There's a New Board In Town

On July 1, thanks to a decline in state funding, PSU becomes an independent public body governed by a citizen Board. Read it on page 16.
"At many other universities they are stuck with high fees, but that’s not the case at Portland State. So there is really, from everything I know, no need for us to renegotiate the contract with Higher One.” pg. 24

— According to President Wiewel
t wasn’t hard to string together a common theme this time around.

Last issue, we explored activism of the past and present. Now we’re all about the future. There are a lot of major changes in the works which will severely impact your future at this school, in this city.

There’s a new Board of Trustees which will govern PSU—a board of private citizen nominees instead of state officials. Read about it on page 16.

Similarly, there’s a new bill proposing to replace the current elected official in charge of Portland’s water management with a board of private citizens (page 12).

On page 6, read about a shift in the way we educate people about drugs. Just telling people to “say no” might not be the best answer.

And there’s a student government election coming up at PSU. Last year, less than two percent of the student body voted for our ASPSU team, which represents us as a voice in matters of the state and administration, and allocates over 14 million dollars of our tuition money, and does a bunch of other important things that directly affect us. Polls open May 16—whether we end up with another pathetically low voter turnout is up to you (page 8).

I guess this issue isn’t all about the future, because we’ve got a lingering, juicy remnant of our “Radicalism: Then and Now” kick—an interview with Andy Haynes, PSU student body president of 1969, and first black president on any campus in Oregon. You don’t want to miss it, this voice from our past is priceless (page 8).

On another note, in case you hadn’t noticed from the cover, WE’VE CHANGED OUR NAME. Yes, we changed our name to “Portland Spectrum,” and we officially changed our charter as well; we are no longer jaded by that official label of being the “conservative voice on campus.” Our doors are now officially open to accepting any and all points of view. We’re a platform for the whole spectrum now. Officially.

The funny thing is, if you’ve been reading us at all this year, you know that this is exactly what we’ve been doing all along. It’s just that now our publishers, the Student Media Board, signed off on it. So we’re not breaking the rules anymore.

Oh well.

The cool name change isn’t the only new thing about us this term, though. We’ve also got an interview series up and running, conducted by yours truly, in collaboration with PSU.tv. I’m interviewing some important, active students on campus, and asking them some tough questions. You can find the series on PSU.tv’s site (PSU.tv), our site (portlandspectator.org), and on our facebook.

One final note: keep an eye out for our June issue. It will be the last magazine our staff produces this year, and we’re going to really go all out. After a year of design and content that just keeps getting better and better, I’m feeling even more cocky than usual, so I’ll go ahead and say June will be our best issue yet. What will it be about, you ask?

You’ll just have to wait and see…

Jake Stein

Editor-In-Chief

IMPORANT CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

In our April issue, the story “They are Pocketing Our School’s Money, And They ‘Could Be Anyone’” was printed with three mistakes.

1.) The following sentence occurs on page 10: “Even if top administrators of SMSU like Mark Russell happened to be aware of other instances of fraud, would they risk publicity at the expense of their careers?” For clarification, this sentence was completely meant as a hypothetical. Our staff had no evidence to support a claim that Mark Russell was actually aware of other instances of time card fraud. His name in this sentence was simply meant as a placeholder—anyone’s name could have been used, due to the hypothetical nature of the sentence. In hindsight, the sentence should have been constructed without his name.

2.) The following sentence occurs on page 10: “…recurring instance of corruption within the management and administration of SMSU persuaded Lomax to quit…” This information should have been clearly attributed to Lomax’s opinion, and not presented as a statement of fact.

3.) Pam Hutchins, mentioned on page 9, is introduced as “director of PSU Human Resources.” This is incorrect. Her official title is “Associate Director of Human Resources for Payroll and Compensation.”
We Don’t Care About ASPSU, But We Should

One student’s quest to figure out what the heck ASPSU is, and if voting and getting involved in student government actually “makes a difference”

The 2014 Associated Students of Portland State University (ASPSU) elections are upon us, and this year the student government is pushing hard to get students involved. In the past several ASPSU elections, voter turnout has remained consistently miniscule. Last year, less than two percent of PSU’s 28,766 students took part in electing ASPSU members, a massive drop from 2012’s nearly 10 percent (the highest turnout in the last five years).

Why, exactly, is such a large student body so disinterested in choosing its own counsel of representatives, and participating in student government?

I decided to ask around campus and see what students knew about ASPSU, and what their thoughts were on the upcoming elections. Unfortunately the collective results were not very positive: I was hard pressed to find any students who were serious about casting their vote this year. And although
everyone had heard of our student government, nobody really had much of an idea as to what exactly they do to benefit students and the school in general. Come to think of it, I realized that I really didn’t know either.

To help rectify this issue and gain a better understanding of the situation, I did a little research and contacted two current members of ASPSU: Student Body President Harris Foster, and Vice President Tia Gomez-Zeller.

ASPSU is a governmental body that is run entirely by students. Their work stretches from the university level all the way up to a national scale. Just recently ASPSU has succeeded in creating a full time coordinator position for the Native American Community Center, has instituted the Good Faith Alcohol Policy (which protects underage students from being charged with an MIP in the case of an alcohol-poisoning emergency), and has also raised nationwide awareness concerning the ethics of third party financial aid disbursement (i.e. Higher One). In addition, ASPSU’s Student Fee Committee is in charge of disbursing the $14.7 million student fee budget among student groups and resources, a huge responsibility that affects all of us.

Last year, less than two percent of PSU’s 28,766 students took part in electing ASPSU members, a massive drop from 2012’s nearly 10 percent (the highest turnout in the last five years).

So then why do so few students seem to care? I would think with incentives such as the Educational Leadership Service Award, which grants every student government member a stipend of between $500 and $2,700 based on position, people would be jumping for the opportunity to take part. Gomez-Zeller informed me that she believes that the low amount of student participation is partly due to a generally negative opinion of government entities on the part of young people in America. Considering the largely liberal identity of PSU, I’m rather inclined to agree with her.

Foster believes that the reluctance of students to take part is simply a matter of poor communication on behalf of the student government. To solve this, ASPSU has been seriously stepping up their presence on campus in order to better connect with the student population. From noon to five every day they set up tabling areas with ASPSU staff to answer any and all questions and provide informational brochures. Just this year they’ve implemented an ASPSU newsletter that goes out every Tuesday with the purpose of connecting ASPSU members with students and keeping them up to date on current student government projects and events. Additionally, as I’m sure most of you have noticed, a sea of ASPSU election posters have been plastered around the school. During the elections there will be stations set up for debate and polling to make it as easy as possible for students to play their part and cast their votes—on May 16, the polls will open.

ASPSU’s Student Fee Committee is in charge of disbursing the $14.7 million student fee budget among student groups and resources, a huge responsibility that affects all of us.

All of these tactics aimed at getting students involved in the elections is only the beginning. Gomez-Zeller stresses the importance of student involvement with ASPSU not only during the election season, but year round. She says many people have the expectation that governing political figures will simply fix everything without the involvement of the people.

“The truth is, it’s not solely up to ASPSU to make changes,” says Gomez-Zeller. “It’s the responsibility of all 50,000 students to make PSU better.”

By taking part in your student government, you have the opportunity to choose which issues are important to you as an individual. It gives you the chance to improve university conditions not only for current students, but also for generations of future students. Getting involved means going beyond just placing your vote and stepping back to let the members of ASPSU do all the work. They are the mouth and hands of the student body, but you are the voice. Things like tuition equity would not be in effect today if not for ASPSU’s place in the Oregon Student Association, which lobbies in the capital and makes our voices heard. Only through ASPSU working together with our student body can we maintain our power in the capital and continue to make PSU an excellent college.

As Gomez-Zeller puts it, “Change is everyone’s responsibility.”
The safest way to use Molly,” advises Romain Bonilla through a thick French accent, “is not to use Molly.” That set the tone for the rest of “Just Say Know: MDMA,” a panel hosted by Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP). Bonilla and his partner, Sid, proceeded to offer potentially life-saving information about methylenedioxymethylamphetamine, known as “MDMA,” “Molly,” or “Ecstasy” to hard partiers the world over. The panel is one of several planned SSDP events, including weekly screenings of “Breaking Bad” and a public forum on the implementation of Good Samaritan Policy at Portland State.

And while skeptics may be quick to brand SSDP as a liberal sect out to force-feed psychedelics down the gullets of America’s impressionable youth, Romain Bonilla and the rest of SSDP insist that the aim of their project is not to encourage drug use, but to reduce the harm done to those who have already chosen to abuse such substances. It’s a lesson we should’ve been taught 14 years ago; in Multnomah County, the number of deaths caused by drug overdose steadily increased over the last decade, dropping only in the last two years from 119 deaths in 2011 to 109 in 2012. On a national level things are looking even worse: as a U.S. citizen between the ages of 25 and 64, you are more likely to die of a drug overdose than you are to die in a car crash, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

SSDP’s mission statement flies in the face of government funded drug education programs, which push an abstinence-
based lesson plan that teaches youth to ‘just say no’ to drugs and those that indulge in them—and little else.

If you attended fifth grade in the last 24 years, you’ve probably experienced this education in the form of the D.A.R.E. program; failing that, you’ve probably seen ads by the Above The Influence campaign on television, in newspapers, and adorning the sides of buses. Both programs were started in the mid-80s as a response to the rise of the crack epidemic of that decade, and both have risen in popular opinion since then for their demand-side focus on fighting drugs. There are eleven D.A.R.E programs listed on their website in Oregon; the website claims over 20 million graduates per year nationwide. Basically, their goal is to reduce the market for drugs in the U.S. by dissuading youth from substance abuse at a young age.

