



A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Protests
rock
Eugene

WHO CONTROLS THE UNIVERSITY?

Which Side
Are You On?



INTRODUCTION

The story of the University of Oregon told by marketing experts to prospective students and donors puts

forth a picture of an institution driven by liberal educational ideals, cutting edge research and a prestigious athletics program. Campus itself appears as a green and peaceful pocket of the Pacific Northwest. However, this story doesn't account for the people here — students, workers, faculty and the surrounding community — or our relationships with the university. It doesn't speak to our experiences, or the desires we may have for things to be different. So, who and what mediates the quality of our lives? How do larger social structures produce the places and spaces in which we exist? In other words, what ultimately determines what the "University of Oregon" is?

The answer is complex and evolving; hard to see, and yet all around us: **power**.



Students opposing the Vietnam War and ROTC occupied 13th Avenue in April 1970. SCUA

A People's Guide to the University of Oregon seeks to help us understand how power operates spatially at the UO. We define power as the ability to control the conditions of our lives, impose our will upon others and create change.¹ Everyone has some amount of power, but due to structural inequalities it is not evenly distributed. For example, President Scholz and the Board of Trustees have much more power over the university than a student, who is much more likely to be affected by administrator's decisions than to do things that affect a large number of others. This inequality leads us to believe that we can not have autonomy in the community in which we learn. We may see ourselves as customers for our education — a "product" which someone else decides — or as workers with little say in what is produced. Yet, decade after decade, people contest these visions for the university and put forth their own. Sometimes, they even come together to build power toward a new, imagined vision or to take some of the decision-making back into their own hands. They find each other, create communities and fight for control of their own lives.

And all of these things happen somewhere on the ground. In line, this guide sees the landscapes of the University of Oregon — all we see when we move across campus — as sites of power. Landscapes are produced by and for power, often as a result of or to be a conduit for money-making capacities. Landscapes that cannot be produced for profit typically are abandoned, built over or displaced; they fade out of existence. Take the leveling of the Urban Farm's "Back 40" for space to expand the Knight Campus for Advancing Scientific Impact, or the relocation of the Grove Community Garden to make way for more student dormitories (and therefore tuition dollars).

So, when we look at these landscapes, we can use our observations to understand more than what we initially see: we can use them as a way to understand the social, economic and political processes that shape them.



Striking student workers took to 13th Avenue for an 11 day strike in April 2025, liberating the space as many have done before (and will do so again). Right: Ian Mohr/Flickr



In turn, we must study these processes to understand why we see what we do. This is the exploration of the totality in which we live.²

But there is more than just the power that produces our lives — there are the struggles taken up in response. Power is always struggled for and contested, often emerging from and transforming the landscape. For example, while 13th Avenue was once a bustling, automobile-centric street — allowing for easy flow of resources like logging trucks through the heart of campus — anti-Vietnam war students of the 1970s intervened by literally blocking this flow with barricades, and closed the street to through-traffic. It remains closed today. Decades later, amidst the summer of 2020, activists took direct action to topple the racist Pioneer Statues after years of ignored calls from students to have them removed. These struggles, though against systems much broader than our campus (capital over people; white supremacy), were fundamentally spatial.

We find that our lives as students play out in condensed space and time via campus living and the few years it usually takes to obtain a degree. This often leads to dissociation, or even alienation, from our surroundings and



“The New Seal” as seen in the Nov. 12 1970 cover of *The Fighting Red Duck*.

our responsibility to them. Students often do not know what came before us, and have little interest (or say) in what will come once we are gone. But we can counter this and reassociate ourselves with our environments by reading the landscape closer. By adding some context and making clear the current conditions, this guide is a deliberate political disruption to the way our campus is seen, experienced and remembered. Our landscapes are repositories of individual and collective memory — they are sites of and for identity.² And living in a time of contested cultural

memory, we understand that our histories are in our own hands. While the ruling class and those with outsized power over our institution seek to portray it as corporate, efficient and clean, this guide reveals the ongoing contestation of the university and shows us what has *actually* happened here. Neither our institution, nor its numerous publications, speak to this side of the story or take an eye to the role of power. This guide does.

To these ends, the following pages tell of the rich histories of struggle, community, and imagination that are found in the seemingly ordinary places we experience each day at the UO. Here, people have challenged, lost and won in their battles against oppression. We honor, celebrate and grieve those who have come before us and the struggles they have endured.

Like all guides, we are aware that what we have unearthed is incomplete. Some of the places or stories that are important to you may not be covered here. There are limitless truths here, and we can’t possibly speak to all of them. For the inevitable incompleteness of our understandings: accept this guide as but one offering towards a dynamic reimagining of what UO has been and will become. We encourage you to view our work as an entrance into an ongoing conversation, one which we invite you to participate in.

Of course, history too is incomplete. The power we observe in the landscape is ongoing and in movement — and we are all a part of it. We hope that you, armed with this guide, may look at our campus’ landscape and find inspiration to think about yourself, your community and your ambitions for this place in new ways. You may reflect on the questions: what kind of university do we want to build together? Can we create an institution capable of true and total solidarity, justice and liberation? The answers lie in looking to those who have shaped UO and the lessons they have left. So flip the page, and join us in commemorating those who teach us how to redefine and respirit the relationships critical to these struggles: those with our work, our education, each other and ultimately: **our university**.

In Solidarity,

Valentine Bentz and Myna Bird // *UO People’s Guide Project*



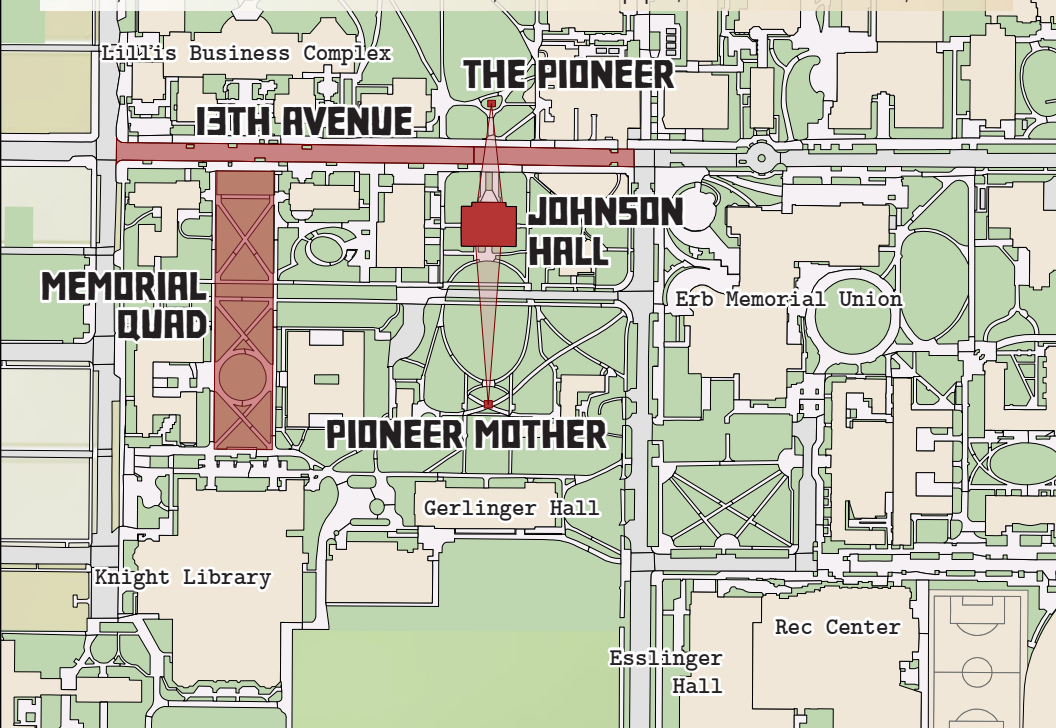
Composite of the UO Gaza Solidarity Encampment: The first morning the camp was set up April 29, 2024; it rapidly grows as students and community swarm the quad to rally and celebrate May Day. Valentine Bentz

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Guide Map.....	6
The Pioneer and Pioneer Mother	8
Johnson Hall.....	10
13th Avenue	13
Memorial Quad	16
Urban Farm	19
Yasui Hall	24
Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)	27
Lyllie Reynolds-Parker Black Cultural Center	31
Center for Advancement of Sustainable Living, Grove Community Garden.....	34
Afterword	39
Acknowledgments.....	40
References.....	41

