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EDITORIAL

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The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680) Established in 1970

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Deadline for all submitted materials:
Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday, 12:00pm

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes To: Portland Observer,
P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, Oregon.
Subscriptions: \$60.00 per year

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Let's Build A Better University System

By SENATOR BRADY ADAMS

"Revolution" is not a term one often hears in discussions about budget allocation systems. However, there is a quiet revolution underway in the Oregon University System (OUS) and, while its focus is on changing the way money is allocated to campuses, its promise is for a dramatically revitalized system of public higher education for our state.

The State Board of Higher Education adopted this new budget allocation system in responses to calls from legislators, the governor and from many in the private sector for a higher education system that is both more responsive to public educational needs and more accountable for its performance. The new system would accomplish both goals.

In the past, our public colleges and universities were funded through a complex system in which all tuition money was centrally pooled and then reallocated to the institutions, along with state general fund money, using a model that

included more than 250 criteria. It was a system that was cumbersome and slow to react to changes in the higher education landscape.

Under the new funding model, each institution will retain its own tuition and fee money. In addition, each campus will share state general fund allocations based on a more student-centered model that uses only twelve key criteria (as opposed to 250). These twelve criteria look at differences in "cost-per-student," based on the level of instruction and program costs. A freshman history student, for example, would be a lower cost than a senior engineering student. OUS will look at each institution's enrollment using the criteria as a filter to provide an allocation based on the actual student population served.

A companion initiative enacted by the Higher Education Board establishes performance benchmarks for each institution. Institutions will be encouraged to develop plans for meeting the benchmarks and their progress will be monitored.

Letter To The Editor:

I am deeply concerned that the Oregon legislature and residents of Oregon. It appears to be a racially bias move how can a state with moral values and equality permit the elimination of African American or Black History for one day. I suppose students study the contributions of

Black people, their achievement, which are many. I pray that the people of Oregon would become more sensitive to the 1.7% African American that live there.

Thank you
Rev. Clifton Zinney

Know Who Will Fight For Your Children

By JEANNE ALLEN
PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM

Recent concerns about declining student achievement and deteriorating schools — at the local, state and national levels — have strengthened the cry for reevaluation and reform of our nation's education system. The viewpoint on educational issues of both elected and appointed School Board members, state legislators and even county officials has been or likely soon will be, the focal point of community discussions on how to improve our schools to make them the best.

All states and communities differ in their needs and approaches to education reform. Moreover, today school boards and other governing authorities are often extremely limited in what they can do to improve schools. Government oversight and opposition from vested interests often hamstring a board's ability to make substantial changes, but it is still critical that these governing bodies take a strong leadership role in introducing new and effective ideas

to their communities, and in working to implement real reform. Because of this, knowing as much as you can about your local candidates and members is crucial.

Getting the Answers

It is important not only to know where the candidates stand, but to make sure the right questions get asked, and to help bring issues important to you and the community to the forefront of public discussion. Accountability — Should teachers whose students repeatedly fail to learn be held accountable? Accountability becomes a difficult issue if and when ineffective teachers cannot be removed from their jobs. In many cases, these teachers are members of powerful special interest groups, like the AFT or NEA, and their positions become nearly untouchable. The processes involved in the removal of bad teachers almost seem designed to protect the teachers and not the ones being harmed by ineffectual, uninterested and bad teachers, our children.

Parents — What roles do parents play in the educational process? Does your local representative welcome and invite parental involvement and interaction in their proceedings? Are all deliberations and decisions made in the open and under public scrutiny? Do you know where members or candidates send their own children to school?

Charter Schools — do you approve of public schools being run independent of district or county supervision? Should parents have the right to start one? Today, 34 states plus the District of Columbia have passed charter school legislation. The number of these schools has jumped dramatically to over 1200 today, from just 1 in 1992. These schools serve over 300,000 students nationwide. In the years since the first charter school opened its doors, these schools have attained measurable success and in most instances have surpassed both expectations and their traditional public school counterparts.

Standardized testing — Is the use of standardized tests a valid and fair

measure of academic achievement of our students? Is it fair to compare the results of student achievement year to year within a single school and between different schools within a district?

Advisors — What organizations will your candidate or elected representative rely upon most heavily for advice on educational matters — Parents? Unions? PTAs? Community and Civic Groups? Some of these groups have specific and vested interest in the direction taken by legislators and school board members. Not every decision is beneficial to the child. This is a very important question as it may also be an indication of loyalty. Is this loyalty to an organization that protects jobs or one that benefits our kids?