But both campaigns have been subject to criticism in the past, and despite undergoing major reforms in response to these criticisms in 2005 and 2006, scholarly analysis of the programs remains divided. A 2011 study by Dr. Christopher S. Carpenter and Dr. Cornelia Pechmann on the Above the Influence advertising program concluded that while “for eighth-grade adolescent girls, greater exposure to anti-drug advertisements were associated for lower rates of past-month marijuana use and lower rates of lifetime use… Associations were not significant for adolescent boys or with students in grades 10 or 12.”

Apparently, boys will be boys.

D.A.R.E. has had similar criticisms levied against it. A slew of studies have called into question the efficacy of the program, leading to a $15 million grant by the federal government to overhaul the entire program in 2001. Yet a meta-analysis of over 20 studies conducted in 2009 by statisticians Wei Pan and Haiyan Bai found that, even after a complete overhaul of the program, graduates of the program were no more likely to avoid drugs or alcohol than peers who did not participate.

Various reviews of both programs have found that the more successful ones utilize a more hands-on, interactive approach with students participating in role-play discussions both as drug-free youth and as the people that would try to sell them drugs, and D.A.R.E has begun to integrate these findings with their programs statewide. Nevertheless, the jury is still out as to whether these changes will prove effective in the long term.

SSDP holds that unbiased, rational information about drug abuse is key to both preventing at-risk youth from using, and to reducing the real health damage possible if those drugs are not used correctly.

“Essentially what these types of education do is shut down the conversation about drugs,” claims Bonilla. “Abstinence-only drug education is not effective, in the same way that abstinence-only sex education is not effective, because we know that people are already going to continue to use drugs, whether we tell them to stop or not.”

While the true efficacy of drug education programs nationwide, after some major overhauls, is still awaiting fresh research, perhaps it’s time we stop resisting the flow of accurate, unbiased information about drug use. 😊
PSU’s student body president in 1969, the first black president on any campus in Oregon, weighs in on community government, police, and football.

Interview by Colin Staub
In March, after attending a debate about the future of Portland State University athletics, something clicked in my memory. My parents attended PSU in the late 60s and early 70s, and they had once spoke of an effort to abolish the football program during their time here. I called them up and asked about that effort, and my dad mentioned the student body president in 1969, the man who was behind the proposal: Andrew Haynes. While my parents were, by their own admission, relatively uninvolved on campus, they both remembered Haynes’ name.

I began to research, digging through old Oregonian and Vanguard archives, and eventually put together an article The Spectator ran in April, “Deja Vu at PSU.” As I was writing that story, I continued researching Haynes. I took pieces of information I had found and cross-referenced them with other details, wondering if I could locate anything about his activities after PSU.

Much to my surprise, I eventually did: I found an email address. I sent an email with a long paragraph explaining my story and acknowledging that he was probably not the same Andrew Haynes, but wondering if there was a chance he was. A few hours later I received a one-sentence response.

“Dear Mr. Staub,” it read. “You are correct. Andy H.”

After corresponding several times by email, I had the opportunity to conduct a phone interview with Haynes, who is now 76 and lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We discussed his platform in 1969, his strategic choices for effecting change, how modern issues connect with the past, and his efforts toward social change which continued after leaving PSU.

Colin Staub: What gave you the idea to run for PSU student body president in 1969?

Andy Haynes: At the time, I was a political and social activist, and that was an opportunity to break yet another barrier. I took it, and with the help of five or ten people we were able to prevail.

Staub: I’ve read that the year you ran was the highest student turnout in ASPSU elections.

Haynes: Really? Well, I suspect that we were in that period of time when the racial overtones made almost any ordinary issue a little different.

Staub: I’ve also read that you were the first black student body president in Oregon.

Haynes: Come on! Okay, I didn’t know that. There are a couple other campuses around the state of Oregon, some that have a history of being progressive.

Staub: All my research through archives indicates that you were the first black student body president on any campus in the state.

Haynes: Well, good. That represents progress.

Football Abolition

Staub: One of the main points you highlighted in your campaign was a call to abolish the football program.

Haynes: The real question is, or was at that time, are you going to make the investment in a particular sports activity to become a superstar in the industry. At that time I certainly did not want PSU to make that kind of investment. There are two other Oregon schools to satisfy the football fanatics. What can I say? Now, I have not followed the PSU football program, and I don’t even know if they have one.

Look, I got to college through a football program, and I love sports and football in particular. But for some schools it makes no sense to gamble on becoming good enough in football for it to pay off for them long term. Now, my math is not too good, but let’s see… 2014, 1969, that is, how many years…

Staub: 45 years.

Haynes: Come on! Okay, look at it this way. If you invested in a stock called “PSU football,” and if you tracked it for 45 years, and it’s still not a money maker, then should you do it for another five to 50 years?

Staub: One of the reasons the question of athletics’ funding has come up again is that the administration announced a budget deficit of $15 million, and announced a plan to cut academic programs. People see the school cutting academics, while still funding athletics.

Haynes: Okay, now, how much economic sense does that make.

Staub: Evidently the current university president, Wim Wiewel, came to that conclusion as well. Last fall he announced that the football program would no longer be funded by student fees, and would become “self-supporting.”

Haynes: That’s a good first step, okay, but “self-supporting” is not probably an appropriate description of what they’re doing. The issue is, is it worth allowing or encouraging them to pursue that route? Is there a strong enough interest in the student body to just stand up against it?

Staub: There is some opposition to the football program, but there are also arguments in favor of it. At a debate in March, one student brought up the issue of athletic scholarships. In particular, the way that athletic programs bring minority students to PSU, who wouldn’t otherwise have been able to attend.

Haynes: I’m one of them who would not have had an opportunity were it not for football. And I am grateful for that opportunity existing. On the other hand, I and other minorities would be better served if they played the “equality” game, not the “dependency” game.

I would rather see that kind of interest poured into struggling elementary schools in urban settings, regardless of the color of the students going there, whether they’re white, Hispanic, or black. The proposition is whether we should have football scholarships simply to finance minority attendance in college. And my answer to that is no.

Staub: So there could be more direct routes to get minority students to college, outside of the football scholarship program?
PORTLAND SPECTRUM  MAY 2014

Haynes: Absolutely. Let’s say the football program amounted to about $5 million per year. I would rather see that $5 million being contributed to students who have strong academic backgrounds, who are willing to tutor part time in depressed educational areas. In the long run, the state and the country would be better off doing that, than using football as an avenue to higher education. And I love the game. I played it and I still love it. But we’re at a point now where we need to be good guardians of our dollars. And some of the traditional outlets need to be re-evaluated.

Is there enough of a concern for someone to take the lead in trying to get this taken care of?

Staub: Well, the way I see it, from reading archives, the overall sense I get is that there was a lot more involvement in the late 60s at PSU, and I imagine nationwide on college campuses. The sense I get now is that there is a kind of apathy at PSU, students don’t have a feeling that they can do anything, so they don’t do anything.

Haynes: One of the opportunities is to try to convince them otherwise. We are in a recession. The world has become more competitive. We need to be more diligent about what we finance. The question is, what damage would be done to PSU if they cut out the football program? How would that damage the student body?

Staub: There’s a lot of money involved. College sports have become a big business. It seems larger than whether or not students are interested. There’s this idea that since it’s been there, it’s going to continue to be there.

Haynes: Well that doesn’t have to be the case. And who there should take responsibility to be the catalyst to get that expenditure re-evaluated?

Staub: The students!

Haynes: Okay. That boils down to a particular person. Who feels strongly enough about it to invest the time trying to get it re-evaluated? How would you find such a person?

Staub: There are people on campus who are involved in this issue. There was a petition on campus to remove the football program, but it barely received a hundred signatures, and it’s been out for months. I don’t know if that’s the most direct route, though. One of the things you said was that you would close the school the following fall if the issues you outlined were not resolved. What steered you towards that kind of drastic action?

Haynes: There’s a difference between “direct” and “drastic.” In this day and age, agents of change should take the responsibility to be very careful about the issues they select. Once they are selected, be very principled in which tactics are used. The reason I select closure as a tactic, is that it’s very easy to measure whether the effort was successful, and secondly, it’s fairly easy to do.

Staub: To close the school?

Haynes: To close the school.

Staub: Did you have a plan of how you would do that?

Haynes: I have a policy of having the plan before the promise. I don’t promise anything I don’t think I can deliver, except that there are no guarantees you will be successful once the battle starts.

I don’t remember the names of the people involved in planning processes—there were about five to 15 people involved in planning, including several FBI agents who were undercover. At least two of them were. One of them actually wanted to convert and become a double agent. We didn’t have the resources to accommodate that.

When we looked at the opportunity to close the school, the decision was that it could be done for about two to five hours with the people we had in the meetings.

When you close a school for one hour, the ramifications are extremely severe, ranging from anywhere from law enforcement to babysitting. That was the situation. It doesn’t take much to obstruct. You personally can go and sit in the middle of the street and cars will stop. So how much resource does that take?

Staub: Just the will to do it.

Haynes: That’s right! The will to do it. And before I do anything, I want a feel for the extent of the support the action will generate. You have to sell students on participating in something like that. If the support is not there initially, the activity will just occur, be squashed, and it’ll be business as usual. You have to get a feel for what kind of support level you can anticipate. If that’s too low, as a leader you have a responsibility to leave it alone.

Staub: Did you work with student groups to effect this action?

Haynes: I personally made the decision not to ally myself with a particular group. I wanted to get support that was broader-based than that. For instance, there was a church that committed to bail money months before the activity would trigger. The assumption was that there would be immediate arrests, people would go to jail, and broke students need to get out of jail.

We were not thinking about sustaining a five-year activity. We were thinking about one to five hours worth of activity. Using a tactic which is fairly easy to do.

