

Students for change

Four Oregon college students back the University of Oregon's restructuring plan: "We want our elected officials to understand that changes are needed now to make Oregon college education more affordable and more accessible to every student. Each election, we hear politicians talk about Oregon's potential, hearing words like 'hope' and 'opportunity' and 'future.' **Oregon's future is now.** We're it. If Oregon wants to keep its best and brightest students from leaving and attending colleges out of state, the state needs first to get its act together with its own universities." Read and comment at The Stump.

Striking out on Measure 11

Salem attorney Kevin Mannix responds to news about Measure 11 convictions: "We ought to be celebrating our success in public safety in this state. Since Measure 11 went into effect, we have moved from being among the worst 10 states in terms of violent crime rate to being among the 10 best states. This is remarkable. I imagine if our high school graduation rates had seen such a turnaround, political leaders would be **dancing in the streets.** Perhaps the political elites are not leading a celebration because most of them opposed Measure 11 in the first place." Read and comment at The Stump.



Saving Big Bird

Columnist Kevin Hassett has an idea for saving funding for public broadcasting: "A famous 1973 cover of National Lampoon showed a dog with a revolver held to its head, with the caption, 'If you don't buy this magazine, we'll kill this dog.' To hear defenders of publicly subsidized media, Republican efforts to cut funding to National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System **puts a gun to the head of Big Bird.** That doesn't have to be the case." Read and comment at The Stump.



Mental health crisis

...has been indicted on 21 counts



A message from Oregon college students: Don't wait to adopt UO's plan

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 **By Guest Columnist**

By Maxwell Boomer, Stella O'Connor, Peter Stice and Mike Turnell

As students enrolled in Oregon universities, we want our voices to be heard as the Oregon Legislature debates changes in higher education. Too often, the voices of everyday students -- not those involved in campus politics or employed with student lobbying groups -- are drowned out or forgotten.

We want our elected officials to understand that changes are needed now to make Oregon college education more affordable and more accessible to every student. Each election, we hear politicians talk about Oregon's potential, hearing words like "hope" and "opportunity" and "future." Oregon's future is now. We're it.

If Oregon wants to keep its best and brightest students from leaving and attending colleges out of state, the state needs first to get its act together with its own universities. Where one attends college has a lot to do with where he or she will look for a job, build a career and start a family. So better higher education will mean creating more opportunities for college grads in Oregon to build a business, teach, work for a nonprofit or, perhaps, one day, maybe even run for office.

The March 6 editorial in The Oregonian "The UO has the right idea: more private support" caught the attention of a lot of Oregonians, including many UO students. We hope the governor and elected representatives take this message to heart. We can only hope that the Legislature doesn't wait to implement these ideas. When it comes to higher education, Oregon has already been waiting long enough for big ideas and big change.

Most of the focus in Salem has centered on who is in charge of our colleges and how they are managed. But those debates only leave us wondering how these proposals will impact our education and our future? A better management structure can improve education for students. So bring the management to the people of the universities and empower the university presidents, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and students to make their schools the best it can be. If old rules need to be changed, change them. But please don't just change the players and call that improvement. Dig a little deeper.

This is where the New Partnership plan comes in. The plan -- to match public funds with private funds raised for each school -- builds on success. Not just the successes of the University of Oregon. Oregon State and Portland State have also had success in recent years raising funds from private sources. And with the larger universities

taking less and less from the total state budget, over time it will allow the smaller universities across the state more access to state funding. This public-private partnership, combined with a guaranteed tuition cap of 5 percent given on your first day of school, will give college student the ability to know what the next four years will cost. And, right now, it's the only plan that tackles the funding and affordability of a college education, making higher education more accessible in Oregon.

We think Oregon needs this ambitious thinking to improve our universities, and that our legislators are up to the challenge. We bring you a message that all college students feel: The issue is funding and affordability; the urgency is now. We know you can do it.

Maxwell Boomer of Eugene is a senior at the University of Oregon. Stella O'Connor of Portland is a junior at UO. Peter Stice of Umatilla is a sophomore at Southern Oregon University. Mike Turnell of Portland is a sophomore at UO.

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