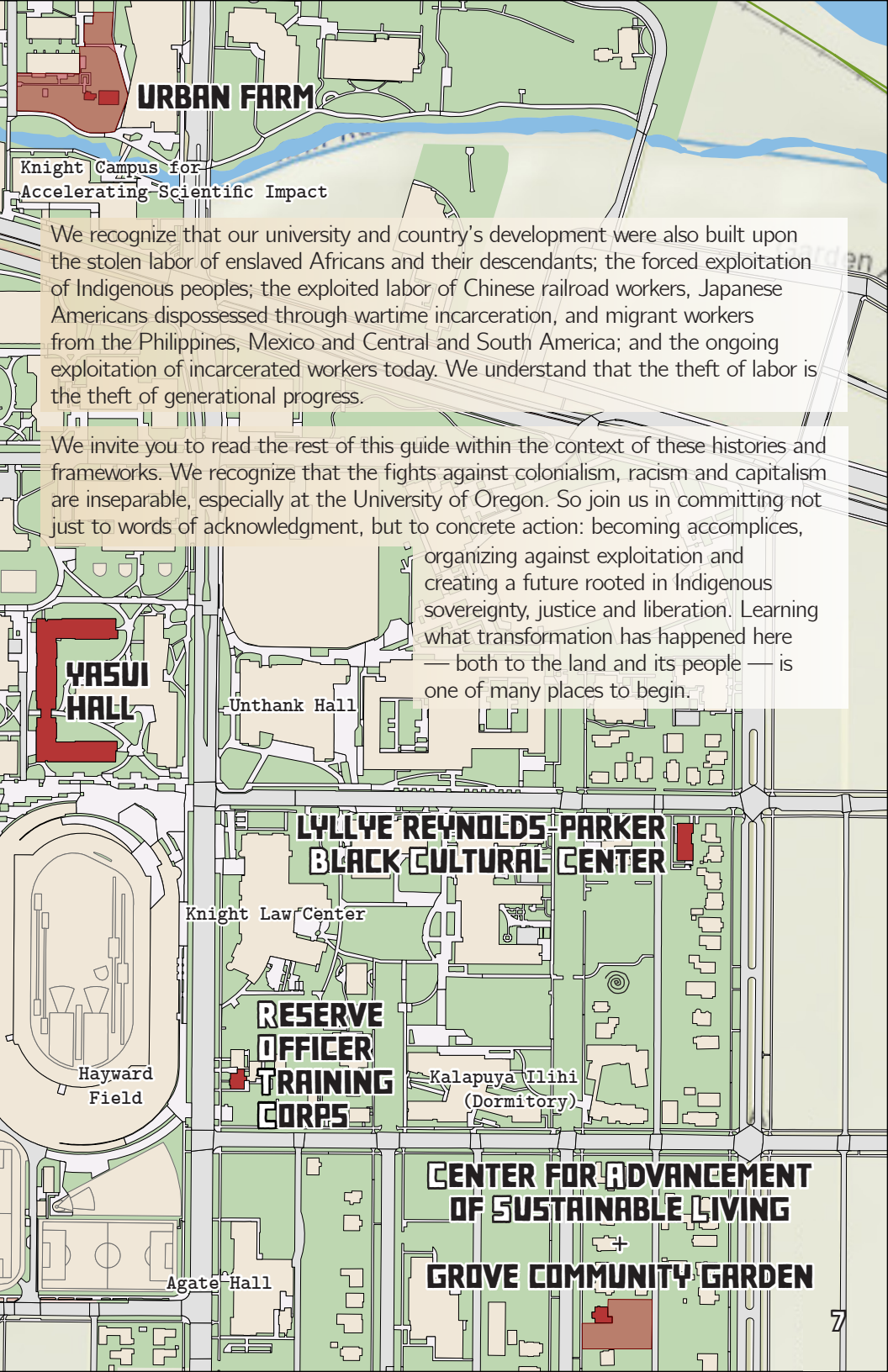
The University of Oregon is on *Kalapuya Ilihi*, the traditional homeland of the Kalapuya people.

Following unratified treaties negotiated between 1851 and 1855, the Kalapuya were illegally dispossessed of their lands by government and settlers and forcibly removed to reservations. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon. We recognize their sovereignty and support the pursuit of justice for the rest of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes — the Burns Paiute Tribe; the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians; the



Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe; the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians; and the Klamath Tribes — as well as the many Indigenous nations with ancestral ties to this territory, including the Chinook Indian Nation and the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribes. On campus, the Many Nations Longhouse and Native American Student Union support Indigenous students in building community, maintaining cultural values and pursuing their educational goals.

We acknowledge that this land was stolen through colonization, genocide and broken treaties, and that the colonial project is ongoing — carried forward through prisons, policing, environmental destruction and capitalism. We must work to disrupt these systems and practice solidarity with Indigenous nations and their struggles for sovereignty, land and self-determination.



URBAN FARM

Knight Campus for
Accelerating Scientific Impact

We recognize that our university and country's development were also built upon the stolen labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants; the forced exploitation of Indigenous peoples; the exploited labor of Chinese railroad workers, Japanese Americans dispossessed through wartime incarceration, and migrant workers from the Philippines, Mexico and Central and South America; and the ongoing exploitation of incarcerated workers today. We understand that the theft of labor is the theft of generational progress.

We invite you to read the rest of this guide within the context of these histories and frameworks. We recognize that the fights against colonialism, racism and capitalism are inseparable, especially at the University of Oregon. So join us in committing not just to words of acknowledgment, but to concrete action: becoming accomplices,

organizing against exploitation and creating a future rooted in Indigenous sovereignty, justice and liberation. Learning what transformation has happened here — both to the land and its people — is one of many places to begin.

YASUI
HALL

Unthank Hall

LYLLYE REYNOLDS PARKER
BLACK CULTURAL CENTER

Knight Law Center

RESERVE
OFFICER
TRAINING
CORPS

Kalapuya Ilihi
(Dormitory)

Hayward
Field

CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT
OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Agate Hall

GROVE COMMUNITY GARDEN

THE PIONEER AND PIONEER MOTHER



Former location of Pioneer Mother leading up to Susan Campbell Hall, opposite Johnson Hall and Lane in 2025.

The Pioneer statue celebrated the conquest of the “Anglo-Saxon race” over “savage Indians,” as declared at its installation and dedication ceremony in 1919.³ During settlement, genocidal violence against Indigenous peoples was widely supported, codified in policy and practiced by government and settlers in Oregon.⁴ Alexander Proctor, the statue’s sculptor, was particularly drawn to the violent nature of his subject, a man he called Big Frank, of

whom he wrote killing a Native person was “all in a day’s work for him.” The Pioneer Mother, later commissioned and installed in 1932, was also sculpted by Proctor.

As seen in the photos here and on the main guide map, the statues were situated in prominent campus locations. Standing tall and towering over passersby, they faced each other, their gazes piercing the lobby of Johnson Hall. On a clear day, it was possible to see one statue from the other through Johnson’s glass doors. A campus legend has it that at some time during the 1920s, students staged a sit-in when the university considered replacing the doors with a fully wooden entry — one that would have blocked their line of sight.⁵

But other students long protested the presence of the Pioneers. Citing concerns over their origins, the University Senate first drafted a measure in 1992 to have them removed. Faculty and students (namely of the Native American Student Union) continued to educate the university community and agitate against the statues’ presence in the decades following. In 2019, 100 years after the original Pioneer’s dedication, a report that irrefutably established the statues’ white supremacist intent was delivered to then President Michael Schill, along with more calls for removal from students. No response was given.⁴

The next year, on June 13, 2020, a crowd gathered amidst the global pandemic and uprisings after the murder of George Floyd for a teach-in on the steps of Deady Hall (later unnamed, now University Hall). After the event ended, a group of activists — whose identities remain unknown — moved to the statues, first



The Pioneer’s former location, seen from across Johnson Hall and 13th Avenue and in front of Fenton Hall in 2025.



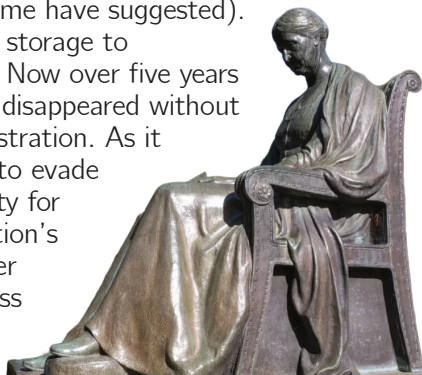
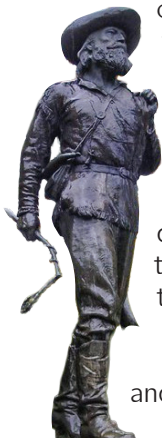
Police survey the Pioneer statues after activists toppled them on June 13, 2020.
Dana Sparks, Andy Nelson/The Register Guard

tearing down the Pioneer and dragging it across 13th Avenue, up the steps of Johnson Hall.⁶ They then moved to the Pioneer Mother, toppling it with the same crowbars and sledgehammers. The remaining crowd cheered, many taking photos of and with the fallen monuments. Eventually all dispersed without any intervention from the University or police. The actions of the protestors were later supported by the department of Indigenous, Race and Ethnic Studies.

Now that they are gone, most students on campus today are unaware of the statues' existence. It may have been more impactful to leave them toppled in place, allowing moss and the rest of the landscape to overtake them (as some have suggested).

Instead, UO placed the statues in storage to determine what to do with them. Now over five years later, the statues have seemingly disappeared without any word from the current administration. As it

did before, the university continues to evade the truth, failing to take responsibility for this dark yet real part of our institution's history: that the Pioneers stood over campus as a monument to whiteness and domination for over 100 years.



A note from "Why They Had To Go"

A statement on the fall of the Pioneer statues by the faculty of the UO Native American Studies Program and the Department of Indigenous, Race and Ethnic Studies⁴

"This could have been a very different story if he [President Schill] had listened the first time and acted more resolutely, but that opportunity was lost. We hope that the decisive actions of those who pulled the statues down will serve as a reminder of the urgency of our fight against systemic racism. We can wait no longer, because the wait is killing us."

*Above: The Pioneer and Pioneer Mother as they stood before the toppling.
 Jackie Lorentz/Pioneer Monuments
 Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard*

A Question As You Visit

What are the effects of the University physically concealing where the statues once stood, and therefore the existence of the statues themselves? 