Community Government for PSU

Staub: Another point you brought up was the creation of a community government for the university. What did you have in mind?

Haynes: Instead of saying “government,” the question was this: how do you get poor people to have a presence in the decision-making process? I wanted them to have a position that could not be taken away from them, so that they could continually provide input to the university instead of just complaining about not having minority students at the university. So if they had a seat, they would have a stronger voice. That was basically the objective.

Staub: Recently a sort of community government has been installed. The “community” is partly made of prominent, fairly wealthy alumni, and that is the demographic that will be having a say in the direction of the university.

Haynes: I believe that we gain by having diversity on many
levels. If a poor person could say, “I have a seat on the governing board of the university in my city,” that would help that person think they have a route to a similar status in life. I have nothing against people serving via the alumni association, after all it’s their institution also. But I don’t think it’s the same as having a welfare mother, who is interested in education and providing a path to advancement for her children, at the table. Because if nothing else, with that sort of a seat they know your name. You have access to channels of resource that comes with the position.

I live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and we had an election for a community position. I doubt if 10 percent of the people in the area, people who are almost all poor, voted in the election. And it wasn’t because they had to go to work, because many are unemployed.

What I’m saying is that inclusion is a defense against disaster. Diversity is a defense against disaster.

**Staub:** And it’s more of a democratic route.

**Haynes:** Without a doubt. I believe good American citizens come from all classes and all colors. I don’t want any of them to claim they are locked out because of their gender or color. I want women to say, “I can compete for the CEO position,” and not even be concerned about gender. I want them to say, “I am going to run for president,” and it’s no big deal.

## Police off campus

**Staub:** You had called for the police presence to be banned from campus at PSU in 1969.

**Haynes:** The answer to that is yes.

**Staub:** Is law enforcement an issue you still feel strongly about?

**Haynes:** For a period of time I worked for the police department in my professional career. In the city I Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and in many other places, crime has increased in general for twenty years. And our law enforcement has increased. So why would you continue to invest in police presence if the crime increases?

It’s not being insensitive to police officers. It’s that you have to set some boundaries.

Sure, I could get protected by having one-on-one policing. That means that every citizen has a police person. It means that half the population is law enforcement. I don’t want that, okay? Because I may be protected, but what happens to my freedom?

**Staub:** It’s reduced, immensely.

**Haynes:** I think it’s reduced, sir, and for what purpose? If I have less freedom, what’s it all about?

I want to say to them, “Look. The criminals are not being reduced by the amount of money being poured into the police department.”

When I pour money into law enforcement, all they do is buy more tasers or the latest radar, for what point?

**Staub:** Currently there is a campus public safety office at PSU. There’s a proposal to deputize the campus police and make them an official police force, giving them more resources, and increasing the amount of police on campus.

**Haynes:** Just do an analysis of this question. In the city of Portland, over a period of ten years, look at the increase of crime, and the increase of law enforcement budget.

**Staub:** Are there alternative ways of dealing with crime, instead of a police department?

**Haynes:** Okay, now I’m not talking about abolishing the police department.

**Staub:** No, I know, but what would be more effective than just putting more money into law enforcement?

**Haynes:** Citizen accountability. When I see a kid breaking my neighbor’s window, I ask the kid to stop it, and I do that frequently. I report it to the property owner, and I ask the kid to let me talk to their parents. I don’t care how big the police force is: unless you’re there to stop the kid from breaking the window when the kid decides to break it, the window’s going to be broken. The crime is committed. I would rather deal with it in the social context than the law enforcement context. Once you get a record in this society, it influences your chances, whether it’s a drug record for a dime bag of weed, or a more serious crime. Once they ask “have you been arrested,” and you put yes, they are obligated to dig further. And sometimes that will eliminate people.

**Staub:** Did your record of activism have this sort of effect for you?

**Haynes:** It hasn’t been that way for me. My arrest record, my social activism, has not damaged me. It has deprived me of certain opportunities. I don’t mind that, because I made the decision to become an activist—and I’m very happy I did.

I can look back over the years and see the progress that the country made because people of all colors, and frankly of all classes, invested in social change. Except on TV and in movies I haven’t seen a “whites only” sign in years. That’s different than saying it’s perfect, but I’m just saying that I and people like me invested in change in America.

## After PSU

**Staub:** Did you continue to work for social change after leaving PSU?

**Haynes:** I made a commitment very early in life. In America I have not lived outside of the inner city, the ghetto, except for one solid year (and that year was in Portland, Oregon). The reason is that I think I can make a higher contribution by being in the presence of challenges.

I will continue to do so. I’ve been fortunate in life, and I don’t think I have missed out on anything by not living in a more affluent neighborhood. The crime is higher where I live, there’s more danger, but it’s kind of hard to give a helping hand unless you’re there. Kids on the street meet me, they talk to me, and sometimes I provide input I could not have provided if they had to go through channels to get to me. And you never can tell when a particular input may help a person select a course of action which is positive for the community and the country.
A n upcoming vote on Portland’s water management will determine whether an elected citizen board—the “Water District”—will replace the city commissioner as head of Portland’s Water Bureau, as well as the Bureau of Environmental Services. Measure 26-156 has been promoted by its supporters as an anti-corruption panacea, while opponents warn that the bill is nothing more than a thinly-veiled move toward corporate takeover. Amidst the debate, a third voice has entered the fray—a group of grassroots organizers who say that replacing one elected official for a group of elected officials is not going to make any real difference without an effective system of accountability.

Headed up by PSU alumnus Jonah Majure ’12, the People’s Water Trust has crafted its own initiative that would amend the charter and profoundly redefine the responsibilities of any entity managing Portland’s water.

Lawn placards are starting to sprout throughout the city as the May 20 vote on the Water District draws closer. “Vote YES,” touts the slogan. “End pet projects”—a reference to the excessive spending that currently plagues Portland’s water bureau, which is commonly attributed to bureaucratic corruption. The campaign literature accurately points out that Portlanders pay more for water than dry states like Arizona, and even pay significantly more than residents do in nearby cities such as Eugene. A citizen board, they say, is the way to take decision-making out of the hands of officials green-lighting each other’s pet projects behind closed doors.

Sounds good in theory—until you follow the money.

In fact, Measure 26-156 itself is a pet project of the private sector. The Water District has been connected to a range of corporate polluters and right-wing financing. John DiLorenzo, representative of industrial agriculture and biotech giants like Monsanto, Bayer, and Dupont in Jackson County, wrote the piece of legislation. Corporate donors to the campaign include all the biggest water users in the Portland area, such as the company Siltronix which produces silicon wafer chips for Intel. In the signature-collecting phase required to get an initiative on the ballot, the bill garnered virtually no volunteer signatures towards its creation. The 50,000 signatures were paid, claims Majure.

Marissa Matsler, 3rd year Ph.D student in Urban Studies and Planning at PSU, explains that the Portland area specifically attracts industries that require large quantities of very clean water—but those same companies resent paying the bills to support environmental protections measures. In Matsler’s words, “These companies flock to Portland for the abundant water, yet they selectively ignore the fact that ecology and environmental water purification are actually important to their industry.” This is not the first time corporate clientele has struck at the city’s environmental programs: the website of the Audubon Society reveals that the same core groups backing the Water District sued the city in 2011 in an attempt to legally undermine superfund cleanup, protection of the Willamette river, and other restoration projects.

For the Water District’s opposition it’s clear that, by getting involved in water politics, corporate customers are simply looking to lower their bills. “Stop the Bull Run takeover!” read the “Vote NO” signs, referencing the watershed from which the majority of Portland’s water flows. The Audubon Society’s website lists more than 50 organizations that have come out against Measure 26-156, including associations of nurses, police, firefighters and retirees in addition to the expected host of environmental organizations.

While no one can deny that the city’s water management leaves much to be desired, Measure 26-156 is clearly not the answer. In essence, the showdown between the city and the proposed Water District is actually just a turf war between public sector bureaucrats and private sector businessmen over who gets to pocket the most profit from Portland’s abundant water.

Enter the People’s Water Trust.

This past Earth Day, the People’s Water Trust officially came out in opposition to Measure 26-156. However, Majure is quick to emphasize that even if Portlanders vote down the bill this month, the city will still be susceptible to privatization of water and lack of accountability. While the city does not openly advocate for privatization, Majure explains that its decision to finance with bonds from private capital group Goldman Sachs can only lead to trouble. “We are setting ourselves up to not be able to repay debt, and then be forced to forfeit our water rights,” says Majure.

In a country where corporate money wields so much political influence and the revolving door makes it impossible to keep private sector interests out of the public sphere, Majure says
The Water District has been connected to a range of corporate polluters and right-wing financing. John DiLorenzo, representative of industrial agriculture and biotech giants like Monsanto, Bayer, and Dupont in Jackson County, wrote the piece of legislation. Corporate donors to the campaign include all the biggest water users in the Portland area, such as the company Siltronix which produces silicon wafer chips for Intel.

that organizers cannot afford to sit around and wait for these changes to take place before taking action. He emphasizes the need to be one step ahead, and asserts that the People's Water Trust is valuable precisely for that reason.

“The People's Water Trust is a one-of-a-kind thing in the country at this point—it could revolutionize environmental law and put us on the offensive instead of the defensive.”

The People's Water Trust will enact change and accountability through three basic mechanisms. First, as indicated in its name, it will establish a trust relationship whereby the city (or any other manager, whether private or public) will be considered the trustee and all water users—human and nonhuman—will be considered the beneficiaries. Second, the initiative establishes new rights, including the right of future generations to have access to clean and affordable water. In order to abide, the city and all contractors will actually have to give hard proof that a proposed measure will not cause harm in the long term.

