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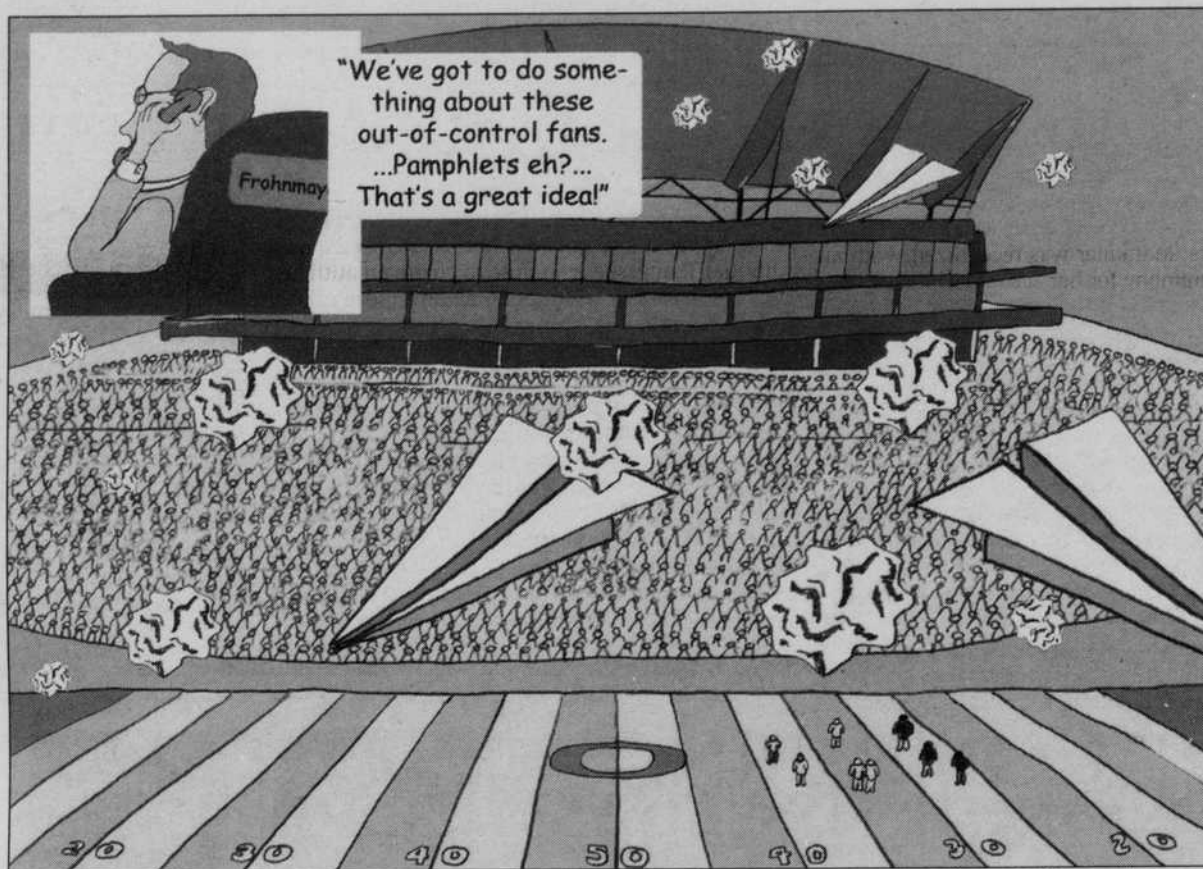
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AARON DUCHATEAU | ILLUSTRATOR

## Guest commentary

# Clearing up facts about Transcendental Meditation

I appreciate serious, informed debate over new ideas and concepts. In that light, I offer the following facts in response to your editorial Thursday ("Meditation movement lacks proper credentials," ODE Nov. 10).

Fact: The National Institutes of Health has granted \$20 million to study the health benefits of Transcendental Meditation — in particular, benefits for reducing heart disease, hypertension and the effects of a stroke. This research has been published in leading, peer-reviewed scientific journals. The studies have been conducted by the NIH-funded Center for Natural Medicine and Prevention at Maharishi University of Management as well as by more than a dozen other independent universities and health centers, including Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles and the West Oakland Health Center in Oakland, Calif.

Fact: Three hundred students at American University in Washington, D.C., are now taking part in a two-year study by the AU Psychology Department on the effects of TM on brain, behavior and health. Similar studies are now under way on the effects of TM on ADHD, high blood pressure, grades and overall academic achievement, anxiety and depression,

and substance abuse at middle schools, high schools and universities around the country.

Fact: Research on the effects of collective Transcendental Meditation practice has been published in several peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Conflict Resolution, Social Indicators Research and the Journal of Mind and Behavior.

Fact: There is no scientific evidence to suggest that all meditation practices are the same. In fact, over the past 30 years, there have been several meta-analyses distinguishing the effects of TM from other techniques, including studies published in the American Psychologist, the Journal of Clinical Psychology and the Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality.

