

NEWS

BY HENRY HOUSTON



EMS AIM TO STRIKE OUT MEASURE 105

Local minor league team takes hard stance against immigration ballot measure

The Eugene Emeralds have received nationwide attention for the team's miraculous championship win: Even though the Ems had a losing season record, the team went on to win the championship.

Now the team is warmed up to take on its real rival: Measure 105.

The Ems, which celebrate Latino heritage through the branding of Las Monarcas, have publicly opposed Measure 105, the ballot initiative that would end Oregon's 30-year history as a sanctuary state for immigrants. The Emeralds are

the only sports team to join Oregonians United Against Profiling's coalition of organizations to oppose the measure.

"We feel strongly with this, otherwise we wouldn't have made a stance on it," says Allan Benevides, the team's general manager.

Opposing Measure 105 isn't doing anything too crazy, he adds, although it's the first time the team has publicly taken a stand on a political issue.

Since making the public announcement, he says he's heard an "overwhelmingly positive" response overall,

though a few negative responses have argued the team should stick to baseball.

In addition to baseball being one of the most popular sports in Latin America, Benevides says that on opening day, the Emeralds' player roster was 70 percent Latino.

In March 2018, the Emeralds announced they would participate in the "Copa de la diversión," a season-long series meant to bridge fans with cultures and values that align with a team's local Latino community.

The team chose Las Monarcas because the Monarch butterfly is a symbol for the migrant community, the team said in a March 20 statement that announced the branding.

The Ems transformed into Las Monarcas for its Tuesday home games, but Benevides says the team will move that to Sunday home games for the 2019 season because it's had such a positive result.

The team's re-branding is intended to mean more than just "fun, family and fiesta." It should also be directed at making an impact in the community, Benevides says.

The Emeralds' front office was trying to decide how to engage with Measure 105 in the ballpark since early August. They didn't want to wait until canvassing season in September, Benevides says.

The team put out a video that played before games showing community members (including Eugene Mayor Lucy Vinis) and Eugene Emeralds staff asking viewers to vote no on Measure 105.

"As Emeralds, as Monarcas, we believe that all Oregonians deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. This fall, Measure 105 threatens the health of our diverse community," the video said. "Say no to discrimination. Say no to unjust profiling. Vote no to Measure 105."

Measure 105 would repeal Oregon's law that prohibits state and local law enforcement agencies from using their resources to enforce federal immigration laws.

Standing up against Measure 105 shouldn't be left to just individuals, nonprofits and activists, Benevides says. Businesses need to stand up, too, because undoing the law "isn't right."

"I just know this country is better than this," he says. "It's frustrating to see [Latinos] under attack. I believe we all deserve a shot." ■

NEWS BY MEERAH POWELL

NOT BAD ENOUGH

A UO student's harassment claim is dismissed in a confusing process

Inappropriate touching, lewd comments, intimidation: Sarah Hansen's allegations sound like textbook harassment.

But when Hansen lodged a formal complaint to the University of Oregon's Title IX office, they didn't agree. Or at least the office didn't find the allegations serious enough to take any major disciplinary action against the man who she says harassed her.

The claims were passed among various people and university offices at the UO as Hansen navigated a complex process, all while hearing similar complaints from other students and continually dealing with her alleged harasser. She says she wishes the school had handled her case better.

Hansen, 34, was a geology student at UO. She finished classes this past summer term. Her original graduation date was delayed due to dealings with her alleged perpetrator, an older, non-traditional male student. She says she had multiple classes with the man, but had not interacted with him until the beginning of winter term in January 2018.

Hansen says she dealt with the male student's alleged harassment for about five months before he finally stopped making contact with her.

She lodged a complaint against the student with UO's Title IX office in February and met with a Title IX investigator to explain her situation.

Title IX is a federal civil rights law that protects people from discrimination and exclusion in education, or any federally funded activity, based on sex or gender.

Hansen alleges the male student made unwanted physical contact with her, such as pressing his torso and his backside against her multiple times, in classroom and lab environments, and grabbing books and lab equipment out of her hands without her permission.

He also allegedly made sexually suggestive comments towards her, for example showing up uninvited at an after hours study session and asking, "Shall I dim the lights and lock the doors?" She says he also intimidated her by forcefully bumping into her.

EW spoke with an instructor at UO, who is a friend of Hansen's, who corroborates Hansen's dealings with her alleged harasser.

Hansen says the Title IX investigator told her that her complaint wouldn't be handled by Title IX but instead by the Office of Student Conduct. "I was told my complaint didn't rise to the level of sexual harassment and it was a student conduct grievance, not Title IX," she says.

"The basic litmus test is that reports of behavior by students are directed to Student Conduct," UO Senior Director of Public Affairs Communications Tobin Klinger says. "All offices ultimately have connections back to the Title IX Office for review of any reports involving sex or gender related conduct."

The UO created the associate vice-president and Title IX coordinator position in 2015, according to the school's annual Title IX report. Before that, the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity director served as the Title IX coordinator.

According to the UO's Title IX webpage, the school is "consolidating its Title IX and Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity offices under a newly formed Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance."

Though the Title IX office did not deal with Hansen's case solely and specifically, Klinger says there are many employees with "Title IX roles" housed in various areas of the university.

In March, Hansen received an email from the Office of Student Conduct saying the school would not be charging the man at all.

"Based on an initial assessment of the information received, we have determined that we will not be issuing charges of potential violations of the University of Oregon Student Conduct Code at this time," Sandy Weintraub, former UO director of student conduct and community standards, writes in an email to Hansen. "This is because the allegations, taken as true, would not at this point rise to the level of a conduct code or policy violation."

The email continues by stating that although the school will not be issuing disciplinary action (this can take the form of suspension, expulsion and other institutional punishments), Weintraub writes, "In my position as the Director of Student Conduct, I will be asking [the accused male student] to meet with him so that the University can make clear its expectations, clarify our policies and provide notice to [him] that his behavior, if continued or escalated, could lead to a conduct code violation."

The male student did not meet with the current director of Student Conduct or the Title IX coordinator until almost two months later, Hansen says.

Hansen says she was not given a direct reason from the school as to why her case was not seen as violating the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9