

'Tell Your Friends to Vote!'

Dean fires up campus crowd.

Howard Dean, once the Democratic front-runner in the presidential race, hasn't slowed down since losing his party's nomination to John Kerry. After disbanding the Dean for America campaign, the former Vermont governor founded Democracy for America, a PAC that encourages "ordinary Americans" to run for public office. He has also been actively campaigning for Kerry.

On Friday, Oct. 1, Dean visited the UO as part of his tour of Northwest universities. Emphasizing the importance of both Oregon and youth in the presidential election, Dean encouraged students to register to vote — and to vote for Kerry.

According to Jeree Anderson, county co-chair for Democracy for America, Dean is "at Kerry's disposal" for the presidential campaign. Dean's support is critical, says Anderson, because he motivates politically disengaged progressives. "Dean brought life to the Democratic Party. He inspired people to volunteer who had never before taken an interest in politics," said Anderson.

At the Erb Memorial Union amphitheater on the UO campus, Dean spoke to a supportive crowd of more than 1,000 students and staff. Several dozen people held Kerry-Edwards signs, and one small cluster held Bush-Cheney signs.

Dean criticized the president's war on terrorism, saying that Bush lied about the connection between 9/11 and Saddam Hussein. "The most important thing for any president is for their word to be good," he said. "John Kerry will tell the truth to the American people." Dean said that Kerry will bring home the American troops in Iraq and reconstruct international alliances.

Hitting a nerve with the young crowd, Dean said that he thinks Bush will reinstate the draft if re-elected. He added that Bush wants to cut Pell grants for students. "Voting gets you a D: barely passing. You need to run for office, because we need your help," Dean told the crowd.

Dean also blasted Bush's environmental record. "I want a president who will stand up for the environment once in awhile instead of selling it out to his friends at Halliburton," he said, eliciting a loud cheer from the crowd.

One of the most dismal legacies of the Bush administration, said Dean, is the current federal deficit. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Bush took office with a national surplus of \$236 billion — the biggest surplus in U.S. history. By the end of 2003, the nation was \$375 billion in the red — the biggest deficit in U.S. history.

"I want a president who can manage money. You cannot trust Republicans with your money," said Dean. "If it takes a liberal to balance the budget, we better have a Democrat in the White House!" By contrast, said Dean, Kerry will roll back tax cuts for the rich and cut taxes for the middle class.

Dean complained that "right-wing radi-



Howard Dean rallies volunteers at the Kerry headquarters before heading to the UO.

cals" have taken over the country. "We can't afford to keep going in the direction we're going in," he said, citing declines in jobs and the crisis in health care. "Never again will we permit a group of radicals to take over the greatest country on Earth."

Dean then veered away from partisanship, saying that 95 percent of people in this country want the same things: jobs, economic security, good public education, and better international relations. Bush, he said, is failing on all of those counts. "We need to give George W. Bush the one-way ticket back to Crawford, Texas, that he so richly deserves," he said.

Driving home the idea that young people can swing the election, Dean offered this parting advice to students: "Vote, vote, vote, vote, vote! And tell your friends, VOTE!"

Chris Halverson, events coordinator for College Democrats — the group that had arranged Dean's visit — said that Dean's speech inspired traditionally apathetic students. "He was the guy that energized the youth vote more than some of the other candidates," said Halverson. "He's a straight speaker. He's sort of the John McCain of the Democrats."

After leaving Eugene, Dean headed to Corvallis and Portland to address students at OSU and PSU.

Speaking with *EW* by telephone en route to Corvallis, Dean said that Kerry is clearly a stronger environmental candidate than Bush. "The environment is a huge issue for Kerry," he said, "and George Bush hates environmental legislation." Dean praised Kerry's renewable energy program, which calls for the U.S. to supply 20 percent of its energy needs with renewable sources by 2020.

Asked if he feels confident that Kerry will win the presidency, Dean replied, "I'd be a lot more confident if I knew that a lot of young people would vote." **EW**

The Lane County chapter of Democracy for America meets the first Wednesday of every month. For more info, visit www.democracyforamerica.com



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