

Leavitt: Students recollect fond memories

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members," Leavitt wrote in an Emerald guest commentary on Feb. 11 in response to the Commentator hearing. "It is important at the same time to speak out, forcefully and directly, when members of our community feel targeted by speech that is racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise biased, whether in words or in images."

Leavitt said there have been times when she became discouraged with the University.

"I get discouraged when we have what I would call rancorous, divisive dialogue about critically important issues because I want people to maintain the capacity to listen to each other and learn from each other," she said. "I want people to really learn from their differences and to listen up and to respect and find the essential nature of each of us. When we get too heated, too partisan, and we think we have to win by yelling, we stop learning."

Leavitt said her favorite part of the job is the contact she has with students.

"I get my contact not by sitting in (my) office," she said. "But by being in the student union in the evenings, attending programs and meetings, then by being available to student leaders. I always say to students, 'just come and see me if you want to talk about how you're doing.'"

She sits in on Student Senate meetings every Wednesday, attends incidental fee hearings and goes to cultural events, she said. Leavitt added that she compliments students on the service they've provided for the community and University by writing letters of reference.

Former ASUO President Adam

Petkun said that he has worked closely with Leavitt, corresponding with her about once each week.

"We talk with her about a bit of everything," Petkun said. "We give each other advice; she helps us with things. We help her."

Petkun said Leavitt was instrumental in the ASUO's negotiations with the administration to eliminate the 15 percent tuition fee for dropping classes during the first week of each term.

"It was really helpful to have such an important administrator willing to listen to us," he added. "She's very capable of having a conversation with you where you do a lot of the talking, but she asks you the questions that you need to come to a conclusion on your own."

Leavitt also spoke annually at Freshman IntroDUCKtion.

"One of the things I enjoy most is inviting the next generation of students and their parents to college, so I speak at IntroDUCKtion," Leavitt said. "I give parent sessions ... about how to support your students and help your students stay in school."

Her own experiences with her children are incorporated into her talk, she added.

"I talk about my children and how it was to be their parent when they went to college and how there were days when I didn't know if we were going to make it or not," Leavitt said. "It's a lot of fun to talk to parents about the challenges of keeping your student enrolled."

Mike Eyster, assistant vice president for student affairs and director of University Housing, said Leavitt is an excellent advisor.

"I've always been impressed with her ability to analyze difficult, complicated situations and to weigh

things very carefully and to try to be fair and realistic also," Eyster said. "I think she's seen her job as a calling. I've never sensed that Anne is in her job as a vice president to ... move to a more prestigious place."

After spending much of her life involved with education, Leavitt is convinced of its value, she said. She's alarmed by the rising cost of education.

"It means the world to me that everybody have an education because they can make choices about where they live, what their work is and who they are," Leavitt said. "It's just imperative for this state that we get higher education to the next generation that's coming in, and it's so expensive now. While I've worked here at the U of O, I've watched the cost of an education go up and our financial aid and scholarships not match that."

While it's difficult for Leavitt to leave the University, she said she feels that the work the Ford Family Foundation does is too important to pass up. She added that her talents are well suited for the new job.

"I love working with students and I like working with the families of students," Leavitt said. "I have a real appreciation for small-town and rural Oregon. I grew up in small towns myself."

"(The Ford Family Foundation) looks at students who have financial need and who are good students and leaders," Leavitt said. "It underwrites, very generously, undergraduate education."

"The world is yours if you get this degree. I really do believe that a bachelor's degree transforms students."

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