JOHNSON ALAREER HALL



Johnson Hall as seen from along 13th Avenue in 2025.

and upper administration do more than simply project a vision — they exert their power downwards upon all parts of the university. As this ripple is received by faculty, students, workers and the surrounding community, people gather at Johnson Hall to confront administrative power with their own. This relationship of cause and effect — the struggle for the institution's soul — illuminates the ever-evolving question of public education: Whose university is it? Historically this has produced grassroots challenges to administrative authority over the direction and priorities of our institution. Presently, the fight against university privatization, the weaponization of corporate interests and undemocratic governance underscores this tension. Through it all, Johnson Hall continues to serve as a fitting backdrop for ordinary people taking responsibility for their education and communities. Below are just some of the many struggles that have occurred here:

As the campus Anti-Vietnam War movement rapidly escalated in the spring of 1970, Johnson saw some of its largest student sit-ins in its history. On April 22, over 300 students filled the lobby, issuing then President Robert Clark with demands to remove naval recruiters and police from campus, abolish the ROTC program and grant amnesty to those involved with prior disturbances.⁸ After 30 hours, Clark abruptly ended student negotiations and sent in multiple squadrons of National Guardsman and members of the Eugene Police Department to arrest those inside and disperse surrounding crowds.

☒ In the process, they deployed teargas on peaceful

“Knowledge the Soul of a Republic,” reads the etched stone above the north entrance of Johnson Hall, quoting the early American statesman John Jay. Named for John Wesley Johnson, who served as the first president of the UO from 1876-1893, this hall has held visions for the university since it was built to house the office of the President and other administrators in 1915.⁷

Of course, the President



Eugene police “escort” a student from Johnson Hall in 1970.

Oregon Daily Emerald



The stone etched in John Jay's paraphrased words, pictured 2025.

crowds and arrested 61 students.⁹ None of the students' demands were met, and the student conduct code was subsequently amended to include a clause against 'disruption,' increase the number of prosecutors and add provisions for surveilling campus demonstrations.¹⁰

Later in the year, in the early morning of December 1, an explosion ripped through the southwest basement of the building, causing substantial damage and jarring the entire university. No one was injured and the case was never solved, though it is reasonable to suggest that perception of the administration being complicit in the ongoing Vietnam war was likely a factor.¹¹

On May 6, 1986, hundreds gathered in front of Johnson to build a wooden Shantytown, joining the nearly decade-strong struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. The demonstration was sanctioned and vocally supported by President Paul Olum at the preceding rally, who called Apartheid an "unconscionable violation of the simplest principles of respect for humanity."¹² At this time, major endowment funds were held at the state level by the Board of Higher Education rather than at individual universities. Students were rallying around their campaign's lawsuit against the Oregon Investment Committee (the body which coordinated how the Board's funds were invested) for blocking divestment from corporations that profited from apartheid — a battle that had been dragging out in court since 1977.

In 2000, students once again took Johnson Hall, this time decrying the use of sweatshop labor to produce university licensed products. They urged President Dave Frohnmayer to sign the UO on to the Worker's Rights Consortium (WRC), an organization who would monitor working conditions along the university's supply chain, especially those of Nike. After multiple days of sit-ins that garnered at least six arrests (including then ASUO President and President-elect), around 50 students launched an encampment on the Johnson lawn to sustain protest efforts on



Students construct a shantytown in front of Johnson Hall in 1986. *Michael Wilhelm/Oregon Daily Emerald*



Composite: Bobby Seale gives a speech in 2000 on the steps of Johnson Hall, occupied by students in favor of the WRC. Daily Emerald, ROAR Center

the evening of April 5.¹³ The following day, after students got word of his local presence and called his hotel room, Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale visited to speak from the Johnson steps in solidarity with the students.¹⁴ Frohnmayer eventually agreed to sign on to the WRC, ending the encampment on its tenth day. Later that month, Nike CEO Phil Knight retracted a pledge of \$30 million dollars to the UO, citing dissatisfaction with the WRC affiliation. In response, Frohnmayer decided not to pay the required membership dues and instead affiliated with the Fair Labor Association, which the camping students specifically urged him to avoid for its laxness in inspections and lack of transparency.¹⁵ Knight later reinstated his gift, which was used to fund an expansion to Autzen stadium.

At around 10 p.m. on Sunday, October 4, 2020 (just a week into fall term) three activists chained themselves to the doors of Johnson Hall following a Black Lives Matter benefit concert in nearby Washburn Park. They demanded President Michael Schill provide them with a concrete plan to disarm UOPD, divest the UO Foundation's assets of \$1.96 billion from investments in fossil fuels and democratize the Board of Trustees (the university's highest governing body). Though groups Disarm UO, Reclaim UO, Cascadia Action Network, Sunrise Eugene and the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) made statements of support, no group took sole responsibility for the action.¹⁶ After 16 hours, Schill granted them a meeting and the trio at Johnson unchained in celebration.¹⁷ Though small, this action yielded a more direct dialogue with power than the over 100 days of marches which filled Eugene's streets the previous summer.

Similarly, students affiliated with the 2024 Popular University for Gaza chained themselves to Johnson's pillars on May 16 and renamed it "Alareer Hall" for Palestinian professor, poet and martyr, Refaat Alareer. The action came following a "People's Trial" on the Johnson steps, where students found President Karl Scholz and other administrators complicit in genocide, occupation and apartheid — with blood literally on their hands (as pictured on the front cover). Later that day, students moved their encampment to the lawn adjacent to the front of Johnson, across 13th Avenue. The

encampment, launched on April 29 from the Memorial Quad (see entry), condemned the UO's ideological neutrality and material complicity in Israel's ongoing genocide in Palestine. Protesters unchained themselves after 100 hours on May 20, and on May 22 — after 25 days of camping in total — they reached an agreement with administration to pack up in exchange for an issuance of a ceasefire statement by Scholz, a University Senate taskforce to investigate investment ethics, additional faculty hires and funding in Middle Eastern Studies, scholarships for displaced students from Palestine and cooperation in creating a South and Southwest Asian and North African (SSWANA) cultural center.¹⁸ Organized implementation of the agreement continues as students battle administrative backpedaling and bureaucracy.



Top: Students chained to Johnson in May 2024, reclaiming it as Alareer Hall.
Rob Scherle

Bottom: Students chained to Johnson on Oct. 4, 2020.
John Adair/Double Sided Media



Questions As You Visit

*What does the building's design and location within the campus evoke?
Who will take to the stuffy lobby, stone steps, or ivory pillars next?
Whose university is it, anyway?*

13TH AVENUE

View from Kincaid Street in 2025 - no cars allowed.



As the most prominent thoroughfare in the heart of campus, 13th Avenue sees tens of thousands of students each day. But it hasn't always been a safe and sure route to get to class or work. Though once lined with boardwalks and home to an electric streetcar, up until 1970 the section of 13th between Kincaid and University streets was an open thoroughway to the public, seeing high traffic from commuting cars and commercial vehicles. In the words of one student in a public hearing that year: "The University [of Oregon] is the only major university in the country where a student can be run over by a log truck."¹⁹

Though many more students dating back to the 1950s took issue with the lack of safety along the corridor, the UO and the City of Eugene failed to ever improve it. By 1970, the student Anti-Vietnam War movement inflected and the ground of campus felt one of its most active eras of protest. And although not directly related to the war, one of the little known (and perhaps largest) wins secured by students that year was the eventual closure of 13th vehicles.²⁰

In April, after 61 student protestors were arrested for staging a sit-in inside Johnson Hall (see previous entry), around one thousand students moved to the EMU as they began to organize a student strike. Although the strike ultimately had minimal success, its increased activity led to approximately 500 people erecting barricades out of brick and mortar planters across 13th at its intersections with Kincaid and University streets (where vehicular traffic terminates today), protesting the lack of safety improvements.²¹ Signs reading "The People's Street" and "Liberty Lane" joined students as they liberated the street from vehicles, filling the planters with soil, trees, shrubs and planters on the evening of April 26, 1970.²² The barricades stayed up through April 29, when students agreed to remove them on the condition that city officials would hold a meeting about permanently closing the section of the street to traffic.²³ The city stuck to its word (after continued pressure from students, who even threatened to rebuild the planters at one point) and the street was officially closed later that fall.

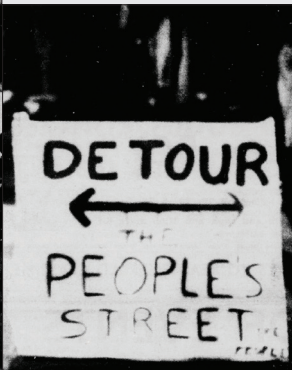
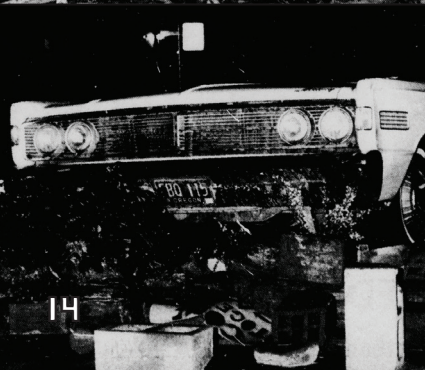


Accounts of the occupation evoke a far gone era of campus protests in the 70s — an almost ridiculous combination of confrontation and jubilation. Several irate drivers abandoned their vehicles to argue with students, some pulled out sledgehammers to try and remove the barricades

Composite: Students deconstruct barricades - which at least one car, pictured, crashed into - on the People's Street in 1970 after reaching an agreement with the City of Eugene. Oregon Daily Emerald, Register-Guard

themselves²² and at least one attempted to drive right on through it. But as traffic died down each evening, students took the chance to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

According to the Daily Emerald, "By nightfall [of April 26] there were people's chalk drawings on the street, people's fires at both ends, people's popcorn, people's marshmallows, and people's beer."²⁴



Liberty Lane, or...