Last but not least, the trust creates accountability through the mechanism of citizen enforcement. If the above-stated laws are broken, the category of the trust relationship gives Portlanders as beneficiaries the legal right to sue the city or any private contractor for breaching their responsibility as trustees. This process is called a public interest lawsuit and its purpose is to force compliance rather than financial settlement.

The People's Water Trust is currently in the signature-collecting phase of promoting the initiative. In order to get on the November ballot, organizers have to gather more than 50,000 signatures before the beginning of July.

Majure is confident that the Trust will not only win, but could also set a national precedent that inspires other cities to place their water in public trust. As for the upcoming vote on Measure 26-156, Majure is not too worried.

“It doesn’t matter who is elected, so long as they have to follow the people’s rules.”

The full text of the initiative is available on the Trust’s website: peopleswatertrust.org
Most people would be astonished to learn that Portland State University, with nearly 30,000
students, does not have a Black Student Union. I recently had the opportunity to sit down with sophomore
Kayla Tatum and junior Briaunna Solomon to discuss their endeavors to bring a BSU to PSU.

TJ: Why do you feel it’s important for PSU to have a Black Student Union?

Briaunna: Well, Kayla and I thought it would be a good idea for a Black Student Union mainly because, as a university, especially in Oregon where diversity is very low, it would help us network, and it would be easier to put our name out there for students to join us. People are familiar with the name Black Student Union—it would be nice for people to congregate and come and meet other black students on campus.

Kayla: I agree. And to build leadership as well. Bree and I are both new to PSU. We wanted to meet other new students and we thought creating a Black Student Union would be beneficial to the school.

TJ: Why do you think they’ve had so much trouble maintaining a Black Student Union?

Briaunna: I don’t think “trouble” is the word. There are just other organizations that I think they feel like they did what they need to for black students on campus. It was never trouble, they just had other things going on. So probably having a Black Student Union never crossed peoples’ mind.

TJ: Don’t you think it’s weird that a campus with 30,000 students doesn’t have a Black Student Union? Most other campuses this size across the country have a Black Student Union.

Briaunna: I think it’s a little weird, but every campus is different. PSU is definitely not a traditional campus. It’s nothing close to the traditional colleges in the state. It’s a commuter campus and there’s diversity in every aspect: race, sex, gender… It’s just completely different from any college I’ve been to.

TJ: Are both of you from Portland?

Briaunna: Born and raised.

Kayla: Yes, I’m from here.
TJ: So you are aware of how Portland has treated the Black Community historically?

Briaunna: Yeah, I know Portland.

TJ: Do you think that PSU, as the biggest school in the area, can be better than the rest of Portland and look out for people of color better than the rest of Portland has?

Briaunna: Definitely, of course! I think it’s a matter of people being more or less comfortable taking that leadership role to push for something like that. That’s why we wanted to start a BSU, so people could feel comfortable. People could open their eyes….the BSU would have been to let people vent and address issues and take action against racism on campus.

Kayla: I believe having a BSU on campus would help us network with other BSUs in Oregon and outside of Oregon. I want to connect the black community at our school and at other schools.

That’s why we wanted to start a BSU, so people could feel comfortable. People could open their eyes….the BSU would have been to let people vent and address issues and take action against racism on campus.

TJ: Do you feel like the needs and concerns of black students are being adequately addressed?

Kayla: Hmmm… I’m trying to frame this so it’s not a diss or anything…

TJ: I completely understand you don’t want to say anything controversial, but that’s what this interview is for, to speak your mind.

Kayla: I feel like for other cultures and other races there’s multiple organizations and groups… Basically, I didn’t know it was going to be as challenging [as it has been] to start a BSU. I didn’t realize how many obstacles we would have to face on campus. I think maybe it’s because we never had any experience creating an organization. I think other organizations face these types of obstacles when starting… But I really, really wanted a BSU.

Briaunna: There are other organizations on campus that allow black students to congregate, but Kayla and I wanted to engage more the political aspect of being black on campus… the not so fun stuff. So if somebody needed support with being the only black person in a class of a hundred and it’s a multicultural class, and maybe the word “nigger” is being thrown around… we could have a group of people to talk about this and maybe take action to make sure the student isn’t uncomfortable…. 

TJ: I heard from Kayla last week that SALP (Student Activities & Leadership Programs) declined to recognize and fund the BSU for various reasons. Could you elaborate on that?

Briaunna: The reason we didn’t get funding was because there was a misunderstanding about some dates, so it was just a technical issue. And we had trouble getting recognized because our mission statement was closely aligned with another organization’s mission statement.

TJ: Was it the Black Cultural Affairs Board?

Briaunna: [long pause] YES! [laughs]

Kayla: [laughs]

TJ: So it was the Black Cultural Affairs Board.

Briaunna: Yes, TJ. Yes. [laughs]

Kayla: [laughs]

TJ: Do you want to name some names?

Kayla & Briaunna: NO!! [laughs]

…

After Kayla told me what happened I was furious. To me, as a black person on campus, it’s really disappointing to hear that another black organization may have inadvertently torpedoed an attempt at a BSU. In Portland, and on this campus in particular, I feel like the more black groups we have, the merrier. It’s not an issue of dividing power, it’s an opportunity to work together so we can get more done. 🎉

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PSU’s New Trustees

The Biggest Change To Our University’s Governance In Decades.

Part One: How did it come about, and what does it mean for PSU?

Analysis by Sara Swetzoff
Board of

The Biggest Change To Our University’s Governance In Decades.

Part One: How did it come about, and what does it mean for PSU?
Analysis by Sara Swetzoff
"The board of higher education has always had the right to increase tuition as much as they want, so this 5 percent cap [on tuition increase] is actually a new development that puts a greater restraint on the board of trustees than there ever was on the state board of higher education. So in that sense already there are greater protections in place than there were before."

-Wim Wiewel, May 2

**This** July, a 15-member Board of Trustees will officially take the reins at PSU. Decisions relating to tuition, academic policy, student fees, the presidential office, the university budget and a host of other important issues will be decided by PSU’s own governing board, rather than the State Board of Higher Education.

This change is primarily driven by declining state funding. Proponents say that this new board system will allow each of Oregon’s universities to more effectively network and fundraise in their respective communities in order to compensate for the cuts. Others warn that dismantling the Oregon University System (OUS) will cripple the coordinated efforts of student advocacy at the state level and mainline the private sector’s influence on the priorities of higher education.

There is still much to be determined when it comes to our board’s relationship with PSU students. As the trustees warm up to their mission and the legislature takes on a new round of state budget deliberations, this coming academic year will be a critical opportunity for students to set a precedent for the future and make their voices heard.

**A shift in authority**

An independent governing board at an Oregon university first became a reality in 1995, when the Oregon Health and Science University successfully lobbied to split off from the university system.

Other universities were not exactly keen to follow suit. When Wim Wiewel became president of PSU in 2008, Governor Kitzhaber and his office were already promoting the idea of giving all Oregon universities the option to break off from the OUS. According to Rob Fullmer, a staff member at PSU and a trustee with the new Higher Education Coordination Commission (HECC), Wiewel himself was initially skeptical of the idea. Administrators became more amicable toward Kitzhaber’s vision after polls showed that people in the metro area would be willing to support bond funding for university activities. That means that instead of competing with all the other universities for the same pool of capital projects money, PSU could turn to the Portland community.

Senate Bill 270, which officially proposed the establishment of institutional boards for Oregon’s universities, was
introduced to the legislature in January of 2013 and finally passed in early July of the same year. According to the bill, a board may have up to 15 members, including one student representative, one classified employee, one faculty member, and the university’s president as a nonvoting trustee. All members serve four-year terms, with the exception of faculty, staff and students, who serve two-year terms. Board members serve voluntarily and are not paid.

House Bill 3120 followed closely on SB 270’s heels and established the HECC, an organization specifically designed to oversee the new independent board system. The HECC will replace the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) on July 1.

However, the legislative process was not without its hurdles. Republican senators initially delayed SB 270’s passage, claiming that the voting rights of student, staff and faculty board members represented a conflict of interest (this objection was eventually assuaged by Governor Kitzhaber and Senate Democrats). Meanwhile, faculty such as PSU economics professor and PSU-American Association of University Professors president (PSU-AAUP) Mary King testified in support of an increased faculty presence on the board. In King’s opinion, both the largest faculty union on campus—the PSU-AAUP—and the faculty senate should have a voting trustee in order to ensure that educators’ voices are sufficiently heard.

The Oregon Student Association (OSA) was the most vocal critic of the proposed board system. Founded in 1975 to “represent, serve, and protect the collective interests of students in post-secondary education in Oregon,” the OSA has long been a crucial student presence in the state legislature.

“We opposed it all the way through, even after [it] passed,” says Eric Noll, legislative affairs director with the Associated Students of PSU (ASPSU) and an OSA board member. “We never wanted the bill to pass, and we still have many concerns about transparency and affordability.”

Noll poses questions that no one has been able to fully answer yet. “Will costs for students increase? What kind of shared governance will students have?”

Noll explains that under the OUS, universities functioned under a shared services model whereby all seven universities had one statewide financial consultant, one legal advisor, and so on, thus minimizing personnel costs. According to Noll, one of the OSA’s most significant reservations about the new board system was the likely increase in tuition that would follow its creation—if every university has to bring on a team of administrators to support their own board, then students may well ultimately bear the burden for that expense.

Tuition regulations are also changing. Boards have the unilateral authority to raise tuition up to five percent every year. This presents a tough new face of the opposition for OSA student advocates, who for decades have been banding together each year to collectively fight statewide tuition hikes. In that light, the power of new boards feels like a divide-and-conquer tactic. Although a PSU student or ASPSU officer could potentially appeal to the HECC, Noll is quick to point out that the HECC holds little power compared to the outgoing board. In reality, no one really knows how such disagreements or confrontations will now pan out, and which avenues of student resistance to tuition policy will actually prove fruitful.

