equal access to opportunities for law students seem to stem from the discrepancy between the academic law student schedule and the schedule most other students use.

Recently retired ASUO President Maddy Melton admitted the law schedule poses a special challenge: "When you get down to working with law students, they have different schedules, and that kind of throws things off."

But as it's unlikely that either schedule will change, the University and ASUO should both strive this upcoming year to accommodate the needs of this special segment of our campus community in accordance with "the best interests of the student body."



Steve Baggs Illustration

You can take it with you

Sitting over a pint at Rennie's last week, a buddy asked me a question.

"What are you going to take," he said, "from this whole college thing?"

"What am I going to take?" I asked. I thought about my impending graduation.

"I'll take that freshman feeling," I said.

"That 'Yeah, I'm going to college' feeling when you first get that packet of information in the mail. Yes, put me in the normal hall. Yes, sign me up for the dorm meal plan. The food can't be that bad, after all.

"I'll take all the crazy experiences I had with my roommate, who slept two feet across from where I slept. Everybody's roommate was bad, but mine was worse. When I first stepped into that room, his stuff was sprawled across my bed. His stuff included cigarette packs and a sword. It was a fun freshman year.

"I'll take that shot by Darius Wright, the one that beat Arizona State in the craziest basketball game I've ever personally witnessed.

"I'll take drinking FIFA, the game that incorporated our two main activities from the first three quarters of our first year: drinking and video games. In drinking soccer, we took a shot from the bottle every time the other person scored. By the end of the game, we weren't sober.

"I'll take my end-of-freshman-year GPA. It was never quite that high again.

"I'll take the Autzen apartments. Like a dorm with room to move around and a porch, the Autzen apartments had everything. Your own bathroom. Friends nearby. A parking spot. What more do you need?

"I'll take fraternity parties. I remember scaling a fence to leave one of those parties, feeling like MacGyver after someone



Peter Hockaday

Today is Hockaday

told us the cops were coming. I remember going out to the front, discovering there was not a policeman within eight blocks, and coming back inside to drink more fraternity-sponsored beer.

"I'll take Info Hell. Anybody who took the journalism school's weed-out class is with me on this one. It's seared into your brain for life.

"I'll take our house, which finally made us feel like adults. We had to separate our recycling for ourselves, which we never did, and pay our own bills, which didn't happen. We had to mow our own lawn, yeah right, and not spill stuff on the carpets. Sure. We were the best house owners on the planet.

"I'll take intramural football and hockey. We kept the same core group for three years and finally won a title in hockey. I say this without exaggeration: It was the finest achievement of my athletic career.

"I'll take disc golf. I never felt more like an Oregonian than the times I threw a little plastic disc into a fan of chains out at Dexter Reservoir.

"I'll take the creative writing program. For my dollar, there's not a more passionate bunch of people on campus. The fact

that there's no undergraduate major for them — that the University can't recognize that passion — is sick.

"I'll take the brutal build-up and eventual execution of my 21st birthday. I think everybody goes through this, especially those of us who turn later than our friends. The months before the big day are filled with more anticipation than ever. Then it happens, and you don't lose that glow for another year.

"I'll take shrinking class sizes. Would you rather have class with 500 people or 15? That's what I thought.

"I'll take poker. There's nothing like sitting around a table and busting your friends for a dollar, then acting like it was half a million.

"I'll take friends and foes, good times and bad. I'll take the crazy road trips and the long nights of drinking. I'll take the jobs that paid no money and the football games where we stood hip-to-hip.

"I'll take the house filled with ants and the apartments with walls thinner than this sheet of newspaper. I'll take memories and lessons. I'll take it all.

"That was horribly self-involved, but does that answer your question?"

"Actually, no," my buddy answered. "I just meant are you going to take your stuff with you. Like your couch. I love that couch. Can I have it?"

No, I won't give up my couch. Memories may be important, but a couch that lived through those memories? Well, that's priceless.

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Vagina Monologues' goal of diversity is attainable

We are responding to the Emerald editorial "Protesters undermined the diversity they sought" (Feb. 17) and cartoon (Feb. 18) concerning "The Vagina Monologues" protest. We do not see

the protesters' arguments as divisive. We did not appreciate the image in the cartoon of women fighting as we do not have two different sides completely opposed as inferred. The discussions are emotional, passionate and difficult, but not violent as portrayed in the cartoon.

In addition, we do not see the protesters' actions as reverse discrimination, as implied in your editorial.

Given the history and systems in place that discriminate, often invisibly so, marginalized groups and the white majority population may have vastly different experiences and responses in their lives. The Women's Center staff agrees that the issues brought up need to be addressed. Greater attention to diversity, both in initial outreach and planning of "The Vagina Monologues,"

and for all Women's Center events, is crucial to ensure we are presenting a more diverse view of women.

As the advisers to the Women's Center, we learned through this process that in the future we will want to give the student directors of the production more guidance and advice to create a more inclusive and diverse event in line with the goals and

mission of the Women's Center. Diversity and inclusiveness are attainable, and future Women's Center productions will strive to reflect this.

Lisa Foisy

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ASUO Women's Center