

## LACK OF OPTIONS

I was heartened by your cover story “No Resources” [9/29]. Calling attention to the lack of options for the unhoused is important and a much-ignored reality by those who say “get a job” and “they can stay at the Mission.” Unfortunately, I was appalled to read the comment by Janet Perez of Sacred Heart.

“I certainly empathize with CAHOOTS,” Perez says. “We too see patients who come in drug-affected. And we will care for them, treat them medically, psychiatrically, in the emergency room. And if they don’t meet that threshold [for a two-physician hold], then we are bound to let them go and offer resources and referral to other places. It is a person’s choice to use substances.”

I feel the last sentence in this quote is the crux of this issue: “It is a person’s choice to use substances.” This shows a lack of knowledge regarding the disease of addiction. It also causes me to question her definition of choice, as well as Sacred Heart’s qualities of compassion and empathy.

Is it the obese person’s choice to eat the food that may lead to heart disease? Is it the choice of the person with lung disease to expose themselves to truck exhaust or perfume worn by others? Is it the choice of the person with mental illness to become unstable? These questions of choice should not dictate the treatment options we receive. Sacred Heart would serve our community much more effectively if its staff had better training in addiction.

Vickie Webb  
Eugene

## WOMEN CANDIDATES

It is great to have so many really smart and caring women running for elected office in Oregon and our city! I urge everyone to make this happen! Emily Semple, Betty Taylor, Claire Syrett, Sheri Moore, Lucy Vinnis, Kate Brown and Hillary Clinton are all smart and experienced community leaders we need to give yes votes of support.

This is our chance for change!

Ruth Duemler  
Eugene

## BERNIE’S WISDOM

Bernie Sanders strongly advises his supporters and all voters that this is not the time for protest votes or votes of conscience. Such third-party votes are in effect saying, “I want Donald Trump to be

president!” Bernie urges voters to strongly support Hillary Clinton and all democratic candidates up and down the ticket. He emphasizes that only with a democratic president and Congress do the almost 50 percent of voters that supported his progressive platform have any power at all to influence our national agenda.

So don’t make the same mistake that the well-educated German population made in electing Hitler to lead their country and then become its absolute dictator. It demonstrated the effectiveness of lies told often enough to become accepted as truth. The backing of German industrialists and the eventual use of intimidation by Hitler’s “brown shirt personal armies” played significant roles.

According to his former wife, Trump was an ardent student of Hitler, reading

## VIEWPOINT BY LAURA HANSON

## Believe Survivors

## A LETTER TO UO STUDENTS

**D**ear University of Oregon students, You don’t know me. But there are thousands of people like me on your campus.

In January 2013, I was roofied and raped at a fraternity while I was a student at the University of Oregon. The Sunday before the first day of my last winter term at the UO, I woke up naked with a man I had never wanted to be naked with, the night flooding back to me as I tried to find my clothes and leave.

I remembered that I had only drunk two beers, while everyone watched the Rose Bowl together. I remembered standing up to go to the bar, and then not remembering anything else until I woke up under a guy wearing only my bra and jeans, saying I didn’t want to be there, saying I needed to leave, asking to let me get up, wishing I could lift up more than my head.

Then nothing.

I write this letter to you in one more attempt to make the UO a safer place for rape survivors. God knows I’ve already tried every other way I can think of.

I want to tell you how I think students can take meaningful steps to make campuses safer places for all students, particularly rape and assault survivors, because my efforts to make your campus (a place that I once loved dearly) have been fruitless and rebuffed.

My first recommendation is to *not rape*.

I feel like Brock Turner and his father have made some people confused about the distinction between “20 minutes of action” and fucking the body of an unconscious woman. Perhaps you are afraid of having a sloppy night of sex with someone you’ve been crushing on, and then, a few months later, either getting kicked out of school or being dragged in front of a judge, because of drunken — what you believed to have been consensual — sex from a few months prior.

Let me give you comfort in the knowledge that you won’t get kicked out of school for raping someone unless you literally get caught with your pants down. RAINN (The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) has published statistics that show that men in the United States are more likely to be raped than they are to re-

ceive any kind of punishment for raping someone. One in 33 men are raped, while only 6 out of every 1,000 rapists go to jail.

Much more likely than going to jail or getting kicked out of school is that you’ll have sex with a woman who is too drunk to consent, or who emphatically does not consent, and you’ll either be too drunk to hear her or too drunk to care. After that, after you selfishly decide that getting off is more important than another person’s right to only have sex with people they want to have sex with, your role in the story will likely end.

She will probably experience a variety of emotions (it differs for every survivor) before either telling a few people in her circle to try to relieve the burden on herself, or she will file an official complaint with the university in the hopes that they will believe her and protect her from you by removing you from campus.

But the chances are that you will be allowed to graduate and allowed to forget about the harm you did to another person. Years later, you might even chock it up to a “mistake you made in college” — if you remember your victim at all.

I have tried, desperately, to change this state of affairs at our school. Last year, I came to a settlement agreement with the UO, with the understanding that it would improve its response to survivors (they have since rebuffed all of my offers to help). I testified against the UO’s proposed mandatory reporting policy, which isolates survivors from their community.

I even tried to bring my concerns to our state and federal legislators, that universities and schools need more oversight and a mandated, uniform response to rape, but they told me that most public universities have independent school boards and there’s not much they can do.

My current plan, and my hope in writing this letter to you, is that you, the students, take it upon yourselves to make our beloved school a safer place for survivors. And I have a few ideas.

1. *You can shun rapists.* When survivors come forward with their story, they are frequently rejected for tearing apart their friend groups, extracurricular or

Greek life communities. They are shunned for causing trouble and “crying rape” when they regret a sexual encounter. Let me tell you: *It’s so scary and isolating to come forward with a “rape story,” that hardly anyone chooses to come forward, let alone people who aren’t telling the truth.* Help your friends and classmates understand the difference: Rapists are the ones tearing apart your communities, not survivors. Rapists are the ones making your friend group, your dorm, your sorority, your frat “awkward” or “uncomfortable.” Not the survivor who comes forward with their experience. Shun rapists. Embrace survivors.

2. *Take action, where your school will not.* Taking action in support of survivors doesn’t necessarily require marching or protesting; you can send one email to your administration, demanding that they remove rapists from campus, or more completely support survivors. Better yet, you can work with your Greek life houses, club sports teams or academic clubs to *remove members who have been accused of rape*. If the UO won’t remove rapists from campus, you can create policies within your organization to remove them from your community, therefore protecting others in your group from falling victim to future abuse. You’d be telling rapists that you see their behavior and won’t tolerate it.

3. *Believe survivors fully.* I cannot emphasize enough how much of a difference it made to have a few members of my community believe me when I told them I was raped, even while the majority of my community did not give me that courtesy. I know how demoralizing it is to be called a liar for speaking publicly about something that had been done to me. The self-doubt, alone, was a terrible hell. When one of your friends tells you that they were raped, *all you have to do is mean it when you say, “I believe you.”*

With love and hope for a better UO,  
Laura

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