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# Senate: Ex-senators raise questions about neutrality

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budget calculations during the meeting.

"That was a clear example where it was our fault," he said. "The majority hadn't looked at the budget to say whether it should be approved and at what levels."

Hart said he also lacked the necessary time to do the job well, which is why he resigned.

"I'm not trying to absolve myself," he said.

Hart said he was also concerned with a lack of viewpoint neutrality in the student government. He said PFC members' attempt to defund the Oregon Commentator in December unsettled him.

"That bothers me, where it became clear that the PFC was making a decision on mission statements when they didn't really understand the breadth of the reach or review they can engage in," he said.

He said some senators seem to have different standards for matters such as food requests, making some groups come back a week later.

"I guess my inclination is not that there is a clear standard the Senate follows every time in the decision-making process," he said. "I do feel different groups have been treated differently."

Moreno-Villamar agreed, saying some groups continue to receive unequal treatment.

"In a sense that there is discussion ... on viewpoint neutrality regarding race and ethnicity and some people want to talk about that, some other people feel the way things are right now ... has been fine," he said.

Moreno-Villamar said when former ASUO Vice President Eddy Morales pointed out racist practices of the Senate last year he was only told how ridiculous his claim was and the issue was not addressed.

He added that "systematic" discrimination exists at an institutional level, saying certain groups' paperwork is often returned for more work. Moreno-Villamar added that certain groups, such as the Black Student Union, have had debt for years because of unfair practices.

He said cultural practices are reflected by budgets.

"It really stretches as far back as the historical past of Oregon and the treatment of black people in Oregon," he said.

George acknowledged that lapses in viewpoint neutrality occurred. He said Senate members need to remain neutral and represent students as a whole.

"There have been discussions that have been very personal for some people," he said.

George said the Senate has been able to address neutrality concerns and prevent future incidents.

Public Relations Director Strauss said contentious issues always come up at Senate and are not generally a concern.

"The Executive generally monitors tensions such as this," he said, adding that he didn't think the Executive was concerned at this time.

Hart added that some senators do not make the best decisions because they are just trying to get by.

"A lot of people are just going by what people are saying," he said. "They just hear something that sounds good and go with it."

Moreno-Villamar said the Senate has an unusually high number of new senators because of elections and resignations, but the new members are improving.

"It's been a learning process for everybody I think, especially the newer people," he said. "They're maturing their skills very rapidly, and I don't see that as much of a problem as realizing the structure they're immersed in as a senator and the pressure put on by different areas of the administration."

Hart also said the Senate has failed to adequately analyze the technical language of resolutions.

Hart said legal review found that language in the job description approved by the Senate for the Multicultural Center could be construed as age discrimination.

"Some members, mainly ones of the (Progressive Students Starting Today) group, basically they pushed it through as is," he said. "The position was a good one, but when looking at technical details of language, it's important to do it right."

Hart said some senators also didn't use "proper diligence" in reviewing the language of the resolution against University sports teams playing against teams with indigenous mascots, such as the University of Illinois' Chief Illiniwek.

The ASUO Constitution Court eventually found the resolution unconstitutional because of vague language in several areas.

George said senators had the responsibility to voice concerns with the resolution when a motion was made to adopt it.

Moreno-Villamar also said student government as a whole has moved away from student issues and concerns into those of the administration.

"To me, the issue here is student sovereignty," he said. "That's why there has been a movement away from voting. And when there's something such as the slate last year that at least announces that they stand for something in terms of ideals ... that's when everybody freaks out at the administrative level, but when everybody gets elected."

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*"A lot of people are just going by what people are saying. They hear something that sounds good and go with it."*

SOL HART | Former student senator

## The ASUO Multicultural Center Presents:

Guillermo Gomez Pena  
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**MAPA-CORPO:**  
Oppositional Rites for  
a Borderless Society



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