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## In my opinion

# Voting and voicing reform

After winning the ASUO Executive elections in "a fucking landslide" last month, president-elect Adam Walsh and vice president-elect Kyla Coy went immediately about the business of leadership and reform.

They began soliciting feedback from student groups and the student body at large. I just hope they remember they got their most important feedback on election night from the voters who put them in office. The message was, put simply: "Student government sucks. Fix it."

This election was all about accountability and responsibility. Though there were a number of tickets in the primary election, one could break it down into the Ashley Rees and Jael Anker-Lagos ticket against everybody else.

Rees-Anker-Lagos had both served with the ASUO before and cast themselves as insiders — the ones who know how to get things done. They promised their knowledge of and experience with the ASUO would make them the most effective executives.

All the other tickets campaigned as outsiders, wearing their lack of ASUO association as a badge of honor.

In a year when some student leaders fancied themselves as "cocky, smooth, motherfuckers" who could drink alcohol and smoke marijuana at an incidental fee-funded trip that was supposed to be dry, casting oneself as an ASUO insider may not have been the smartest political move.

In a year when student leaders vowed to take "group responsibility" for the Sunriver incident and then failed to meet even the meager



GABE BRADLEY  
THE WRITING ON THE WALL

requirements of their self-imposed punishments, voters reasonably questioned whether ASUO insiders can actually get anything done.

And in a year when the budget process seized the Constitution and ran it through a shredder of political correctness and cheap politicking, the last thing voters wanted to do was send student leaders back into office.

The voters clearly called for reform of student government in this election.

In the primaries, Rees-Anker-Lagos got more votes than any other ticket. But all the other tickets, which ran on platforms centered around ASUO reform, comprised a majority of the votes. It seemed that those who wanted reform outnumbered those who wanted the status quo. They just hadn't all agreed on which reformer they wanted.

Walsh-Coy advanced to the general election with Rees-Anker-Lagos. All the eliminated candidates except one announced support for Walsh-Coy. They gave speeches and sent out Facebook messages on behalf of the ticket. Those candidates who had campaigned so hard against each other just days before were now united in trying to bring about the election of Walsh-Coy and to defeat business as

usual in the ASUO.

This shows just how seriously these candidates regarded their reform agendas. They were willing to invest their resources and energy even though they had nothing personally to gain. Rather than be sore losers, they put differences aside to advance the cause of ASUO reform.

The voters had called for reform and candidates were responding. Come the general election, with the support of his former rivals, Walsh pulled in nearly two-and-a-half times more votes than he had in the primary, while Rees-Anker-Lagos pulled in 6 percent fewer.

The self-styled underdogs had defeated an opponent that had spent more than twice as much money. It wasn't slick campaigning or popularity that pulled in a victory for Walsh-Coy. The voters liked the message.

I didn't get a chance to drop a note in Adam Walsh's suggestion box. If I did, though, it would say, "Remember how you got here." The work of reform is slow, and Walsh's term will be over in one short year.

He needs to hit the ground running and take seriously the charge that voters have given him. He needs to crack down on the unprofessional, unstructured and sometimes illegal behavior of the student government.

And while a well-run student government that respects the very laws it's elected to administer will probably provide me with fewer topics for juicy, angry, scandalous columns, it's a sacrifice I'm willing to make.

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## INBOX

### Oregon Opportunity Grant should be fully funded

Every eligible student should be guaranteed the right to an education. It is the principle of democracy and the beginning of a more prosperous country and economy.

One available means of an affordable education in Oregon is the Oregon Opportunity Grant, which gives low-income students access to post-secondary education. It gives students the money they need to be able to afford some aspects of college, including tuition, food and school books.

Today, thousands of students statewide do not receive the grant due to the lack of money funding it. In addition, the grant only covers 11 percent of the cost of education. It is time for this to change. We have the ability to tell our state legislators to fully fund the Oregon Opportunity Grant and make it available to all eligible students.

This grant can make a difference in whether a student goes to college or gets a dead-end job after graduating (or not graduating) from high school.