*Student
Insurgent*



Today, most of campus has no idea that ordinary people took direct action and closed the street themselves. In 2022, the university moved to, in effect, further conceal this history by renaming the very same section of the street once occupied by students after Chuck Lillis.²⁵ Lillis, who died in

2024, was a private equity firm magnate, founding member of the Board of Trustees and the namesake of the Lillis Business complex. Though a donor of over \$25 million to UO over the years, he came under scrutiny in April of 2020 when he physically assaulted a student (lowering his shoulder into them) on his way to a Board of Trustees Meeting at the Ford Alumni Center.²⁶ The student and other members of the ROAR Center were peacefully blocking one of four open entrances in protest of the meeting occurring with little regard for safety (as it was in-person just weeks after the initial pandemic lockdown), and lack of resolve from the Trustees to address the unfolding health emergency.

It is reasonable to imagine that the original occupying students, who took the street in the name of “the people,” would have chosen anyone other than Lillis as its permanent namesake — who is truly the embodiment of the UO’s privatization and consolidation of corporate interests. And yet, today, the street is often re-envoked as the people’s. Its closure has brought marches, picket lines, and occupations — mostly occurring without issue — to 13th time and time again. This was well on display in the spring of 2025, when the UO Student Workers union (UOSW) went on strike and stationed a prominent picket line in the middle of 13th outside the entrance of Johnson Hall. Over the 11 day strike, the picket served as an unavoidable landmark of student workers utilizing their collective power to improve the quality of their lives. This was true not only in the years-long fight for a fair contract, but in the space itself: students from all parts of the university liberated themselves into the community by walking out of work and taking to the street. UOSW reached an agreement with UO on May 8, 2025 — winning a historic first contract that set the standard for the student labor movement nationally.²⁷ And like 1970, 13th Avenue’s spatial transformation was both the result of struggle and ample means for the end of it, too.



Student workers (and allies)
picket on April 29, 2025.

Questions As You Visit

*How would campus feel with through-traffic and parking allowed on 13th?
How might the design of the street be enhanced to further prioritize people?*

YAZAN'S MEMORIAL QUAD

By Myna Bird Though perhaps not the lawn of choice for sunbathing



View from the Quad facing Lillis Business Complex in 2025.

today, ever since the demolition of Kincaid Field opened the space between 13th Avenue and Knight Library, people have found themselves passing through the Memorial Quad. The quad joins some of the most important throughways and buildings on campus — connecting paths from the EMU and Johnson Hall, 13th Avenue and the library and the border of campus on the west side. Once a wide open field on a sparsely populated campus, eight massive oak trees (planted in memory of a drowned student body president) and various buildings have enclosed the long grassy rectangle of the quad, such as the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art; Condon Hall; Chapman Hall; Prince Lucien Campbell Hall; and finally, Anstett, Peterson and Commonwealth Halls — now the Lillis Business Complex.²⁸

Standing at the center of the quad looking north to south, one finds themselves staring between two of the most emblematic buildings on campus. On one side, the Knight Library offers a liberal academic vision of the university. Inscribed above its doors are plaques that read, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” Facing off with the library on the far end of the quad stands the Lillis Business Complex, which sports a huge University of Oregon logo — placed there for national football coverage “College Gameday” in 2012, and has since become an important landmark on campus.²⁹ The hall exemplifies the changing values of the university as a business institution with a duty to make money and advance a “brand” over the old university ideals as an institution with a duty to create conditions for freedom through the exchange of ideas and investigation of truth.

Over the years, the UO community has weighed in on the responsibilities of the university. Much of this deliberation has taken place on the Quad’s grass. In May of 1970, amid rising unrest around the Vietnam war and the aftermath of the Kent State Massacre, university president Robert Clark canceled two days of classes and called on university constituents to gather and reflect on their role in the state of the world in that time. The English department, including mostly students and a few faculty members, met in front of Prince Lucien Campbell (PLC) and decided to spearhead the creation of an “Alternate University” (or “Alternate U”) where “classes [were] held ‘when someone [had] something to teach.’”³⁰ Classes included “U.S. Involvement in Imperialism and the Radical Alternatives”;



Prince Lucien Campbell Hall as seen from the quad in 2025.



Alternate U students gather on PLC quad in 1970. *SCUA*

“Practical Comic Books”; and “Reading Newspapers.”³¹ Alternate U convened each day on the Memorial Quad for a number of weeks and even hosted a discussion with President Clark. Alternate U presented a possibility of a university that joined informal, popular education and global justice.

In 2011, Occupy Eugene, the local manifestation of the Occupy Wall Street movement, briefly moved to the Memorial Quad as internal questions about the purpose of the movement were reaching a critical height. Occupy aimed to bring to light wealth inequality in the wake of the 2008 recession. Some student leaders felt that the movement could powerfully oppose rising tuition and student debt — they felt education should be affordable for the 99%. However, when Occupy demonstrators moved to the Quad, university administration quickly threatened to arrest all demonstrators camping on the quad, and negotiations led to the camp moving to the Riverside Research Park by the Millrace within hours. While the encampment was still on university property, the location made it peripheral to the everyday functioning of campus, and in the end it didn’t have the impact that student leaders had hoped for.³²

In 2024, six months after the beginning of the intensification of Israel’s genocide of Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank, students set up tents on the Memorial Quad early on the morning of April 29 as a wave of encampments swept universities across the world. The Gaza Solidarity Encampment quickly drew hundreds of students and faculty members, holding daily mass meetings and negotiating with UO administration on a number of demands, including, first and foremost, divestment from all companies that profit from Israel’s apartheid. Some professors held their regularly scheduled classes on the lawn, and students, faculty, and community members hosted lectures, teach-ins and trainings about US imperialism and the genocide in Palestine, social movement history and direct action tactics. During this time, students renamed



Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community members swarm the quad during a rally in May 2024. *Elliot Deins/KATU* 07

the quad to “Yazan’s Memorial Quad” in memory of the first Palestinian child to die of starvation from the Israeli blockade of food and other necessary resources into Gaza. The encampment moved to the front of Alareer Hall (see Johnson Hall entry) before decamping after an agreement was reached on May 24, 2024.¹⁸ UO’s encampment was reportedly one of the longest running uninterrupted encampments within the 2024 “student intifada.”

The positioning of the encampment on the Memorial Quad was certainly emblematic of the contradiction presented between the library and business complex — students asserted rights to free speech contradictory to the profit-motive of the institution. However, other possibilities for the university emerged through that movement. While Lillis and the library faced off from north to south, the east to west axis presented a less obvious but perhaps more important question. Just to the west sits the rest of Eugene — the path from the quad to the edge of campus served as an important supply line for non-student allies to bring food, tents and other resources to the 2024 encampment. Following that path through the quad and to the west finds the backside of Alareer Hall — the heart of administrative power — and the Erb Memorial Union — the heart of student life on campus. While the Knight Library and Lillis Business Complex frame our imagination around restoring the mythical, old university — which valued free speech, yes, but also colonization and class hierarchy — the east-west axis offers a different framing altogether. When we look at the places where students naturally congregate and where power lies, then out to the borders constructed between that power, students and the broader community, we have to ask the question: What else becomes possible when we recreate a university where the institution acts not on a responsibility to reproduce racial capitalism and its injustices, but rather acts on its responsibility to the community beyond its borders — from Eugene, Oregon to Gaza City, Palestine?

A Question As You Visit

Who makes up the broader university community (faculty, Eugene residents, student groups), and what might their role in a liberated university be?

A scene from one of the largest rallies at the encampment. Source unknown



URBAN FARM

The Urban Farm as seen in 2025.



Under the glow of floodlights in the early morning of December 19, 2022, demolition crews and woodchippers met an orchard of apple, plum and pear trees surrounded by beds of long-cultivated soil and centuries-old heritage trees. These were the last moments of the “Back 40,” a beloved section of the UO’s Urban Farm that was destroyed to make way for phase two of the Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact.³³ Nearby, a quote printed inside the entry way of Knight Campus building #1 illustrates the development’s ethos: “There is no finish line. That is our motto. Let everyone else call your idea crazy... just keep going. Don’t stop. Don’t even think about stopping until you get there, and don’t give much thought to where ‘there’ is. Whatever comes, just don’t stop.”³³ The words, those of Nike CEO Phil Knight, can help us understand how and why scientific impact was pursued against the will of many wishing to control their own environment and education. That December morning, the crews erected construction fences to keep students away as they cut and chipped the trees, making room to stage construction materials to build the second Knight Campus facility.³³ But the Back 40 didn’t go quietly — students and organizers fought for nearly a year to save this place, which was equal parts farm, classroom and sanctuary.

Founded in 1975, the Urban Farm is about a half acre of land adorned with hundreds of garden beds and other food bearing plants on the north edge of campus. Here, students learn how to grow food for themselves and each other through the Urban Farm Class, working together to take care of the land and build community. Though wafts of fennel and basil still greet you as you walk down the farm’s entrance, the space is being encroached upon by the towering Knight Campus — the very landscape demonstrating the struggle between corporate power and place-based values for the right to land.

The farm is a visionary experiment in designing urban areas for food growing,³⁴ started by landscape architecture professor Richard Britz and students. They envisioned creating a public commons with elements of



Circa late 1970s, the newly established Urban Farm takes shape around the Graduate Shelter. Note the completed Fine Art Studio building C in the background. *UO College of Design*

food growing and energy production in pursuit of a concept Britz called the “Edible City” — retrofitting empty space within cities to see how much food and community they could produce. With surplus land available along the historic Millrace, Britz and students began experimenting, and in the process, transformed the area into one of the most unique parts of any major university campus then and now.

