

COMMENTARY

Tuesday, August 10, 2004

EDITORIAL

Campus projects should preserve aesthetic legacy

Even in times of continual monetary leanness, the University continues to develop and reinvest to meet the needs of a changing (and slowly growing) student body, and to improve the campus's aesthetics.

Consider the following (not exhaustive) summary of campus improvement projects:

- **Hayward Plaza.** In a July 1 meeting, the Campus Planning Committee approved a proposal for a new entrance at East 15th Avenue and Agate Street to the University's famed track and field venue. The design includes landscaping, brick work and a columned entrance, and a showcase for the University's athletic achievements.

- **Heart of Campus.** The busiest intersection on campus — University Street and East 13th Avenue — is seeing a face-lift this summer, including a new, student-designed kiosk. Once home to a one-way thoroughfare, the street will no longer be open to motor vehicles during the day hours.

- **Living Learning Center.** Workers recently tore down the tennis courts between the Walton and Earl complexes on East 15th Avenue to make way for the Living Learning Center, the first new on-campus residence hall in decades, which is set to integrate living space with classrooms and instructors' offices.

The University deserves kudos for strategically timing the Heart of Campus' construction. Like last year's "pedestrian refuge," doing major construction on a heavily trafficked area in the summer inconveniences the smallest number of people. But not all of the University's construction projects will be so ergonomically benign.

The University campus has about 3,300 parking spaces, leaving driving commuters with fewer than one space for every six students and staff members (a low ratio compared to other campuses). In all this construction, the University should ensure that staff and students have access to this precious resource.

At the same time, while the University is poised in many ways to vault into the future, it should in considering all these campus improvements remember the importance of the campus's aesthetic legacy. For example: The neoclassical stylings of the new Hayward Plaza are pleasing to the eye, but do they mesh with the University's look?

Whatever the project, the Emerald Editorial Board wholly supports the above and other campus improvements in spirit, given that the University takes into consideration both the needs of the present and the legacy of the past.

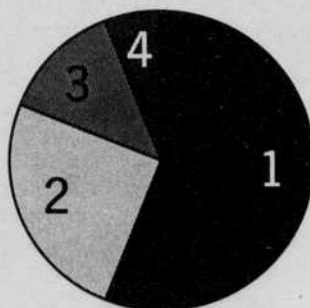
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ONLINE POLL THIS WEEK'S POLL RESULTS



Do you support the GTF walkout on Wednesday? (32 votes)

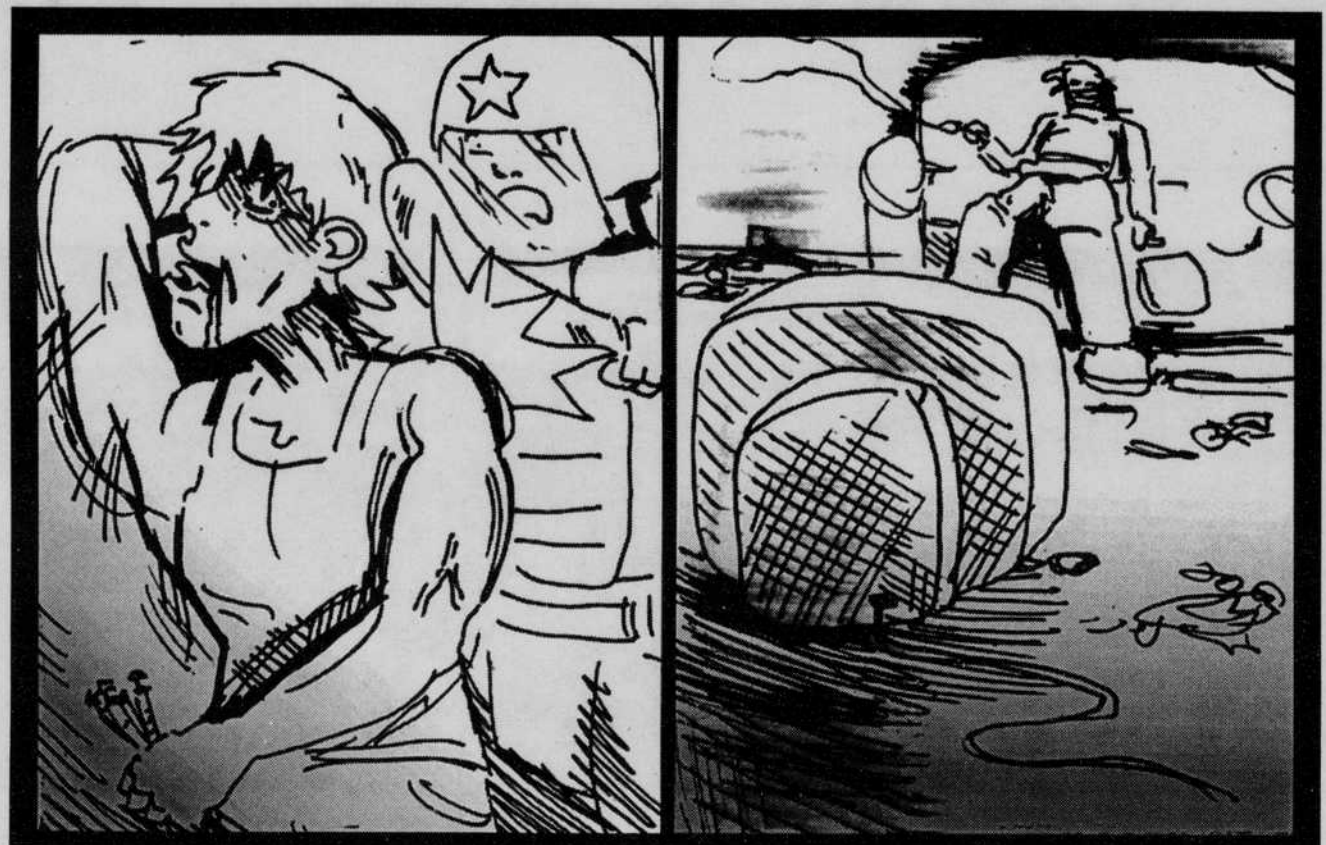
1. Yes — We have a responsibility to support our students and staff — 56 percent
2. No — I'm paying for my classes to be on campus — 25 percent
3. No — It is unfairly inconveniencing students — 13 percent
4. Yes — It's a great excuse to skip class — 6 percent