As students continually experience budget cuts, declining services and higher-than-ever tuition, the Oregon

Opportunity Grant becomes the difference between staying in school and dropping out. Therefore, Oregon needs to prioritize access to a higher education with a simple start: fully fund the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

Jared Axelrod  
Freshman

### FOX was not the only network to turn off Bush

Jennifer McBride's column last week ("A plea for pure water," ODE, May 4) makes numerous references to FOX's decision to cut away from a primetime speech by President Bush in favor of airing "The Simple Life." While asserting that this "invulnerable television channel ... (had) made an excellent comment on the state of our society," McBride implies that FOX was alone in deciding to leave Bush's speech early. In fact, contrary to what McBride strongly suggests, FOX was not the only network to cut Bush off mid-sentence. According to the Drudge Report, CBS and NBC also abruptly left Bush's speech to move onto their regular primetime programming (NBC aired "The Apprentice" while CBS aired "Survivor: Palau").

Regardless of whether this omission was a product of poor fact-checking or

political bias, McBride neglected her responsibility as a journalist when she went on at length about the significance of FOX's broadcast, while failing to mention even in passing that two of the other major broadcast networks had done the same thing.

Miles Church Kane  
Eugene

### Tuition freeze opens door to college education

There is talk in Salem of a tuition freeze, and I am all for it.

Tuition costs are continually shooting up each year. I come from a big family in which all the children's ages are close together. It is expensive to raise four kids before college, and when they hit college it is nearly impossible.

Increasing tuition is closing the door of access for many to higher education. It is pricing students out of college.

A tuition freeze would be beneficial to many people, and if we are the future, our efforts at furthering our education shouldn't be hindered by financial issues.

Molly Dawn Cathcart  
Freshman

## Editorial

# CIM places a needless burden on education

Last week The Emerald reported on an ongoing argument over the Certificate of Initial Mastery ("High school CIM program faces rejection," ODE, May 4). Since 1991, the CIM has served as a way to certify that high school students meet state requirements in different subjects. Passing the CIM is not a state requirement for graduation.

Both the Oregon Board of Education and the Oregon House of Representatives find themselves at what could be a critical turning point for the CIM. Advocates of the program believe the CIM provides a good set of standards for measuring education and that CIM scores should be widely considered in college admission processes, as well as be mandatory for high school graduation.

Opponents counter that educators, students and parents find little value in the CIM and that precious money should not be wasted on educating and administering the tests.

Although creating and meeting standards of education is important in any school system, the CIM doesn't seem to be the best way to meet educational goals.

CIM curriculum is often far removed from teachers' lesson plans. This means when CIM time rolls around, classrooms must take a break from carefully crafted lesson plans and instead concentrate on general facts or skills. Studying for the CIM becomes a game of memorizing what may be on the test, rather than a useful, interactive education. As soon as the test has been taken, students and teachers go back to a previous curriculum that is usually unrelated to any specific CIM standard.

Like Bush's No Child Left Behind Act, the CIM represents a drain rather than an improvement on the education system. Standardized testing and goals don't always make sense for individual schools and classrooms. For instance, a school targeted toward talented and gifted students could waste time and money refreshing students' memory of certain math equations when normal curriculum concerns material of a much higher level.

Likewise, students from economically poor areas often fall behind state standards as a result of a lack in school funding. Trying to teach these students CIM material is a waste of time if their previous education is inadequate to understand the CIM. Furthermore, withholding funds from schools that don't meet standards (as occurs with the No Child Left Behind Act) will only perpetuate the cycle of underprivileged students receiving a sub-par education and missing out on future educational opportunities.

Students should not be treated like trained monkeys, forced to perform particular tasks when prompted by the state. It doesn't make sense for graduation from high school or admission to college to hinge on a one-time performance. Surely there are other ways to measure the success of students, such as GPA and individual assessments.

Oregon legislators should provide state schools with the incentive to give students a well-rounded education, rather than lauding those institutions that meet a standardized and arbitrary test.

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