Though novel, the farm got off to a shaky start as Britz was denied tenure and left UO in 1979. But under the renewed direction of Ann Bettman (who picked up where Britz left off in 1982), the farm grew in size and, by the mid-1980s, the farm course blossomed into one of the most popular classes at the university. However, the space faced consistent threats of building development, most notably from the Riverfront Research Park project in 1986. City and university officials partnered to locate new research buildings along the river and north edge of campus (including over much of the farm), but — in part to opposition from Bettman, students and community members — the project decided to site construction in other areas.³⁵ In 1990, the university opted to build the woodshop and furniture studio that the farm now surrounds. This construction could have very well been the end of the farm, but Bettman once again negotiated to maintain enough temporary growing space to continue the class while the building was built (though the farm’s original footprint was condensed, and the nearby “graduate shelter” house was demolished).³⁶ Over the years, similar development threats have risen, but its momentum as a program and presence in the local agrarian community have protected the farm’s land use.

In the early 90s, students decided to reclaim the abandoned half-acre area adjacent to the north edge of the farm, clearing out old construction debris and removing invasive blackberry brambles to create what would be known as the ‘Back 40.’ This land grab was tolerated by the university and the farm added the mixed species fruit orchard, more fenced growing space, and a hoop house to the area. Unlike the other half of the space which had been recognized as outdoor classroom space during early land use advocacy, the Back 40 lacked official designation as a part of the farm despite it functioning as one space. In 2011, current farm director Harper Keeler warned that the farm “would be seriously impacted should any further designs to reduce its usable area be entertained and student objection to such a plan would most likely be considerable” in his master’s thesis.³⁵

And he was correct. In early 2022, the UO announced that the second Knight Campus building would come to fruition thanks to a \$500 million  donation from resident UO billionaires Phil and Penny Knight. The

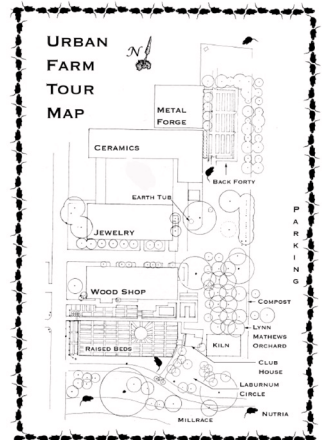


Composite: Campaign poster from 2022; a Nov. 2022 rally; fruit tree “George” saved from the Back 40 in Jan. 2023. Save the Urban Farm, Oregon Daily Emerald, Harper Keeler



facility, designed for biomolecular research programs in concert with large corporations, was slated over top of the gravel parking lot along the farm’s east edge. Though it was claimed to not impact the farm, students and the concerned community quickly realized that this was only true for some but not all designated farm space. Ensuing public records requests found that construction crews planned to level the Back 40 to stage construction materials for the new building. Thirty years of tending to land — building soil health, planting trees, teaching classes and feeding students — meant little to the university in terms of what was the best use for the space.³³

The divergence between the development plans and the “on the ground” reality of Urban Farm supporters lead to the emergence of “Save the Urban Farm” — a student led campaign to save the Back 40, seeing it as integral to the farm and community. Despite administrative attempts at pacifying concerned students, the group led months of marches, town halls, musical festivals and organizing meetings, generating widespread support against the development. And yet, seemingly little progress was made towards halting it as the demolition date crept closer. Students faced months of confusing public engagement, inaccessible “public” records, inaccurate timelines and, ultimately, undemocratic decision making from the university.³³ Antagonism between students and administrators — particularly Dean of the College



Farm tour map prior to Knight Campus development. Urban Farm Reader



Late 2000s spring work session. *Ali Abbors*

Design, Adrian Parr — grew to such a point that the Dec. 19 demolition crews were there a full month ahead of the publicly announced schedule. Clearly wary of supporters taking direct action to protect the space, the UO hastened timelines to begin construction during winter break when most students were away. And to move quickly, lights were installed so that much of the initial work was done before anyone came to campus.

Although the collective effort was not able to save the Back 40, it did yield the concession of a \$1 million dedication toward an additional space for urban farming on campus, to be housed on the nearby bank of the Willamette River and called Urban Farm “Riverside.”³⁷ Prior to demolition, 16 large fruit trees and a considerable amount of soil were salvaged from the Back 40 and relocated to the Riverside at a great expense to the UO, a key victory won by students. As of 2025, the rest of the site remains a point of administrative contention, although it is now under the purview of the department of Landscape Architecture and design has begun. Recently herbs and flowers have sprouted up from seeds left in the soil — remnants of the Back 40 coming back to life.

Today, university admin primarily sees the remaining Urban Farm as a chance to continue their marketing ploy of greenwashing and strategic PR boosting — they will likely attempt to shrink place-based programs as such to the point that they are as small as possible on the campus map, but just big enough to get a shot of someone holding a shovel and “throwing up the O” for a commercial. This gap between what students experience here and what values the university projects has implications — that those invested in the soil will constantly be struggling against development and loss if they are in a spot that is “buildable” (and farms and gardens are almost always “buildable” as compared to other spots on the campus map). In order to preserve the few remaining places where food (and our souls) are grown on campus, students will need to stay aware of how development works and be ready to fight when it happens.

A note from the Farm

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

This morning I find myself sitting here at one of the farm’s picnic tables, finishing my notes for this entry. As I entered the farm I was greeted by the loud whirring of construction machines and a black, cloth-paneled fence around its back border. I was, once again, stunned by the abruptness of the development, which is most well characterized by the four story and nearly all glass Knight Campus Building II towering over what once was the Back 40. The space, now being used as a staging area, will soon become

ADA parking spaces when construction is complete: a memory of what once was; 50 years of careful tending erased in just a few.

I sit here and ponder the effects of students organizing to save this loved part of the farm. While researching the campaign's timeline, I was struck by the memory of a small and cold November 4, 2022 march and rally for the farm. It was somehow the first protest I attended on campus, and in my life for that matter. I had little prior knowledge of the space — I had only walked through it once before — but the crew of campus radicals I had found myself immersed in via The Student Insurgent newspaper got me out there with a sign that read “protect my right to eat and learn” in the drizzle.

As the march terminated at the farm's outdoor pavilion (where I sit now), I and others wrote letters to the Back 40 to process our condolences. Now, just about three years later, I can credit this effort to save part of this space with launching my own trajectory towards campus organizing and activism. It gave me especially important knowledge in my efforts to maintain and protect the Grove Community Garden.

I see that the designation of outdoor classroom space in itself poses a contradiction to the status quo of our campus — that forms of development can take unexpected and even beautiful shapes which are mutually beneficial to the land, students and university community. And yet this unique landscape has been a site of constant struggle: over land use and the question of the economy vs. environment — what use is most important at the University of Oregon? You can tell a lot about a place from how they grow their food — so what is our campus about? Ultimately, this is the heart of the Urban Farm's experiential education offering — that students are exposed to an entirely new set of placemaking tools and thrown into the struggle for space as they are learning how to use them — a true practice in political geography. This potential for a critical land-based connection is a rare opportunity at the university for students to actually become immersed with where they are. It is one of the few places you will find students with hands in the ground and rain on their face — and this alone is power.

A Question As You Visit

*How does
this place feel
in comparison
to the rest of
UO campus
— what do
you smell,
see, hear or
taste?*

Urban Farmers
dance around a
maypole on May
Day, 2010.
Harper Keeler



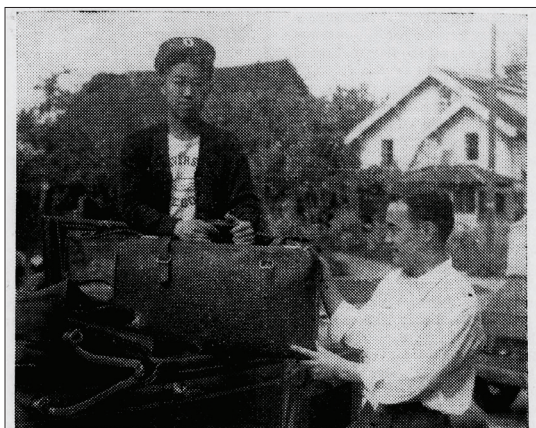
YASUI HALL



Yasui Hall as seen in 2025.

The 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor shocked the nation, accelerating the US' involvement in World War II and ushering in an era of heightened uncertainty for those in the States. Over 110,000 Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) living on the West Coast experienced this time of chaos the harshest as increased discrimination and racial violence loomed.³⁸ Soon the US moved forward with the nativist policy of Japanese Exclusion, drawing new borders around California, western Oregon and Washington and parts of Southern Arizona where Nisei were no longer allowed. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of executive order 9066 in February 1942 declared these zones military areas, initiating the forced removal of all Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast to inland incarceration camps.³⁹

This geography of exclusion was felt by students at college and university campuses along the West Coast. At the University of Oregon, there were 22 Nisei students enrolled at the start of the 1941-42 academic year. As rumors of interment and evacuation began to circulate in early 1942, administrators from several schools, including Karl. W Onthank at UO, began working on ways to aid and support Nisei students in continuing their education. Onthank initially suggested to the state of Oregon that the National Guard allow the UO campus to be a sanctuary zone for Nisei so they could evade internment. In a correspondence to a fellow administrator, he noted, regarding the students: "If they are thrown out of college and ㄱㄹ can do nothing but mark

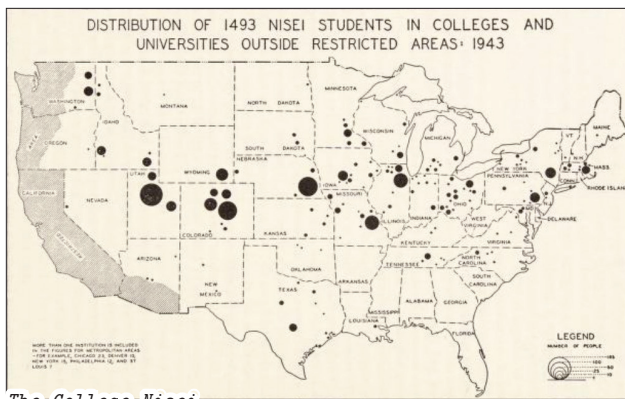


JUST PRACTICING . . .