Noll asserts that some of the OSA’s concerns about increased expense have already been substantiated. According to him, University of Oregon and PSU experienced an upsurge in administrative load in the five years running up to the creation of the board. “Universities increased both pay and the number of administrative positions in order to prove institutional board readiness [to the state],” says Noll.

But the OSA’s concerns were not just financial. Noll says that the most important differences between the outgoing board and the incoming institutional boards system lie in the legal framework: the SBHE is bound by state law. Thus the OSA worked hard over the years to establish universal guidelines enshrined within the Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) of the OUS, such as the requirement that each university enter into a shared governance agreement with their students.

This law, along with the rest of the OARs, might not carry over to the new boards.

The impending expiration of the OARs also affects faculty by removing a layer of legal safeguards relevant to faculty shared governance arrangements. King explains that while the
By Portland Public Schools (PPS) to file an Unlawful Strike the removal of shared governance. An unfair labor practice union must accept the change proposed by the administration’s “permissive,” meaning that it is not required by law and the on tenure and promotion policy. In a May 2013 letter from strike out the contract content protecting faculty oversight in the AAUP contract language.

Quickly and unilaterally alter or even cut departments and promotion and tenure procedures.”

Administration to negotiate to mutual agreement any changes that they want to make to Faculty Senate language on promotion and tenure procedures.”

With the OARs’ legal code potentially expiring, the only thing standing in the way of the administration’s ability to quickly and unilaterally alter or even cut departments and their tenured professors was the shared governance language in the AAUP contract language.

“They saw an opportunity,” agrees King.

Thus from the early days of this bout of collective bargaining, the administration began its ardent attempts to strike out the contract content protecting faculty oversight on tenure and promotion policy. In a May 2013 letter from David Reese to the AAUP, we see that in the first month of negotiations the administration was already trying to alleges that bargaining on shared governance contract language is “permissive,” meaning that it is not required by law and the union must accept the change proposed by the administration’s bargaining team. Nearly one year later and just days from a faculty strike, the administration was still holding out on the removal of shared governance. An unfair labor practice charge filed by the administration’s bargaining team in the last days of the contract negotiations appeared to be some kind of last-ditch effort to assert their demands via the Oregon Employment Relations Board. To add insult to injury, the charge was submitted by attorney Jeffrey P. Chicoine of the private firm Miller Nash—the same attorney and firm hired by Portland Public Schools (PPS) to file an Unlawful Strike Charge against PPS teachers in February.

One can only speculate at the hundreds of thousands of tuition dollars the administration spent on private legal services in the course of their efforts at the bargaining table.

The formation of PSU’s board

Faculty determination to keep shared governance language in their contract is understandable, particularly given the selection process for PSU’s Board of Trustees. A number of top administrators presumably in support of the administration’s position at the bargaining table were intimately involved in choosing the nominees. Thus, it is not surprising that King and other faculty are concerned about the policies that the board might put in place. And while the now-confirmed nominees include individuals known for their philanthropy and community engagement, nearly every single one has ties to the business world. Three of the Board of Trustees nominees sit on the board of the PSU Foundation, a nonprofit fundraising arm of the university that seeks to increase PSU’s endowment by cultivating relationships with private sector donors.

After repeated requests, Chris Broderick of University Communications finally provided the names of the individuals who made up the “Executive Committee” that assisted the president’s office in identifying Board of Trustees nominees. The list reads like a chart of all the university’s top-earning administrators: the president’s Chief of Staff Lois Davis,

“Three of the Board of Trustees nominees sit on the board of the PSU Foundation, a nonprofit fundraising arm of the university that seeks to increase PSU’s endowment by cultivating relationships with private sector donors.”

Provost Sona Andrews, Chief Diversity Officer Jilma Meneses, General Counsel David Reese, Vice President for Research and Strategic Partnerships Jonathan Fink, VP for Finance and Administration Monica Rimal, and VP for Advancement Francoise Aylmer (who will soon become head of the PSU Foundation upon the completion of its merger with the office of University Advancement). Governor Kitzhaber also had the chance to suggest nominees, but it appears that most of the trustees came off the list compiled by the president’s office. When asked about the criteria for selecting this small group of individuals who would wield such an important role in the academic lives of 50,000 students, Broderick’s responses were initially brief. “What the people nominated for the board have in common is a shared interest in PSU and its urban mission,” Broderick wrote in an email. “Some of them have existing connections to the university; all of them have some knowledge about the university. There are people in education, business, philanthropy, nonprofits, alumni, etc… in fact, it’s a more diverse group than the boards of UO and OSU.”

The board certainly is a diverse group in terms of cultural backgrounds, but not as diverse when it comes to experience in the public sector. This is King’s first and foremost concern about the board.

“The composition of the board is disturbing,” says King. “[It includes] relatively few people who are based in the public sector, understand and value the public sector, and understand what it is like to experience the kinds of cuts that we [are] undergoing. With faculty, students and staff proportionally represented much less than on the OUS board, we are concerned that the board will not sufficiently understand the conditions students are facing on campus; that they will be
pretty disconnected and making decisions in a vacuum.”

When asked directly if business connections or clout in the legislature had anything to do with trustee selection criteria, Broderick finally elaborated on the definition of what it means to be “interested in PSU’s urban mission.” According to the administration, this includes “providing access for students of all backgrounds, finding new ways to support the university given declining state revenues, and building more partnerships across the region.”

Diane Saunders, OUS director of communications, was more candid, making it clear that financial hardship and the need to increase the university’s sources of revenue was the primary motivating factor behind the implementation of the board system.

“This restructuring is a response. We needed to change the model because the current one is not working. We don’t feel that we can just wait around.”

Saunders refers to the drastic decline in state funding that has hit universities hard over the past three decades; she recounts the familiar story of Oregon’s university funding role-reversal whereby the state and the students switched places as the primary financial resource of the university.

“The state used to pay more than 75 percent of what it costs to educate a student; now it is the student who pays. This year $755 million was divided among the campuses. If you look back to 1999-2001, the budget was almost exactly the same as what we get today, but now we have 54,400 more students.”

“When boards like this are chosen, you are trying to find people who are wired into a network that has resources that can help the university,” says Saunders. “The key to survival is going to be a very, very diverse mix of revenue coming into campus. If you can partner with the private sector to improve programs and bring in revenue, and then they are waiting there to hire your graduates, then that is an ideal world.”

Saunders continues, “I think that the business community understands their role to play in terms of helping the community be successful. They are there to provide advice and council, to help us look at the bigger picture.”

In contrast to the administration’s selection process, students and faculty were able to recommend their respective choices for their board members. Following an interview process, ASPSU recommended student Pamela Campos-Palma for the student position. The faculty member nominated for the board, Maude Hines, was selected through a collaborative process involving both the PSU-AAUP and the Faculty Senate.

According to King, the Executive Council of the PSU-AAUP was responsible for identifying potential candidates. They passed a shortlist of willing individuals to the Faculty Senate, who undertook their own evaluative process. The Faculty Senate and the PSU-AAUP agreed on a mutual ranking of the candidates who were then communicated to President Wiewel and Governor Kitzhaber via letter.

In August, Governor Kitzhaber officially announced the trustee appointments selected by the PSU executive committee and himself, and gave his stamp of approval. On November 21, the Oregon Legislature confirmed the thirteen nominees. A full list of the PSU Board of Trustees can be found at www.pdx.edu/board/meet-the-psu-board-of-trustees.

In early December, the board convened for its first meeting, getting to know each other over the duration of a two-day orientation program. Since that time the board has met once a month. Three separate committees within the board—the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, the Executive and Audit Committee, and the Finance and Administration Committee—now hold separate meetings in addition to meeting regularly with the full board.

• • •

Transitioning governance from elected officials to civilian boards is a trend that extends beyond the university. Next month, Portlanders will vote on the proposed “Portland Public Water District,” a measure that would replace the current head of the Water Bureau with a board of trustees (see article page 12). While Water District trustees will be elected, the model has drawn criticism and questions similar to those hovering around PSU’s new Board of Trustees. In each case people are voicing their concern that those who end up on the board will disproportionately represent private sector interests.

In a country where the revolving door between public and private sector is always turning, it must be admitted that the private sector has many different manifestations. But the question remains, will private sector interests coincide with the principles our school and city are known for?

“The PSU Foundation directly states in its mission that it aims to fundraise privately in order to compensate for declining state funds. If the same individuals who sit on the Foundation board are also on PSU’s Board of Trustees, what does that mean for academic priorities?”

This month, PSU was one of just 22 schools nationwide to make the Princeton Review’s “Green Honor Roll.” A host of high-ranking graduate programs in the School of the Environment, the School of Urban Studies and Planning, and other departments pride themselves on engaged scholarship for sustainable solutions. Portland as a city has likewise committed itself to sustainability, and has attracted organizations that do the same; EcoTrust, an environmental advocacy group based in Portland’s Pearl District, is becoming known nationwide for encouraging sustainable industry through its green investment package Portfolio 21.
Considering PSU and Portland’s commitment to sustainability, a few of the names on the trustee roster seem ominous. The corporate affiliations of Peter Stott in particular grossly contradict PSU’s commitment to green development and sustainability. Stott sits on the board of Omega Morgan, a company that has recently come under scrutiny for providing a supporting role in the controversial Alberta tar sands oil extraction: indigenous communities along the route of Omega-Morgan’s equipment transports have repeatedly denied the company permission to cross their land and accuse the company of violating permit restrictions.

