

Academic freedom forum explores what we've learned



Nancy Wilson, nursing instructor, discusses discrimination against ethnic groups. She spoke from her experiences as a Polish person.

DIANA SCRIVNER
Associate News Editor

Is it right for instructors to state their opinions in class? What rights do students have when it comes to filing a complaint or disagreeing with an instructor? What is academic freedom, and where do we draw the line?

These and many other issues were part of a lively discussion about academic freedom held yesterday in the Gregory Forum.

The forum, entitled "Academic Freedom, What Have We Learned?," was hosted by the social science department in light of all the issues that have been raised this school year.

"My idea was to remind us of the importance of the issues," said Bill Briare, coordinator of the event.

The opinion of what academic freedom is varied among the four

panel members: Nora Brodnicki, art history instructor; Dr. John Keyser, college president; Linda Vogt, advisor to *The Print*; and Paul Creighton, student; as well as among members of the audience.

Brodnicki was the first panel member to speak. She spoke about the academic freedom forum that was held in February about the controversial artwork of "Two popes boinking." She also discussed a recent ruling passed by the Supreme Court.

"March 22 the Supreme Court ruled that public universities can collect activity fees from people who object to the particular activities; this is a landmark decision. The Supreme Court said though you might disagree with gay right groups or women's rights groups or art on campus, you still have to contribute to the college

activity fee.

"I hope that today and in the future we can continue this discussion about academic freedom and the rights that we have as students and as teachers but more importantly as people," Brodnicki said.

Keyser was the second member of the panel to speak. He discussed the difference between academic freedom at Clackamas and that of a private institution. He also spoke about instructors' roles at Clackamas.

"I believe that faculty are the ones that need to drive their own dimensions of classroom behavior and conduct, and I have a great deal of belief and confidence that that works.

"It's important that we can continue to approach the future of this community college as one that needs to reach out and balance the tough debate about tough issues with responsibility toward the diversity of people that are in the community."

Vogt spoke about *The Print's* role in the Epstein issue.

"The first point I want to make today is something I think we are forgetting about this whole incident: when we talk about academic freedom we can debate the validity or appropriateness of Dr. Epstein's comment in the class. We can debate what context it was in. But what he said to the student newspaper on the record with full knowledge that it would probably be published... there is no mistaking what he said there."

Vogt then read parts of the inter-

view in which Epstein stated he was anti-homosexual. She also made comparisons to racial discriminations that could occur.

Creighton took a different point of view.

"The trend nowadays is open mindedness to everything and accepting and I'm great with that," said Creighton. "However, I am also accepting of the 'ignorant' people who may not be so accepting and it is important to bear in mind that there are a lot of people out there who don't have the same belief or open-mindedness, and until we can accept that, it is the same kind of reverse discrimination."

Creighton also brought up the subject of an instructor at another institution being fired for saying "dangerous" things. "I want that degree of danger, I want to have that around, the possibility of me joining a class and maybe having a dangerous thought put in front of me."

Counselor Bill Zuelke said, "There is academic freedom and there is responsibility and there is a boundary there somewhere... are there any signals that we can point to... that we're getting close to the boundaries?"

Zuelke inspired much feedback from the audience of approximately 100 people, as did the subject about

dangerous speech.

"How do you determine the difference between intolerance and danger?" asked English Instructor Sue Mach. "If an intolerant thought is dangerous, should it be accepted? If a teacher makes an intolerant remark, or what the student perceives as intolerant, is it not that student's right to complain and why is the student then attacked?"

"I think it is one thing for students to say dangerous things to one another; they are on an equal ground," stated Amanda Coffey, English instructor. "It's yet another thing for an instructor to say a dangerous thing."

"I think the college may be lacking acceptance

of what each different group has to say," said student Ron Landolt. "It seems to me that there is a line drawn to where it affects teachers more than it affects students as to what they can and cannot say."

Jean DeVenney, a counselor, ended the forum with her comments.

"I think that you can talk about dangerous thoughts and if they apply to a way of thinking, a system of ideas, then that is a challenge. But if you start making dangerous speech about individuals, then you start moving into what we call hate speech."

I hope today and in the future we can continue this discussion about academic freedom.

Nora Brodnicki
art history instructor

Win or lose, bond 3-74 promises great impact at College

STEVE NIELSON
Staff Writer

There has been a lot of talk about Measure 3-74, the bond measure that will provide \$47 million for Clackamas Community College on the May ballot, which many of us have already received.

So, what is the bond? Who will pay for it? And where will the money go?

The bond will make it possible for the college to update and renovate existing buildings, build a new multi-purpose classroom building, and improve student support services. Due to the college's growth, these are much needed improvements. The bond's \$47 million will come from a property tax of 20 cents on every \$1,000 of assessed value for residents of Clackamas County.

Clackamas has experienced a 25% increase in enrollment in the last five years. The college has responded by cutting staff, doubling tuition and significantly reorganizing.

"The net impact of these measures is that the average cost per student has dropped \$300 in the last three years," said college President John Keyser. What that means is that it costs the college \$300 less to educate a student than it did three years ago.

In spite of this, the college has had to dip into its reserve fund for several years to meet its budget needs. That reserve fund is almost

depleted, and unless the school receives emergency money from the legislature, the college will have to make drastic budget cuts this year. And the bond, if it passes, won't have any effect on the college's budget problems.

In addition, anti-tax activist Bill Sizemore's \$1 billion a year tax-cut initiative on the ballot in November threatens to take about \$323 million dollars away from state schools.

"[It's] the single greatest threat to Oregon education," said Gov. John Kitzhaber.

But, Kitzhaber himself has made it harder for schools to receive funding by deciding not to give voters the opportunity to drop the double-majority law that requires 50 percent of registered voters to turn out and vote for the bond before it can pass.

The money from the bond will expand and improve Clackamas' physical facilities, including the remodeling of five buildings, and the construction of a multi-purpose classroom building to relieve crowding and provide a place for art, English, and theater. Student support services like registration, counseling and financial aid will be improved. College utilities, parking lots, roofs, and roads will all be rebuilt.

Money will be made available to match public and private investments toward new learning and community outreach centers. A

small portion of the bond will also go to refinance outstanding debt and pay bond issuance and associated costs.

Roughly \$41 million of the \$47 million bond is allocated for construction, improvement, expansion, and remodeling of college structures and facilities. Only \$6 million will go to

matching public and private investments and refinancing outstanding debt. None of it will go to the college's budget and the school administration won't have any say about what it gets spent on.

Whether or not the bond passes, it will have a huge impact on the school. If it passes, much-needed

improvements will be made to allow Clackamas to keep pace with increasing enrollment and demand for services.

If it doesn't pass, those improvements won't be made and the school will be forced to deal with increasing numbers of students and needs with the inadequate and outdated resources they have now.



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