— Photo by Don Jones

. . . in case of evacuation orders are true Americans of Japanese ancestry, Kenzo Nakagawa, left, and Shu Yasui.

Nisei students photographed (and captioned) by the Daily Emerald on May 12, 1942. SCUA



The College Nisei

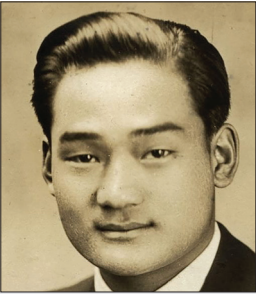
growing National Japanese American Student Relocation Council. Made up of hundreds of university administrators and philanthropic organizations, the council assisted many Nisei students on the west coast in finding new places where they could continue their course of study. At UO, this included helping the students apply for scholarships available via the council so they were able to feasibly relocate and re-enroll financially. By the end of the 1941-42 school year, as evacuation orders were enforced, at least ten students from UO were able to utilize this support to find new educational opportunities outside of the exclusion zone. Others fled independently, entered military service or rejoined their families in incarceration camps.

In April of 2025, four international UO students saw their visas revoked by the Trump administration for reasons largely unspecified.⁴¹ Herein students find themselves in a similar moment of nativism reemerging nationally and on campus. In response, students, members of the UO Young Democratic Socialists (YDSA) and others called for a renewed commitment to a legitimate sanctuary campus — one that does not comply with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or share vulnerable students' information with the federal government.⁴¹ Under these conditions, the actions of past administrators like Karl Onthank serve as a powerful reminder of how it is possible for University of Oregon administration to act compassionately, transparently and decisively in the interest of students facing racialized repression, especially those of international descent. Words of one anonymous Nisei student, who received clearance to continue their studies at a different university in 1942, underscore this:

“I just can’t find sufficient words to describe my gratitude for all that your office has done for me and other Niseis. In our darkest hour you brought forth your loving hands and gave us new hopes and inspiration. Surely Democracy can not and will not die as long as such groups like yours and Colleges that uphold the true ideals of Democracy exist...”

Anonymous words of a Japanese American student upon receiving clearance to continue university study in 1942.⁴⁰

On May 4, 2025, the University of Oregon officially named its newest resident hall “Yasui Hall” after the Yasui family of Hood River, Oregon. Siblings Minoru, Michi, Shu (Robert) and Yuka Yasui were students at the UO during the internment era. Min was the first Japanese American to graduate from UO Law School; Michi and Shu Yasui were undergrads when removal and incarceration orders disrupted their education; and Yuka was the first Japanese American to return to the university after the war.⁴² Each of their stories are poignant snapshots into the experience of exclusion at UO, through which we celebrate their perseverance.



MINORU

*SCUA and the
Yasui family*

Special thanks to SCUA for extensive assistance on this entry.

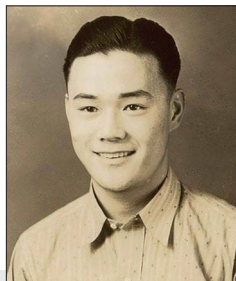
Minoru Yasui (1916-1986) became the first Japanese-American graduate of the UO Law School in 1939, moving to Portland to practice law. When curfews were imposed on all people of Japanese ancestry in the city, Min spent three hours walking around downtown Portland in defiance of the order on the night of March 28, 1942, hoping to challenge its constitutionality. He was arrested and convicted for breaking the curfew — a conviction that would be upheld by the United States Supreme Court in a landmark June 1943 ruling. He was sentenced to nine months in solitary confinement and then to an incarceration camp. After the war, he continued practicing law in Denver, earning numerous awards for his work in civil and human rights. He passed away in November 1986, two years before the efforts of his lifetime yielded the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which led to a formal apology to victims of the incarceration policy and restitution of \$20,000 for every living survivor of the concentration camps. In 2015, he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the first and only Oregonian to date to be so honored.

Michi Yasui Ando (1920-2006) was a senior at UO in 1942 as similar curfews were enforced prior to mass removal orders officially being issued. Karl Onthank and other university administrators appealed to military authorities to allow Michi to attend her graduation ceremony, which was scheduled to begin after curfew at 8 p.m. just three blocks from her dorm at McArthur Court on May 31, 1942. The Wartime Civil Control Administration denied their request; Michi was forced to stay in her dormitory and missed her graduation. Encouraged by her brother Shu, who had safely fled from Eugene to Denver, Michi left for Colorado before others were ordered into incarceration camps. She earned a master’s degree in education and became a beloved teacher for Denver Public Schools, and was welcomed back to UO 46 years later to receive her diploma at the 1986 commencement (where she was an honored speaker).



*SCUA and the
Yasui family*

MICHI



Robert Shu Yasui (1923-2012) was a first year student at the UO when his mother and siblings were sent to incarceration camps. Evading evacuation orders, Shu left campus alone in the night, heading to Denver to continue his education as his parents had wished. He graduated from Temple University Medical School and served in the US Army Medical Corps, later opening a surgical practice in Pennsylvania.

Yuka Yasui Fujukura (1927-2021) was 15 years old in 1942, and was forced to leave home for desolate government incarceration camps with thousands of other Japanese Americans. After nine months, she left Tule Lake Camp in Northern California alone and moved to Denver to finish high school. She came back home to Oregon and was the first Japanese American to enroll at the UO after the war. She later earned master's degrees in nursing from Yale and in public health from University of Pittsburgh. She went on to work as a nurse and volunteered for decades in public health.



SCUA and the
Yasui family **YUKA**

RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

Walking South down Agate Street across from Hayward Field you will pass a sign that reads "Military Science," which marks the current home of UO's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. A twisting hawthorn tree shades pull-up bars just to the south of the old white house turned office building that is conjoined with the Labor Education and Research Center. This peaceful location near the edge of campus tells little of the program's long and tumultuous history.

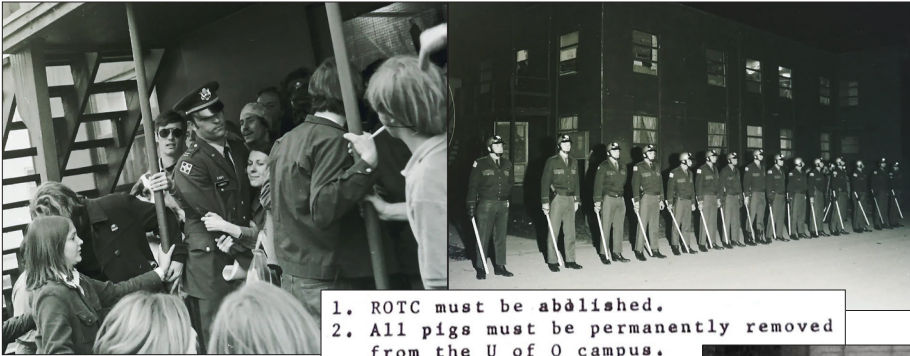
A Question As You Visit

How do the actions of past administrators like Karl Onthank under repressive federal governments compare to actions of current administrators in similar positions? What role should UO take on when students are under threat of federal repression, especially when it is racially motivated?

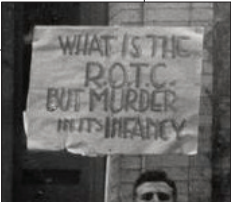


The ROTC "Military Science" building as seen in 2025.

Composite: Protestors scuffle with police who later surround the French and Cherney Hall ROTC Offices in April 1970; published demands of students from the same month; a protestor holds a sign outside of Fenton Hall in April 1937. *Register-Guard, SCUA*



Historically, the ROTC quarters have garnered perhaps the most physical aggression of any department at the university. As American troops have deployed across the world, protestors have often concentrated on the ROTC as the local representative of American foreign policy and US imperialism. This has mobilized students and charged the atmosphere in Eugene, setting the scene for both non-violent protest and escalating violent action. University support for the program — or simply allowing it to maintain a physical presence on campus — has been perceived as capitulation to American involvement in horrors abroad.⁴³ It is also worth noting that the sheer scale and fervor of action against ROTC has ushered increased militarized responses to protestors — including the first use of tear gas and National Guardsman against students at UO. Altogether, dissidents' fierce reactions to ROTC reveals it as UO's most profound spatial entanglement with militarism and US empire: sending brutality outwards across borders, which ultimately rebounds back to campus.