“In its December orientation meeting, the trustees elected former PSU Foundation Board of Directors chair Pete Nickerson as the interim chair, and Thomas Imeson—another PSU Foundation board member—as interim vice-chair. They will serve until July, at which point the board will officially assume power and will elect a chair and vice chair to serve up to two-year terms. The Board of Trustees may be “diverse” in some ways, but in alarming consistency with the status quo we are seeing many leadership positions filled by wealthy white males.”

Clearly, following the money does not always produce decisions that reflect PSU’s priorities in research and learning. The most disturbing possibility is that the influence of private sector leadership will actually alter what we are studying in the classroom. The PSU Foundation directly states in its mission that it aims to fundraise privately in order to compensate for declining state funds. If the same individuals who sit on the Foundation board are also on PSU’s Board of Trustees, what does that mean for academic priorities? With or without an institutional board, we are already seeing a nationwide trend whereby departments and faculty that are able to fundraise externally are receiving priority. Established and highly regarded academic professionals have even been terminated for not bringing in enough cash—Columbia University’s recent firing of two public health academics, a move allegedly spurred by funding issues, for instance. Students and community members may wish to consider at what point—or in what numbers—trustees with private sector affiliations might bring a conflict of interest to the board.

In the case of Stott, the conflict of interest between industry involvement and PSU’s commitment to sustainability is crystal clear.

King points out that corporate interest in fundraising for the university is ironic, considering that the private sector has been campaigning for years to reduce their tax burden. Low corporate taxes, combined with the state’s increased expenditures on incarceration following the passage of mandatory sentencing laws in the early ’90s, has rendered Oregon the fourth-lowest state when it comes to spending per student.

“Corporations are doing ‘charity’ to support public higher education when in fact it is their duty,” says King. “The percentage of taxes paid by corporations in the state has fallen dramatically. They are not Shouldering their share of the burden, and yet they still want to have a say?”

Fullmer says that it is precisely for all these reasons that the future character of the board’s decisions hangs in the air. He sees the situation as a balance of power in which student and faculty board members need to make their voices heard. “The question is whether or not this [private sector sway] is going to overpower the other voices on the board, and that’s where student, staff, and faculty advocacy is so important.”

But if the Board’s proceedings up to this point are any indication, students need to work harder: in its December orientation meeting, the trustees elected former PSU Foundation Board of Directors chair Pete Nickerson as the interim chair, and Thomas Imeson—another PSU Foundation board member—as interim vice-chair. They will serve until July, at which point the board will officially assume power and will elect a chair and vice chair to serve up to two-year terms. The Board of Trustees may be “diverse” in some ways, but in alarming consistency with the status quo we are seeing many leadership positions filled by wealthy white males.

Check out our June issue for part two—a focus on student involvement and voices, and a deeper analysis of how ASPSU, StAC, PSUSU, and students in general factor into this equation.
Portland often finds itself at the top of Cleanest U.S. Cities lists. We’ve got the air, the water, and the sustainability. But there’s another factor at play in our city’s cleanliness, and it dates back long before eco-friendliness became fashionable.

The Oregon Bottle Bill was signed into law in 1971, making Oregon the first U.S. state to legislate a container redemption service. “Litter reduction was the primary goal of the bottle bill,” acknowledges the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

That’s right: besides earning a small amount of cash, the folks pushing carts full of bottles up your street also play a key role in keeping the city presentable.

“Instead of ending up in the landfill, it all gets recycled,” says Barry Lee, owner of the Clinton Street Market in southeast Portland. Stores like Lee’s have been required to accept empty bottles and cans in exchange for nickels for over 40 years. Lee believes bottle returns help keep the streets clean, and also help the homeless make a bit of money. “I make it easy for them to return, so they can go out and collect some more.”

Several modifications—the 2009 addition of plastic water bottles, for instance—indicate efforts to increase the practice of returning bottles, in turn increasing the city’s clean streets. Some amendments to the bill, however, have the potential to turn would-be recyclers away from the idea.

In 1993, a change in the law allowed stores to limit the number of bottles and cans they would accept from a single person to 144 per day. While it’s an understandable change (nobody wants to wait in line behind the guy returning cans by the truckload), it provides little incentive for newcomers to start redeeming cans.

The prospect of a maximum $7.20 a day just doesn’t sound as enticing as what could be made off a truckload, does it?

In addition to this limit, there is an overhaul of the bottle return system in process. The Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative first approved BottleDrop redemption centers in 2010. These centers are dedicated container-return facilities, billing themselves as “fast, clean and convenient.” While it’s not explicitly stated, the idea seems to be a step toward ending the requirement for grocery stores to redeem containers. The centers hope to “reduce burdens on retailers to accept empty containers,” says the DEQ.

So where can you find your friendly neighborhood Portland BottleDrop? Grab your shopping cart and take a stroll out to 124th and Glisan.

“The reason you would use this kind of store is that they’re everywhere,” says Lee of his market. “Do you expect the homeless people to walk all the way out to the redemption centers? Would you walk out there for five dollars?”

Indeed, a trek up to 124th and Glisan presents more than a slight inconvenience for many of Portland’s homeless. And even with the increased per-day limit at BottleDrop centers—they will accept 300 containers per person per day—previous non-canners are unlikely to start roaming the streets for empty bottles.

“A lot of people take the time to put bottles on the street for the homeless,” says Lee. “But they probably won’t take them back to the stores themselves. It’s just not enough money.”

Stores in Lee’s area are still required to accept containers, but those within a mile and a half of the redemption center can choose to opt out. Those within a three-mile radius only have to accept 24 containers per day.

As bottle return settles into fewer, more localized facilities, you might want to get used to those Steel Reserve cans in your front yard. They could be there awhile.
**A Word With Mr. President**

On May 2, President Wim Wiewel sat down with *The Portland Spectrum*, *The Vanguard*, PSU.tv and KSPU for an informal press conference. This transcript has been edited down for conciseness.

*Transcript by Spectrum Staff*

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*Colin Staub, Portland Spectrum Executive Editor:* There was a bill this year, House Bill 4102, that passed the house but did not pass the senate. It was going to regulate Higher One, and remove some of the more extreme fees charged to student accounts. It’s now stuck in committee. Since the legislative route is not working, will there be any work done in house at PSU to renegotiate the contract with less extreme fees for students?

*Wim Wiewel, President of PSU:* As I understand it, our contract with Higher One is very different than what they have with most institutions. Our contract was, in fact, held up as a model of a good contract. Harris Foster made that point as well. At many other universities they are stuck with high fees, but that’s not the case at Portland State. So there is really, from everything I know, no need for us to renegotiate the contract with Higher One.

*Whitney Beyer, The Vanguard Editor-in-Chief:* I had a question about how often you engage with student media, what you think about the materials we’re putting out, and how you would respond to some of the criticisms of administration within our publications.

*Wim:* That’s a pretty broad question. I engage with student media almost every time I get asked. I am generally totally available to meet with student media about whatever the issues may be. The only exception to that was when we were in the final throes of negotiation with the faculty union, and I felt that the timeline of the publication was such that the article wouldn’t appear for a while, and things were changing day-to-day with our negotiations. I didn’t feel it was going to be productive to talk about something that might come out two or three weeks later, when the world would be very different than it was the day we were discussing it. In general, when we’re in the midst of negotiations, we have been fairly deliberate and conscious about trying to de-escalate conflict, to not respond tit-for-tat to every charge that might be made. So at times that may have meant our statements seemed a little bland in comparison to the statements that were made by wothers.

As a result of that, I felt that too often some of the student media were too one-sided in their coverage. It’d be interesting to go back and see how much of that was because we were succinct in our answers, rather than being elaborate, or to what extent was that a matter on the reporters’ side, of not trying to dig deep enough to find out what the fuller story might be.

*Jake Stein, Portland Spectrum Editor-In-Chief:* I’m interested in how you think the board of trustees will affect the future of tuition costs. So next year’s frozen, but OSA recognizes this as a “band-aid” fix. The board of trustees retains the power to raise tuition 5 percent each year, so what will you do to make sure this 5 percent increase does not occur every year?

*Wim:* Right now, the board of higher education has always had the right to increase tuition as much as they want, so this 5 percent cap is actually a new development that puts a greater restraint on the board of trustees than there ever was on the state board of higher education. So in that sense already there are greater protections in place than there were before. I have no reason to think the board of trustees is going to approach this question any differently than the state board did. What that will mean for future tuition increases I couldn’t possibly predict. It has to do with what happens with general inflation, what happens with salary cost, the mix of in-state and out-of-state students (because that shapes our revenue). Those factors will all go into what ultimately will be necessary on the tuition side, and very much how successful we are in getting state assistance. If the state increased its contributions even just back to where it was in 2007 or 2008, we’d be in a heck of a lot better shape.
**Keegan Meyer, KPSU Station Manager:** How involved have you been in the ELSA policies through the student fee committee, and what are your plans or intentions with the incremental decreases with majority of student media’s compensation per the ELSA awards?

**Wim:** I have not been involved with that, that’s a question that should probably be addressed to someone in student affairs.

**Keegan:** You do oversee the SFC proposed budget, correct?

**Wim:** Yeah, what happens in the end is that I can approve or veto it. If there are things I really, really disagree with, I send it back and they modify it. I think I could theoretically replace it with something I want and they could appeal that. That has never happened while I have been the president. This year, I did not send it back for anything. I had asked them at the beginning of the year to work with the presumption that there should be no increase in the student fee. As you know, in the end there is an increase. I felt they made a convincing enough case to do the things that students wanted and needed, that there should be one. I will continue to be extremely tough on any future increases, just like the concerns about tuition. It doesn’t make sense to be that tough on tuition and then raise other fees. I’m going to be very cautious and conservative on that.