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION

What role should presidential and vice-presidential spouses play?
 Visit www.dailyemerald.com to vote.

- They're there to decorate the White and Blair houses for the holidays

- They should make or influence policy
- They should support their spouses' politics
- They're not elected, but they should act as goodwill emissaries



Aaron Sullivan Illustration

Drug of choice

Working in a small-town newsroom, I heard a lot of stories about it:

A man masturbates in the doorway of a hotel in Curtin for hours until police are called out. When the two officers arrive, the man shoots one with a high-powered rifle, penetrating the officer's bullet-proof vest and killing him.

A man steals nachos from a corner market in Cottage Grove and when police officers arrive at his home he attacks them without provocation. They hit him with a baton and spray him with pepper spray. A police dog battles him but he still nearly kills the officers with his bare hands.

A man races on Interstate 5 from the Sutherlin area to Cottage Grove, where his transmission finally explodes because he had been unknowingly flooring it in second gear for the 40-mile trip.

Meet methamphetamine, and the broken, violent, paranoid people who used it.

A man enters 7-Eleven and buys Cheetos, Mountain Dew and a huge danish. He then goes home with his friends, where he munches his snacks and plays video games or watches infomercials until he falls asleep.

Meet marijuana, and the giggly, hungry, video-game playing people who use it.

My point here is not that pot is a completely harmless drug — it does impair the user and have some negative physical affects — but rather that in terms of posing a threat to society, there's clearly a difference between meth and pot. Meth is more dangerous and destructive to addicts and society at large than pot is. So, it would make sense that pursuing pot users with more vigor than meth addicts would be absolutely ludicrous.

But sadly, that's exactly what our out-of-touch federal government seems to be doing: pouring money and resources into an endless battle on pot use.

According to a press release from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, "The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, a comprehensive federal effort to provide drug prevention messages to America's children, was reworked in 2002 to produce harder-hitting ads that have focused on the harms of marijuana."



JARED PABEN
 HELP WANTED

Consider this a wake-up call to our out-of-touch politicians in Washington, D.C., who are busy pursuing local pipe shops and doctors who prescribe marijuana. Wake up and realize we have a new enemy to fight — one that already has a head start wreaking havoc in our society — and investing anything less than our full efforts in battling this foe is unacceptable.

Here is some ground-level intelligence on this enemy, which, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has already become one of the most prevalent illicit drugs in the world:

Meth makes people dangerous.

"Chronic abuse can lead to psychotic behavior, characterized by intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and out-of-control rages that can be coupled with extremely violent behavior," according to a NIDA fact sheet.

Meth addicts steal. According to an Aug. 2 column in *The Oregonian*, a meth addict robbed at least 30 different places along southeast Hawthorne Boulevard in Portland in the past year.

That same addict stole appliances, including washers and dryers from up to 100 vacant Portland homes.

Meth addicts are also self-destructive. The drug itself — which can be made with hydrochloric acid, and lithium from batteries or lye — can increase body temperatures to as high as 104 degrees. It can leave a user awake and without an appetite for days on end, if an overdose doesn't cause a heart attack or stroke first. Hallucinations may cause the user to perceive bugs crawling under his or her skin; he or she tears his skin apart with knives or fingernails trying to get at them.

Meth destroys families. Almost two years ago I interviewed a 17-year-old boy who told me his mom and dad were meth addicts who spent every cent of the family's money on the drug. When he was 10 years old and his grandmother died, his mom spent all of the inheritance money on the drug.

Another teen told me he came back from a trip when he was 12 or 13 years old, only to find his meth-addicted father at home, 6'1", 92 pounds and bald.

"Dad just shaved his head; he was trying to run from the cops," he said. "He looked like he just came out of a concentration camp"

In May 2002, a Cottage Grove woman came home and found her 18-year-old daughter hanging from a rod in the closet with a belt around her neck. Her daughter had been a meth addict, and had hung herself because of her sorrow at getting involved with meth. She left behind a four-year-old daughter and two sisters.

Meth also costs a lot for the rest of society. Meth labs, which are often set up in residential rental units, cost thousands of dollars to clean up, which lowers property values. Moreover, the dangerous chemicals from a former lab can also cause unsuspecting residents to fall ill. According to a column in the Aug. 2 column in *The Oregonian*, the federal government estimates "one in six meth labs explodes or catches on fire."

I had a police officer once tell me that his department could go out and bust a meth lab any time it wants, but there simply wasn't enough money to fund it. Instead of busting meth makers, he said departments frequently go after marijuana dealers, because they usually have more money, yielding bigger crops of forfeitures for the department.

Now, here's a thought for you Washington lawmakers: Instead of dropping millions of dollars on commercials depicting pot smokers as dangerous criminals, you could actually fund local police departments so we can go after the real criminals.

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The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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