20 1970 anti-ROTC SDS rally poster. *SCUA*

Seen as a war preparedness program for white and able-bodied civilian men during the First World War, the signing of the National Defense Act in 1916 facilitated the establishment of numerous ROTC programs on campuses across the nation,⁴⁴ including at the UO. Then President Prince Lucien Campbell supported the adoption of ROTC,⁴⁵ saying “the matter of military training in any school seems to me to be a training for better citizenship, rather than for war” in 1915, shortly before the program was housed in a small building near the corner of 15th and University Streets (which is now the northwest edge of Esslinger Hall).⁴⁶

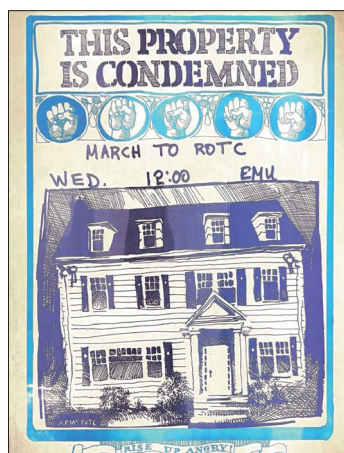
For its first five decades, ROTC at the UO was

“compulsory,” meaning participation in its training program (or “drill”) was mandatory for all freshmen and sophomore men. Though this primarily took the form of physical education, it sparked a tension between administrators and the university community, because it gave the military inappropriate control over students and academic requirements. In April of 1937, a large crowd of students affiliated with the national Peace Movement walked out of class, rallying outside of Fenton Hall to protest the potential of another World War for profit and the compulsory status of ROTC. Among others calling for peace, a white sign reading “what is the ROTC but murder in its infancy” peeked out of the crowd.

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education had to be lobbied to change ROTC’s regulations, and in 1935, UO faculty found themselves deadlocked in a 42-42 vote to recommend the board make participation voluntary. UO president C.V. Boyer leveled his tie-breaking vote against the recommendation in order to maintain compulsory status.⁴⁷ Faculty remained resolute, and between 1935-1962 several votes came close to delivering the recommendation. Successful votes by faculty at both UO and Oregon State University in 1962 moved the state to declare participation in the programs voluntary. The record high enrollment of the program peaked in 1959 with 1400 cadets.⁴⁸

In the early morning of April 25, 1963, the ROTC building on 15th and University was burned entirely to the ground, and the cause was later confirmed as arson.⁴⁹ The program moved offices into the nearby French and Cherney Halls (which were located within the current footprint of the Student Rec Center) and its storage into the depth of the Physical Education Building (now Esslinger).

1968 saw the United State’s involvement in Vietnam grow and ROTC targeted by dissidents again. Graduate students who were forced to share offices with ROTC in French and Cherney delivered a petition to interim president Charles Johnson demanding the program’s eviction, citing the potential danger of a political attack on the buildings. They were ignored, and on Monday, November 4, an explosion of dynamite ripped through the building. The blast collapsed the floor of the Air Force ROTC’s (founded in 1948) administrator’s office into the basement and left an eight-foot-wide hole in the adjacent wall. None were injured.⁵⁰ Neither the arsonists in ‘68 nor those who caused the 1963 fire were ever figured out.



Anti-ROTC Rally Poster, likely depicting the past Alder Street location. SCUA

Things kept heating up during the 1969-70 school year. The campus chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) ran a year-long campaign

demanding ROTC be removed from campus along with all other “pigs.” They kept busy — within months, a torch-lit march of over 200 protestors accosted president Robert Clark on his front porch in the middle of the night,⁵¹ ROTC recruiters were splashed with animal blood by members of a women’s militia,⁵² a Chicago concert at MacArthur Court was disrupted⁵³ and a “People’s Trial” found the university and ROTC complicit in “Racist War Crimes in Vietnam.”⁵⁴

On January 19, 1970, hundreds of protestors marched through Cherney and French Halls to disrupt classes chanting “Smash ROTC.” Many returned the next Friday, January 23, and ransacked the buildings’ administrative offices.⁵⁵ On Valentine’s Day, another arsonists’ fire broke out, this time in the ROTC storage room in the PE Building (Esslinger Hall).⁵⁶ It caused over \$250,000 (nearly \$2.1 million today) in damages and destroyed ROTC records, weapons and hundreds of uniforms. The message “My Lai” was later found written on the room’s door.

On April 15, members of the Faculty Senate called a vote to terminate ROTC from campus. Many in support cited that no other university program saw a prospective employer (the US military) entirely dictating the related course of study (ROTC). Despite a close margin of 199-185, the vote failed, inciting clashes between students and police. Just hours later, tear gas was deployed for the first time in campus history by the Eugene Police Department in an attempt to disperse hundreds of protestors throwing rocks, fire crackers and torches at Cherney Hall.⁵⁷ Both the ROTC buildings and Johnson sustained substantial damage and seven students were arrested, four of which were held at \$25,000 bail — the highest amount in Eugene history to that date for a non-capital crime (equivalent to over \$200,000 today).⁵⁸ A 700-person-strong march rallied to the county jail that night to demand their release. The situation on campus continued to escalate the following week



Dan McCarty, student conduct system coordinator, tries to put out a fire on the lawn of the ROTC building May 4, 1972. A few moments later, more kerosene was poured on the fire.



Phil Waldstein/Oregon Daily Emerald

and the movement peaked in its power, as covered in other entries. Despite this, most student demands were never addressed, and ROTC remained in place.

The May 4 killing of four student protesters by National Guardsmen at Kent State jolted the nation and the campaign, canceling classes nationally and chilling the protest movement at UO for the remainder of the spring.⁵⁹ Following the school year, French and Cherney Hall were demolished due to the damages and ROTC moved to

temporary quarters in an old fraternity house near 18th and Alder.

A year later, as multiple US-backed military operations failed in Laos, the most violent riot in the history of UO ROTC unfolded. A day of varied pro-peace activities on Thursday, May 6, 1971 culminated in an evening of street warfare: a march from the downtown courthouse to campus saw nearly 100 law enforcement officers exchanging rocks, bottles, tear gas and nightsticks with over 500 protestors. Among the bonfires that stretched Adler Street and the broken glass from the windows of the ROTC house, 38 students were arrested and several sustained injuries requiring treatment.⁶⁰ The evening rocked Eugene as one of the most disruptive protests in city history. Later anti-war demonstrations saw students digging faux bomb craters and setting the ROTC building sign on fire in the spring of 1972,⁶¹ but the pressure on the program slowly relented and focuses shifted as the campus anti-war movement dissipated.

In fall 1976, the ROTC moved into its current office on Agate Street as enrollment totaled just 80 students. The decades here have been significantly more peaceful for the program, though not uneventful. In 1983 ROTC drew faculty scrutiny for not abiding by affirmative action anti-discrimination practices that the rest of the university was required to (the program would not allow gay students to receive scholarships or enter into upper divisions).⁶² Pro-American sentiment during the Gulf-War in 1990-91 and following September 11, 2001 subtly increased cadet enrollment and campus support for the program, though seven community members were arrested for trespassing at the ROTC during a peaceful protest against the Iraq War in November of 2005.⁶³ As of 2025, the program has produced 48 general officers, more than nearly all other programs at non-military schools.⁶⁴

Questions As You Visit

How and where do you see power within the “profound spatial entanglement” of the university, ROTC and US Empire?

Remember that violence is often the manifestation of power.

Under what circumstances may dissidents return their aim to the ROTC?

LYLLYE REYNOLDS-PARKER BLACK CULTURAL CENTER



Despite its reputation as a state of progressive liberal ideals, Oregon’s history is marked by virulent racism and codified discrimination. Visioned by settlers as a “white utopia,” it was the only state

The BCC in 2025.



The Black Panther Party emerges on campus in a 1968 rally. *Oregana*

admitted to the Union which practiced Black exclusion (laws and policies that prohibit Black people from owning property, making contracts or simply being within state borders) or enshrined it in its Bill of Rights.⁶⁵ Eugene, considered a sundown town until 1927, boasted one of Oregon's strongest Ku Klux Klan chapters, and overall, the state had the highest KKK membership per capita in the US. Against these odds, a small Black community emerged in Eugene by the 1950s. But even as discrimination

became illegal thanks to new public accommodations and fair housing laws, the legacy of prejudice and racism persisted well into the latter half of the 20th century.

In the context of these inequalities and the national Civil Rights Movement, the UO Black Student Union (BSU) submitted a list of demands and grievances to university president Arthur Flemming on April 8, 1968. Processing the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King just days earlier, they called for immediate action by the administration to reduce racial tension on campus, eradicate inhumane acts and attitudes of racism and provide more academic and financial resources for Black students.⁶⁵ This included implementing an African American studies curriculum, hiring more Black professors, increasing scholarships and allocating dedicated space for Black and other minority students to gather and study. Admin responded by opening a dialogue with students and providing some resources, namely creating 75 new scholarships to incoming black students through Project 75. But despite this initial movement, the majority of the BSU's demands were not met, and much remained to be desired in the way of racial equality and cultural resources at the UO.

Nearly 50 years later, another wave of Black student activism emerged. In 2015, the national Black Lives Matter movement gained steam, and protests at the University of Missouri inspired members of numerous UO Black student organizations — including, of course, the BSU, Black Women of Achievement, Black Male Alliance and QTBIPOC groups in the Multicultural Center — to mobilize in Eugene. They organized meetings, rallies, teach-ins and die-ins which brought thousands of students on campus together in the name of racial justice and equality between December 2014 and November 2015.⁶⁶ A handful of



student leaders cohered to form the Black

BSU leadership in 1974. *Oregana*



Student Task Force (BSTF), and on November 12, 2015, they issued a set of demands to UO president Schill which were eerily similar to those of 1968. Among them was once again the need to provide physical space for Black Students to build community and share culture, as well as more calls to increase students' resources and rename campus buildings that had namesakes with racist origins.⁶⁷

Out of the BSTF meeting with Schill came the pursuit of a Black Cultural Center (BCC) — which taskforce members worked extensively to plan and build student support for — as well as meeting with donors to gather funding.⁶⁸

In January 2017, Schill announced the UO would move forward with the BCC thanks to successful fundraising, and in October 2018 students and community gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony and celebration at the future location on East 15th Avenue between Moss and Villard streets. A year later, on October 12, 2019, the center opened its doors to the public as the Lyllye Reynolds-Parker Black Cultural Center. Reynolds-Parker was a longtime Eugene resident and beloved advisor to many Black students (see page 34). Like her warm and welcoming spirit, the BCC serves to academically, culturally and communally nourish students.