**Keegan:** In general, do you have any plans, with the proposed student fee budgets, are you hoping to increase areas, or are you more just approving denying whatever the SFC decides?

**Wim:** These are funds to be allocated by the student fee community. My main concerns are for levels of continuity and predictability, so you don’t get swings. You can’t run an institution that way.

**Jake:** What’s your background in sustainability, specifically environmental sustainability?

**Wim:** My own personal background? I really came into this primarily looking at suburban growth. I’ve done a lot of research and written a book on the cost of suburban job sprawl—what does it cost people when jobs move from the central city to the suburb? It’s really been about the transformation of large agricultural land to urbanized areas, while at the same time then getting a hollowing out of city neighborhoods. That’s been my main focus.

**Whitney:** When the discussion starts in the fall [regarding suggested alternatives of having a sworn police force, and having a larger campus discussion on the subject] what do you foresee as a timeline?

**Wim:** I don’t know, I’m in no particular hurry with this issue. By the time we actually get to it in the fall we may have a suggested timeline for it, but we don’t have a timeline for a decision at present.

**Colin:** After the bargaining process was over, you wrote an email saying you’ve been a little taken by surprise at the amount of unrest on campus, and that you were going to work to be more involved with issues students are facing. Since then, you’ve been to an ASPSU senate meeting, and of course this meeting is great. Are you going to continue engaging with students on a regular basis?

**Wim:** Yeah, and I want to point out that I had asked to be invited to the senate all year long. I asked for that at the very first meeting I had with Harris after he was elected. I want to make it very clear that it was not through lack of interest. I felt that discussion was useful, and I felt more discussions would be more useful.

**Jake:** So what is the best email to reach you at?

**Wim:** President@pdx.edu

**Jake:** And you’d say that is the best way for a student to contact you.

**Wim:** Yeah. Because then, you know, if I’m not there, my assistants check that and know what’s happening.

**Jake:** Better than showing up with twenty students with signs?

**Wim:** It’s always lively and interesting, of course, but probably not the best mood to generate a productive discussion. Makes for better pictures, I’ll give you that.

**Colin:** Any comment on the closure of Food For Thought?

**Wim:** Now I haven’t gone so much. When I was in Cramer I was a frequent customer of Food For Thought, I loved their oatmeal, so I was very sorry to see that close. It’s just always a shame when any kind of student effort collapses, whatever it is. But yeah, I thought it was a great concept, a great resource. I don’t know the details about what went wrong, or whether and how it can be salvaged. I certainly hope it can

**Keegan:** In general, do you have any advice for student media publications? Any general thoughts?

**Wim:** I won’t call it advice, I’ll just call it comments. I always wonder whether all the articles that have nothing to do with the university, about the Blazers or whatever, how relevant those are. The unique niche to me of the student media is the tie to Portland State, Portland, whatever, there are a lot of other sources for info about general cultural stuff. Maybe that’s not true, maybe, you know, since nobody reads the paper anymore or whatever, this is a source that students rely on for that. That’s a judgement call about what your audience wants. Me, the only articles I read are the ones related to PSU. But you know, I’m not your typical audience either. But that’s what I look for. I think there have been many interesting good articles. I’m not crazy about these sort of lifestyle opinion pieces, where people get to go off on their own particular beef about the world.

**Jake:** You and us both. But it’s better to get students writing about something rather nothing, right? To get that skillset, that experience?

**Wim:** I would strive for a higher goal, let me put it that way. Yeah, I don’t think just filling paper with ink is necessarily the goal. If you’re going to spout off, you at least have to consider the alternative point of view, even if you wind up dismissing it. At least give the counter-argument.

**Keegan:** Any advice for the non-print publications? KPSU and PSUtv?

**Wim:** I don’t see and hear those as much, I have to say. It’s hard for me to make a comment about that. I think it’s great you guys are doing it. That’s just not what I tune into.
Awkward or Not, Canvassers Drive Donations

They’re everywhere, they’re commission-based, and they work.

We’re not the ones who let the children starve in faraway lands
We’re not the ones who made the streets unsafe to walk at night
And even if we try and not become so overwhelmed
And if we make some contribution to the plight we see
Still our descendants will inherit our mistakes of today
They’ll suffer just the same as we and never wonder why

-The Offspring, Not the One

Canvassing is that teeth grindingly obnoxious human-to-human contact that we must suffer every time we cross campus or step outside the gym. Idealistic young people speaking to the hoi polloi in the hopes of spreading support for a cause or campaign. Politicians canvassing regular joe shmoes to win over their vote. People canvassing door-to-door for voter registration and ballot signatures. But at the end of the day, no matter the form of canvassing or the location, most folks equate it with being hassled for money.

Canvassing has become a staple experience of urban living. Where there are crowds and foot traffic, canvassers flock. On Hawthorne, NW 23rd, outside of grocery stores and most definitely on campus, you’ll be asked to help with any number of social and environmental problems. The pedestrian reactions are varied and predictable: talking on the phone, headphones in, eyes straight ahead. The passively dismissive smile and a “no thank you.” Or perhaps, the extremely rare stop and chat.

It’s a numbers game. It’s mostly inescapable and unsatisfying, maybe even for both parties. But the more people you wave a clipboard in front of, the more likely it is one of those people will feel strongly enough (whether that feeling is guilt or passion) to stop and shell out money for a cause.

Save the Children is a prominent organization and one found easily here at PSU. Although there have been several strange happenings in their past (including allegedly inflating the amount of money going to the children as well as continuing to accept donations for children who have died) they’ve since cleaned up their act, after the Chicago Tribune exposed some of the “inadequacies.”

Speaking of inadequacies, you might think canvassers are wasting their time promoting their organization against foot traffic. On the contrary, Save the Children notes on their website that almost 70 percent of their donations are coming from people who’ve been stopped on the streets. Thus the bulk of donations is thanks primarily to the hard work of canvassers and the generosity of random citizens.

How do they do it?

A lot of the employees of canvassing organizations are paid on a commission basis. They receive a percentage of the money that you give them depending on the type of donation. According to the Riverfront Times of St. Louis, Save the Children canvassers earn a bonus of 15 percent for every “one-off” donation, and 20 percent for “lifeline sponsors.” That 20 percent cut for the canvasser expires after 10 months. The hours are long. People can be rude. Most folks roped into these jobs are college students or recent college grads strapped for cash and willing to do anything.

Enter the Fund For Public Interest Research (FFPIR). They operate primarily as a for-hire company training canvassers to work for a variety of charity organizations like Greenpeace, Save the Children, Sierra Club and the Human Rights Campaign.
But all is not as it seems. A website created by former FFPIR Citizen Outreach Director John Castiglione offers a scathing insight into the world of mega-charities. He stresses that the FFPIR deceived him in the job description and eventually fired him for not reaching a financial quota, and the same happens to a lot of college kids who get canvassing jobs and can’t quite keep up.

**Few of us can fathom…**

A lot of the humanitarian and environmental issues that we hear about stretch far beyond our ability to understand and empathize from the protected bubbles of our first-world existence. Most of us have never gone hungry for any more than a few hours, let alone been left malnourished for our entire childhood. Few among us can fathom the amount of biodiversity lost when a rainforest is destroyed for monocropping. And as long as we’re disconnected from that pain, we will fail to understand how complicated the issues truly are. But as soon as we attempt to immerse ourselves in that knowledge we know that money doesn’t mean shit.

Will 28 dollars a month really affect anyone at PSU’s lifestyle? Doubtful. And as Children International likes to remind us: a child could potentially see a doctor for the first time with that small donation. But if I give money for every group and individual that asked I’d be begging myself pretty quickly. I never decided to be born in the United States. I didn’t choose to be born into the middle class and if I carry guilt around for cosmic happenstance then I’ll be consciously paralyzed for the rest of my life. The charities acknowledge that their work can only do so much. They can only affect change in a single individual’s circumstances at a time. No flood of money from the first world will solve the rest of the world’s issues. Donations are only one way to affect change. There are people starving here in Oregon and there are food banks to volunteer at. There is a massive population of destitute people living under the bridges and in the streets here in Portland that need donated basic necessities to survive winter. There are devastated ecological areas in the Willamette valley that require volunteers to replant. Just because I’m not giving 28 dollars a month doesn’t mean I don’t care—it just may not be the way I choose to express my sympathy.
PTSD And Tunnel Vision: The Veterans Resource Center Is Here To Help

A striking young man greets me from behind the desk, sporting dark hair, glasses and a chiseled goatee. He appears poised and refined, just like one would expect from a former soldier. He could easily pass for a twenty-something-year-old college student with his fresh and tanned looking face. “The army keeps you young,” he tells me. “There’s a lot of physical activity going on.”

Raymond Facundo is the coordinator for the Veteran Resource Center (VRC) at PSU. Having served in active duty for six years, he knows first-hand how to provide for veterans who seek assistance. “The biggest challenge for army vets is coming right out of the military and transitioning into civilian life,” Facundo explains. “You’re basically thrown into a reverse boot camp, and many of them are underprepared. There’s this idea of the American dream: being independent and on your own.”

I suppose that feeling of under preparation leads former soldiers to seek out assistance at the VRC, where Facundo has been working as coordinator for just under one year.

Hard Transitions
Facundo graduated high school in New Jersey in 1998, but, as he didn’t necessarily feel passionate about pursuing a college education at the time, he opted for a more nontraditional career path. He took a number of side jobs to pay the bills, and even tried his hand at culinary school for a bit, but it didn’t pan out like he’d hoped. He grew tired of being in the kitchen, contemplating his future. He knew that someday he’d want to attend college, but didn’t feel ready just yet, saying that he didn’t want to graduate with a “useless English degree like so many 22-year-olds do.”