Remember, for the next few years the people elected to represent you, at both the local and state level, will play a critical role in the direction your children's education will take. It is up to each parent to learn how each member or candidate stands on education issues important to you.

The Alarms Are Sounding

By HUGH B. PRICE
PRESIDENT NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

It should be clear now that the shooting death of Amadou Diallo, an unarmed law-abiding West African immigrant, by four white New York City police officers, has crystallized the anger over police misconduct that has been building up in Black America throughout this decade.

It's also clear that, in their anger and dismay that some white police officers don't bother to try to distinguish the law-abiding from the criminal among them, blacks are not alone.

Rail Yzaguirre, president of the National Council of La Raza, and Karen Narasaki, executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, gave heart-wrenching example of police abuses aimed at their communities during a press conference the National Urban League convened in Washington, D.C. February 25.

Yzaguirre and Narasaki were joined by a broad cross-section of grassroots groups, civil rights organizations, and ordinary citizens who came to Washington that day to urge President Clinton to become directly involved in resolving these issues and defusing this crisis.

Abe Foxman, president of the Anti-Defamation League, Kweisi Mfume, president and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Ira Glasser, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, and Congressman John Conyers (Dem.-Michigan), shared the podium.

The Reverend Al Sharpton, the attorney, Johnnie L. Cochran Stewart, president of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcers, the Reverend Joseph Lowery, chairman of the Black Leadership Forum, and Edward Lewis, president of Essence Communications, were among those present as well.

So, too most poignantly, was Betty Grimmer, whose son was slain by an avowedly racist cop in Pittsburgh, PA last December. No one could remain unmoved as she described the pain of her loss and appealed directly to the President to lead the nation out of this crisis. These people and others came to Washington arms are sounding. America must respond.

The racial crisis that exists in American law enforcement was underscored the following Sunday when Governor Christine Todd Whitman, of New Jersey, fired the head of the New Jersey State Police for racist remarks he made during a newspaper interview.

Col. Williams said that certain minority groups were disproportionately involved in certain kinds of drug trafficking: heroin, cocaine, and marijuana were heavily province of blacks and Latinos. In saying this, however, Col. Williams steadfastly denied, as he had in the past that the state police engage in racial profiling—the notorious practice of "Driving While Black."

Some have defended Colonel Williams, declaring he was merely speaking the truth: that blacks and

Hispanics are disproportionately involved in the drug trade.

Yes, that is true. But the documented fact of the history of the widely disproportionate stopping of black and Hispanic motorists by New Jersey state police—the overwhelming number of those motorists are not arrested—are powerful evidence that something else was being said as well.

In fact, Col. Williams comments starkly reveal the attitude behind racial profiling: So what if most are law-abiding, stop enough of them on suspicion and you'll catch the few who are doing something wrong.

The new York police departments own statistics show that in the past two years, officers of the city's elite (and nearly all white) street crimes unit

stopped and frisked 45,084 people. Most were black and Hispanic.

But that action resulted in only 9,546 arrests meaning those 35,000 people were stopped and frisked on the streets because these officers dedicated to keeping the peace.

We also reject the odious notion that blacks and Hispanics should be glad to "trade" a reduction in their civil liberties for the reduction in crime in their neighborhoods. We've had quite enough of second-class citizenship.

Our coalition has made as the drafting of guidelines for state and local law dealing with this crisis—such as the drafting of guidelines for state and local law enforcement agencies to help them attack crime while protecting citizens' civil liberties.

The morning of our news conference the President notified us that he considered the issues of police misconduct "critical" and would take action to examine it.

Attorney General Janet Reno agreed to meet with a group of those who participated in the news conference and she also spoke about the gravity of the issues of police brutality at her own weekly news conference.

These are steps in the right direction. Of course, they are only a beginning. Much more needs to be done.

The alarms are sounding. This issue is going to tear at America's social fabric if clear efforts to guarantee that law-abiding people of color need have no reason to fear the police as well as criminals are not made.

Just think: Your son is bright, healthy and headed for college one day. You love the direction your career has taken. You're doing a lot of the things you planned and even a few you didn't. Living life to the fullest is easy when you have family behind you. American Family Insurance. Call and talk to one of our helpful, friendly agents. You'll find out why we're consistently rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best, the insurance rating authority. Then, go on. Dream. Plan. What you do next is up to you and we'll be here to help you.

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