

COMMENTARY

Thursday, July 22, 2004



S.R. Neuman Freelance Illustrator

State legislature, not University, finalizes budget, deserves blame

Elected bodies, such as the legislative committees that deal with the OUS budget, have the power to issue budget notes. Budget notes for the OUS in the past have directed the agency to do as the legislature sees fit with tuition; they do this every biennium that I can remember. Tuition is debated in the legislature every session. Budget notes do not carry the power of the law but do have a direct and significant impact on decisions arrived at by, in this case, the OUS board with recommendation from the University presidents and the chancellor on the issue of tuition. It is misleading to create

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a cartoon (ODE, May 25) depicting that people in Johnson Hall enjoy raising tuition or that they exercise the final authority over tuition and ultimately should be held responsible. Raising tuition sucks, but universities around the country are facing similar difficulties, however severe it may be here in Oregon.

Furthermore, nobody in the administration at any OUS school really likes raising tuition; they are often forced to. Having served on the OUS board I know full well that even at that level it was apparent that the power over tuition really resides with the legislature and the governor. The OUS board is the legal authority over tuition but the legislature has the final say, and they always get what they want. Moreover, private donors and the federal government can only do so much; the state doesn't pay its fair share of the burden and students are left with the bill. That is why we are put upon financially; it's not Dave Frohnmayer's fault. In fact, President Frohnmayer is one of the best public figures we could ask for to carry our cause.

Most importantly, if real change is to occur in the way Oregon pays for our public universities, it will have to be on the ballot. The governor is proposing a Constitutional amendment to create an endowment that would generate revenue outside of regular, general fund appropriations from the legislature towards entitlement scholarships for Oregon high school graduates. The Access Scholarships for Educational Trust will take a lot of work to make a reality but it is desperately needed in Oregon. Focusing our grievances as students at real targets for change is much better than blaming bureaucrats that can't even fight back. Seriously, based on ethical and legal principles you are not going to ever hear public employees from Johnson Hall fight back on stuff like this. They are precluded from such political activities and the result is that people go on thinking that they are the bad guys when if you look at it more closely, turns out every one of voting age in Oregon will be the bad guy if we don't vote for something like what the governor is proposing with ASET. This problem is much bigger than Johnson Hall.

Economically, higher education is the future of this country. Maybe it always has been, but no more so than today. Oregon doesn't like raising taxes but maybe Oregonians will see fit to plan for our future and raise taxes in some way to help out students striving for a good education so that eventually, our tax base may grow and more of our citizens can prosper and take advantage of a world knowledge-based economy.

Tim Young, a graduate student studying public policy and management, served on the OUS board and as student body president of Portland State University.

Bureaucracy and borders

I bought a shirt in San Francisco last March that reads, "Don't mess with Kansas, either." Now it seems there might be some truth to that statement after all.

Kris Kobach, a lawyer-turned-Congressional-candidate in Kansas, filed a lawsuit aimed at overturning a Kansas law that allows illegal immigrants to be eligible for in-state tuition. The lawsuit was filed Monday on behalf of some Kansas non-resident students who view the law as unfair to them.

Now, I'm sure all my conservative readers who imagine me a left-winger will be expecting me to disagree with this audaciously political maneuver; however, I'm sorry to disappoint. I agree that giving illegal immigrants in-state tuition — and thus cheating thousands of legitimate non-resident students who also want an education — is a fundamentally bad idea on several levels.

Supporters of such a law claim that it encourages illegal immigrants to go back to school so that they might eventually join the ranks of working Americans and add to the country's great labor pool. But, if illegal immigrants really want to become a legitimate part of said labor pool, here's a better idea: Send them back and let them come over legally (for example, gain citizenship), require them to meet the standard requirements for becoming a state resident, just like everybody else, and then give them in-state tuition — legally.

Sounds harsh, right? Well, why not? No matter what form of whining socially-conscious supporters of this law can muster,



J. TOBIAS MONTRY
 STOP BREEDING

one fundamental fact stands as a foreboding obstacle to their grumbling: No student should be granted special privileges not given to any other student, especially if that student is breaking immigration laws.

This isn't about race or the misguided neoliberal idea that all outsiders are unwelcome within the boundaries of our nation (admit it, you're rolling your eyes right now and writing me off as an extremist who hates diversity). But in reality this argument is solely about accountability in the eyes of the law for all people in America, be it rights granted in our Constitution or laws governing tuition.

Yet, I will inevitably receive a certain tonnage of hate mail from those who feel any opinion perceived to adversely affect a minority group is racist on its face, and any writer pushing such an opinion is a hopelessly uninformed American who hasn't been past the borders that delicately hold this place together.

Well, I've been around the world. I've explored Europe and Asia extensively, and I have a diverse family. Still, if my sister, who

is half-Japanese, came to America illegally, I wouldn't change my opinion. And if I went to Japan illegally, I wouldn't expect special treatment. I would expect to be treated like somebody who entered the country illegally and was attempting to exploit its laws for my financial gain.

Such is the most important point of this debate: special treatment. Who deserves it? The people who work hard? The people who don't follow the law of the land? Nobody? That depends on your political persuasion, but suffice it to say that when it comes to college tuition, all students should be treated fairly and equitably — not just the ones who can tug the heart-strings of bleeding-heart, economically ignorant bureaucrats.

On a side note, did you know that the United States Student Association — a lobbying group funded in part with student fees, including moneys from the University — has advocated for similar tuition laws? Congratulations, University student! You officially and most likely unknowingly support this immigration policy by proxy. How does it feel? If you disagree, the moral of the story is this: When the next Programs Finance Committee process rolls around, don't forget to fight for your money so vehemently that the ASUO won't know what hit it. Taking the power of handling YOUR money away from money-grubbing, infighting and inevitably corrupt students is a great start.

Godspeed, all ye oppressed souls.

janmontry@dailyemerald.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Emerald article errs in issue of 2005-07 tuition

I appreciated the article on the State Board of Higher Education budget proposal in the July 20 Emerald ("Higher Ed board proposes 2005-07 budget"). While the article generally did a good job of capturing the recommendations the Board will make to Governor Kulongoski for his 2005-07 budget, it did not correctly describe

the proposal for tuition for the coming biennium.

In fact, the Board's recommendation in its Essential Budget Level proposal is for a 5 percent tuition increase in each year of the biennium — absolutely the minimum amount necessary to continue our educational programs at this year's level. In response to board member Tim Nesbitt's suggestion, the Board also requested, as an addition to this Essential Budget Level, a policy package of \$20 million, in order to reduce the projected tuition increase to

the 3.6 percent quoted in the Emerald article.

Whether or not the governor will recommend, or the Legislature will fund, this additional policy package is of course not known at this time. In fact, the final tuition levels for 2005-07 will not be determined and approved by the Board until early summer 2005. The important point here is that the Board and the OUS institutions are concerned about the level of tuition and the recent increases necessary to make up for the disinvestment of state general funds, and

are committed to holding these increases to the minimum necessary to continue educational programs and course availability at this year's level.

*John Moseley
 senior vice president and provost*

Student should take blame for assignment

Regarding "Journalism school shows bad judgment with workshop" (ODE, June 2): The student decided not to do the assignment

correctly; they just did the letter of the assignment, and made a choice to break the law.

If a student plagiarizes a work, is it the fault of the teacher for asking them to write? No, it is the fault of the student for making a choice to copy the work. Blame the person who made the negligent choice. Don't blame the teacher for trying to challenge a student.

*David Hogan
 San Diego*