Facundo’s brother joined the army in 2000 and, after some careful consideration, Facundo followed in his brother’s footsteps. He grew up in a middle-class family in Vermont, and felt lost about his next steps in life. In my meeting with him, I was taken aback by his great sense of responsibility in which he held over his own life at the time, and his girlfriend. Each step was meticulously thought out like a map. Perhaps he felt he that he was in need of some sort of discipline, as he describes the army as a place that teaches and instills the importance of life skills, hard work, and ongoing training like no other.

I can only imagine living in this sort of environment day for several years would teach you to live like a soldier—for the rest of your life. “There are so many rules an individual goes through while in the army,” explains Facundo, “that making that transition can feel like you have tunnel vision.”

For the first two years of his military career, he underwent specialized training to become a “Field Artillery Surveyor”—a position which essentially ensures all weapons are properly armed and loaded. But Facundo explains that certain jobs within the army can be sort of ambiguous, and you never know what you could end up doing. On his deployment to Iraq, he switched jobs, becoming a transportation specialist.

Resources for veterans at PSU
The Veteran Resource Center was initially advocated for by the Viking Vets, a PSU student organization who felt there was some bigger piece missing from the student life. Despite being one of the whitest cities in America, according to an article published in Oregon Live, PSU takes pride in its diverse assortment of cultural resource centers, including the
Queer Resource Center, Women’s Resource Center, and the Multicultural Center. But even with all these resource centers, in terms of assisting veterans, there was for too long only the Veteran Certification Office, which helped with receiving payments and benefits, rather than providing social and emotional support.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is all too familiar for army vets and, sadly, you may not be able to think of one without the other. Facundo explained that during his time in the military, nearly everyone from his team suffered from PTSD. “We were a little bit more fortunate in that we acted… like convoy security,” he explains. “We drove trucks around the Baghdad area. It was [still] pretty scary stuff. We dealt with lots of indirect fire, and we often found ourselves dodging improvised explosive devices and roadside bombs.”

There are about 800 veteran students enrolled at PSU each academic term, many of whom have recently left the army. 1,400 veterans were registered last year. The VRC sees on average 40-50 students per week, and assists many more via telephone and email. “Out of that number, we see a lot of vets who have suffered, or are suffering from some kind of PTSD,” says Facundo.

The VRC does not provide counseling, but often sends students to Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), located near the campus McDonald’s off 6th Ave. There are other alternatives and organizations that serve veterans in need, like the Transitions Assistant Program (TAP) that focuses on leadership skills, timeliness, and efficiency. TAP also helps vets build resumes and reenter into the job market. “While you’re in the army,” says Facundo, “you’re taught such a specific skill set that it can cause a hindrance for finding work because you’re so specially trained in one area. This is a program that teaches you how to build valuable skills, which is a good thing, especially in such a poor economy.”

When Facundo left the army, things didn’t go smoothly for him. His bad luck in finding work in a crummy economy landed him a job as a bank teller, which, while it may seem great to some, for Facundo it felt like he was undermined compared to the work he could be doing.

Education benefits
The GI Bill is awarded to many army vets, and offers great benefits. It can be broken down into percentages. If a soldier serves at least one year in active duty service, the soldier receives 60 percent of the GI Bill benefit; those serving two years receive 80 percent, and those who serve three or more years get the full GI benefits, which includes full tuition at an in-state school and a stipend based on the zip code of the school. “In Oregon, a veteran who is eligible for 100 percent of the GI Bill receives $1,415 a month for rent and an extra $1,000 per year on books alone,” says Facundo. And this is the post-September 11 bill, which is an improvement to the previous bill.

There are multiple reasons why one might wish to join the army, but gaining a solid education seems to be top of the list for most.
Opinion  
by Eugene Messer

A Point of View...

Eugene Messer is a longtime Vancouver resident who has been writing for over 40 years. He was a campaign manager/speech writer for Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey and George McGovern, among others.

In Protest!

“On the bus the wheels go round and round”—and throw water onto the sidewalk, splashing us. The yellow buses disappear into the gray falling rain, and my compatriots and I trudge on. A ruling had been enforced and we were compelled to walk, instead of riding the bus. The ruling stated that if we lived within one and a half miles of McLoughlin Junior high, we had to walk to school—even as the buses went right past us as we walked.

As an eighth-grader at the time, I was incensed and decided it was time to protest—my first demonstration. We went to the art department, freed some poster board, painted our protest across it, and walked the halls with a petition to sign. Of course, those who were at the mercy of the rule signed at once and, of course, our friends signed. Then, at a designated hour, we marched on the principal’s office. I had personally complained the loudest, never liking walks in the rain, and thus I was selected by the group as spokesperson. I stressed my points and issues with vigor—my argument must have been convincing, because later that day the voice of the principal came over the loudspeakers, informing those students who lived on the bus routes that they could once again ride the bus from designated stops, no matter what the distance.

A cheer went up from all of us.

My first academic protest ending in success. Protest and Demonstration had begun to enter my life and my blood.

In the last issue of The Spectator, abundant articles and art covered protests and demonstrations, united by the theme: “Radicalism: Then and Now.” So I began to look back to the activism I’ve encountered, beginning with that youthful bus issue. And so, I decided in this column to run a brief review of those free speech issues I’ve been a part of.
A Note On France

Being born on May first, May Day, I was born with the heritage of turning things upside down. The original celebration of May Day was a time when the servants became the masters and the masters became servants; a time when everyone, as it was said, “could go blissfully astray.” Then it became the official “Celebration of Workers” day, especially in the Soviet Union. To counterbalance that, President Eisenhower redubbed it “Law Day”—the actual antitheses of the ancient meaning.

After the bus incident, my next encounter with protests came when I was attending the Universite d’Montpellier in France, and every now and again marches and demonstrations would occur regarding the French war in Algeria. General DeGaul, while campaigning for presidency, swore he would solve the long struggle. Surprisingly enough, considering politicians, when eventually elected DeGaul actually did just that. He solved the long struggle by, well, giving up Algeria—a place the French had held since before there was a United States of America. More demonstrations would ensue, with the French generals in Algeria threatening to invade Paris and bring their protest to France. Tanks rolled and soldiers marched through Paris streets, but it amounted to nothing, and generations of Algerian-born French returned to Paris, or figured out a way to remain under different leadership in Algeria.

Enough About France

When I was the proprietor of several businesses in Los Angeles in the 1960s, one day one of the shops needed some signage, and I said, well, I’ll just drive down to the printer and get it. I drove my car calmly into the middle of the Watts riots.

As I pulled up to a stop light, several rioters yanked my unlocked car doors open and began beating me.

I held to the steering wheel for dear life, with one rioter biting my hand to get it free. At the last moment, when I was dragged halfway out the door and about to lose my grip, a police car arrived on the street and threw his siren on. The perpetrators ran.

I drove back to the businesses, closed them, and headed out to my home in Malibu. All night, sirens sounded and wild reports of an attack coming to Malibu filled the radio. It didn’t happen. The next day I felt terrible; I went to my doctor and he commented, sarcastically, “Why didn’t you just wait a little longer—you wouldn’t have had to come in! You have blood poisoning from the bite and you could have died.”

Three days later, my art gallery was featuring the first black artist ever to show artwork on LaCienega Blvd. Gallery Row. Yvonne Cole Meo was a beautiful and talented person. She called me up and asked if I was going to cancel her opening, and I replied, “Of course not!”

The thugs who attacked me had nothing to do with her group. When the police called and wanted to have armed policemen there, I said, “Absolutely not,” so they sent men in plainclothes (as if you couldn’t tell who they were, with those suits, ties, and no alcohol!) and the riots ended. Violent demonstration does not settle well when you are burning down your own neighborhood.

Yet Another Note of Protest…

Two Lewis and Clark College protests remain vivid in my memory: the building of the chapel, and the Vietnam War. The chapel was highly protested for its cost, coming at a time when a new science building and more classrooms were needed. Students hauled out the poster board, made signs, and marched against the extravagance. Lewis and Clark was originally a Presbyterian school, but by this time the connection between the church and the school was growing thin, and within a few years it was dissolved altogether. In fact, people are surprised to hear that when I first attended Lewis and Clark, we had compulsory religious classes and Chapel! The students rallied daily, and the chapel still got built.

As the Vietnam War arrived, so did the shooting and killing of students, and Kent State and marches and demonstrations on campuses across America. Every day at noon, students gathered with signs and banners—rain or shine—and protested the deaths in Vietnam.

“So, hey, LBJ, how many boys did you kill today?!”

I must say that I was one of those protestors supporting an anti-war candidate in Senator Robert Kennedy, and when walking down the street in front of Pioneer Courthouse and seeing the colorfully dressed protesters sitting in the street, in my suit and tie and carrying my briefcase (my May Day protest hormones kicked into overdrive), I sat down in the street with them. When I was later at the Democratic Convention that summer in Chicago, as Mayor Daly’s thugs were clubbing student protesters, I marched among a delegation of Democrats in support of the protestors.

And now, returning to academia at Portland State University, I run smack into more activism—loudspeakers blasting, live speakers, fliers proliferating, student and faculty protest in the air. I joined in, put the red ribbon of the PSU-AAUP around my neck, and marched—or rather, walked—with the best of them to the administration building, and protested loudly. We protested against the lack of a fair contract for the faculty that has the job of sending our youth into the world prepared and ready. We protested against the size of classes or the funds overspent on nonacademic expenses. We protested for free education for all students.

As long as students protest, as long as people declare their beliefs one way or another in nonviolent voice and song, we are a nation to bear strength in the inheritance of our forefathers, in seeing to it that, “Though I may not agree with what you say, I will defend with my life your right to say it!”

Protest! Demonstrate! March on!

Rack up ‘em protests!
WE’RE WAITING.

SUBMIT
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