Fact: The course fee to learn Transcendental Meditation is about the same as the cost of a 3-unit course at most universities. However, the TM course is not just one semester but includes personal instruction from a qualified TM instructor as well as a lifetime of follow-up meditation instruction at thousands of meditation centers around the United States and the world. The Lynch Foundation is providing full scholarships to students at schools, colleges and universities throughout the country.

Fact: Transcendental Meditation is not a religion. It is taught and practiced by people (and clergy) of all religions — and to people with no religious beliefs. Well before scientists began to explore the effects of TM, a judge in New Jersey in 1979 concluded there were religious elements to the teaching of TM. However, as we all know, there is a long tradition in the American judicial system (see civil rights in the south), where decisions are overturned with new evidence. Transcendental Meditation is offered to students of all religions in scores of educational institutions throughout the United States.

David Lynch did not come to the University of Oregon to persuade anyone to meditate. He came to answer questions about his filmmaking, his creative process and his meditation practice. And to offer, if anyone is interested, to help provide them with the tools to "dive within." It was — and is — a simple, genuine offer from a brilliant artist and a rare human being.

Best wishes.

Bob Roth is the Vice President for the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace

## INBOX

### Transcendental Meditation benefits outweigh cost

As a meditator and a college instructor for more than 20 years, I felt disappointed by the Emerald's assertion that something as "controversial" and "pseudo-scientific" as the discussion of Transcendental Meditation by David Lynch and friends does not belong at the University of Oregon ("Meditation movement lacks proper credentials," ODE Nov. 10).

For the sake of balance I strongly suggest that, before readers of the Emerald take this blast by the editors

against the validity of the research on TM to heart, they take a look at tm.org. There they will find references to scores of articles with impeccable science that have been published in such peer-reviewed journals as The Scientific American, the Journal of the American Medical Association, Business and Health, and Science, and learn that the TM technique is "the most thoroughly researched program in the field of human development. The National Institute of Health has spent more than \$21 million conducting research on the beneficial effects of TM on heart disease alone."

The benefits for workers, addicts, students and the elderly revealed by this compendium of research will act as an antidote to the tired old clichés you have used to describe a uniquely enriching and scientifically validated mental practice. I for one am thankful that the university setting is still the place where exploring controversial topics, weighing the value of scientific research, and welcoming the challenges presented by the David Lynch of the world belongs.

Susan Williams  
 Local Coordinator for the David Lynch Foundation  
 Eugene

## Editorial

# Diversity template is excellent for UO's future

With the Oct. 21 adoption of a new diversity policy, the School of Journalism and Communication has pre-empted the University administration's failed attempt to draft an overarching plan. The school's plan also provides the University with an excellent template for future planning attempts.

The school's plan differs in tone and scope from the rejected Five Year Diversity Plan draft, while still borrowing that plan's objectives. Instead of characterizing diversity issues as a problem that can be rooted out in half a decade, the school of journalism has set small goals. These small steps are reasonable, rational, and although maybe immediately attainable, they are feasible.

Although admirable and groundbreaking in many respects, the drafted Five Year Diversity Plan failed to clearly and concisely define what diversity is or why it is important. The SOJC plan, however, states that peoples' "communication styles and viewpoints" are molded by the history and culture of the communities in which they live. Thus, diversity is extremely important in the field of journalism because journalists must be able to convey information to people who see the same events differently.

The SOJC plan rightly broadens the concept of diversity to include "social, political, cultural, economic and intellectual diversity." We are pleased to see "diversity" defined more broadly than the constricting concepts of race and ethnicity; this definition helps the policy avoid "tokenizing" certain minority groups, or trying to recruit people to fill a certain number of minority positions.

The school's policy could benefit from more specifics in some areas. Designating certain people or committees to facilitate aspects of the plan, for example, might help the school build momentum for change.

Yet rather than having the University try to engineer a massive, micro-managed restructuring, departments should be supplied with a broad diversity plan framework onto which they build their own individual policies. Many parts of the Five Year Diversity Plan could be adapted to provide this broad framework.

Departments should be encouraged to focus on explaining and promoting diversity in ways that students with interests in specific subject areas can understand and apply to their academic and professional careers. Diversity should be important to all students, but it can be more understandable when put into a specific context.

Departments can better attract instructors and students from diverse backgrounds by targeting those with specific academic interests. Further, department-specific programs such as the Summer Journalism Workshop for Minority High School Students can help bolster diversity for both departments and the University.

Still, most students don't come to college with a clear idea of which department they will receive a degree from, so creating a supportive, diverse campus environment is extremely important. The University's general diversity plan addressed six areas of improvement, but giving some responsibility to the departments would allow it to focus on topics most pertinent to the general community.

Splitting up the role of increasing diversity between the University and its departments will help put diversity in context. Some departments would likely need prodding and outside consultation, but the Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity should provide this leadership.

Changes must be made, but we'd rather start making small steps tomorrow on a departmental level than wait another year to start making big, infeasible plans.