Today, there is still much work to be done on campus in further pursuit of racial equality. Out of 17 demands presented between 1968 and 2015, only three have been met.⁶⁹ Other wins included the renaming of a now demolished Hamilton Hall wing to “Unthank” (previously named for Frederick Dunn, a KKK leader) and denaming of University Hall (previously named for Matthew Deady, a pro-slavery federal judge), as well as the creation of the Umoja Black Scholars Academic Residential Community. And though the contributions of Black students to the university and their own communities are immeasurable, their presence at UO has only meagerly increased: in 1974, they made up about 1.4% of the overall student body (earliest data available), and in 2024, that number had only increased to 2.9%.⁷⁰ But there is true hope in the creation of a physical space dedicated to Black students. Black Power activists have been on the forefront of revolutionary struggles in the United States not only because they have struggled for equal rights and resources, but also because they have fought for more human relationships between people. The BCC is a powerful place for Black students to persist in forging relationships, building community and organizing for liberation.

*Composite: 2018
groundbreaking at the
BCC; the Black Student
Task Force. Oregon Daily
Emerald, David Pluviose*



In memorial of Lyllye Reynolds-Parker (1946-2024)

Beloved mentor and activist. Photo via Register-Guard



Coming from one of the first African American families to settle in Eugene, Ms. Parker was likely the first black baby born at the “whites-only” Sacred Heart Hospital in 1946. She graduated from the first class of Sheldon High School in 1964, where she served as vice president of the Eugene chapter of the Student

Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She later enrolled at UO at the age of 40, earning a degree in sociology which led to work as an academic advisor in the Office of Multicultural Academic Support (now CMAE) for 17 years. She quickly became one of the most beloved advisors on campus and a true rock for hundreds of young students of color. In letters of support for her to become the BCC’s namesake, many former students genuinely remembered her as family, crediting their empowerment and success to her support.⁷¹ In addition to the care and tough love, Ms. Parker was perhaps most well known for a constant refrain: “*Speak truth to power.*”

A Question As You Visit

Note the location of the BCC on our campus’ edge. What does this tell us about how power works here? What challenges or advantages are there for a gathering space along the edge?

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING



AND THE GROVE COMMUNITY GARDEN



Composite: CASL and the Grove in 2025.

In 2025, venturing down Moss Street south of the Kalapuya Illihi dormitory will yield a much different part of campus than most students are accustomed to: a neighborhood noisy from children playing in the street, sidewalks filled with apples fallen from trees and many houses empty and seemingly let go of. The west side of the street is fenced off and cleared for development — the university will soon build the first of two eight-story, 800-bed dorms here which will anchor the future of the east campus area. The east side of the street tells a different story. A hand painted sign reading “Grove Community Garden” invites you up off of the sidewalk and into an abundance of fresh food growing in 20 or so wooden raised beds. A small and abandoned blue house with a sign overgrown by grass says “Center for the Advancement Sustainable

Living,” nestled just north of a mason bee house that borders the garden’s edge. 2026 will see both of these places demolished and made ready for more dorm development, but their intertwined histories and nearby future tell of place-based struggles for sustainability, mutual aid and community.

Over 20 years ago, the Center for the Advancement of Sustainable Living (CASL) began as a vision for an ecologically and socially conscious framework for living.⁷² Inspired by efforts at other academic institutions (such as the Campus Center for Appropriate Technology at Humboldt State University), UO students, faculty and community members formulated a proposal to explore sustainable living at a residential scale in early 2002.

They envisioned transforming an existing house on the edge of campus into an integrated classroom, living space, resource center and research facility — all of which pursued environmental sustainability, economic feasibility, applied research and teaching. Students were to lead the project and live in the house, facilitating community and creating an educational gateway to the future high-density campus development in the surrounding area.

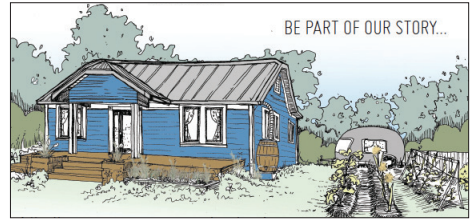
The project gained the support of numerous academic departments and campus programs: in 2003, ASUO recognized CASL as a student organization, and in 2008 it received nearly \$150,000 in funds from the ASUO, the University Space Committee and Student Sustainability Fund.⁷³ On January 7, 2009, the School of Architecture and Allied Arts (now the College of Design) acquired the house at 1801 Moss Street to become the Center. Originally built sometime in the 1930s, the collective drew plans to transform it into a state of the art demonstration for low impact living, including every possible measure to be highly energy and resource efficient (eventually aiming to become a passive solar system). Soon after, students began remodeling and reconstructing the house to these measures, work which continued throughout the next decade.

In 2012, faculty and students involved with the project as well as the Landscape Architecture department reclaimed the empty grass lot to the south of the house, and started the Grove Edible Campus Initiative (also referred to as “Project Tomato”). Student organizers from the group Climate Justice League and ASUO senators were particularly instrumental in securing access to the space from campus planning, which also led to the nearby Columbia Street Garden’s creation. Originally designed as an offshoot of the UO Urban Farm, the Grove project aimed to simply grow food on campus for students. Intended to be a short term endeavor of three years, organizers installed a meager irrigation system and pulled an old airstream trailer into the corner of the lot to house tools and seeds (which was donated in hopes of facilitating future mobile gardening elsewhere off campus).



CASL students in the late 2000s.
Student Sustainability Center

By the end of the 2010s, the overall CASL project found itself in limbo. The faculty responsible for oversight left, students lost direction and the house fell into physical and bureaucratic disrepair. Students attempted to continue interior and exterior renovations, but due to a lack of consistent support or resources, much of the work was not permitted or up to code and would not reach university compliance. The CASL organization expended the majority of its funds, and eventually lost most student interest.



A visualization of CASL circa late 2010s.
Student Sustainability Center

In 2019, an effort was made by the Student Sustainability Center (SSC) to resurrect the space into a hub for student resiliency. “We must do better by our students,” read a proposal to make the house into the “Center for Sustainable Living,” citing high rates of studied homelessness, housing and food insecurity among the campus community.⁷⁴ To do so, it aimed to take on the original CASL vision while also adding a food pantry annex, free school supplies and clothing store and eventually a basic needs navigator. The SSC aimed to ultimately transform the home into a national example for how universities could care for their students while connecting them to their environment. The idea was denied by administration and planners who reached similar conclusions: the house was too far gone with not enough potential to renovate considering the then-murky (and possibly short) housing development timelines for the area.

After almost 20 years, it was simplest for the university to scrap the existing resources and vision of the CASL in favor of demolishing and repurposing the area. The COVID-19 pandemic saw the house wholly abandoned. Building plans spread across a table along with an empty pizza box could be seen through the windows, like the last group inside locked the door and never came back.

All the while, the garden had been growing up and around the edges of the CASL. Around 2014, the SSC took over its coordination and transformed it into a community space run for and by students. This was not without its challenges, which in some ways mirrored the house. Existing within the same zone of future development, the UO didn’t allow permanent infrastructure to be installed or substantial financial investment. And thanks to busy schedules and not enough support, many of the garden’s raised beds were rented and abandoned by students — empty slates of dirt rather than filled with food.

But garden organizers, with another generation of help from Climate Justice League, saw the value in the space and decided to overhaul how it worked. Understanding that destruction was likely imminent and hoping to secure future garden space, they collectivized food growing efforts and continued to transform the landscape of the area into a community space. They developed communal values and opened work sessions by critically analyzing the powers that allowed food insecurity to exist at an institution as well resourced as UO. This shift

and injection of creative energy led to abundance — both of food growing and students involved. Weekly work parties, which had seen around 5 students in 2022, saw more than 30 students regularly by 2024 and more than 60 on one January day. Once-empty beds exploded with food and life, offering students and others free produce nearly every week of the year — including all the way through the winter. The airstream was replaced with new, green garden sheds and a full deer fence was built to protect food from wildlife.

And yet, in January 2025, campus planners notified the SSC that by the end of the year they would have to vacate the garden which was, on paper, still temporary. After 13 years of caring for the land, and a year of public engagement where it was easy to see that the most valuable piece of East Campus to students was the Grove, the university refused to include it within the new designs. And though this will mean the end to the garden as it is seen in 2025, there is a significant silver lining. As the university encourages “displaced uses” to be rebuilt when possible,⁷⁵ it will relocate the Grove from 1801 Moss Street to just a block north in the empty lot behind Global Scholars Hall, near the Northwest Indigenous Language Institute (1605 Moss Street) by the end of the 25-26 academic year. It will maintain a collective growing model, prioritizing mutual aid and community: food grown will go right back to the students who grew it, to campus food security efforts and also Eugene street outreach groups. Different geographies also create possibilities: new effort will be put towards collaborating with soon nearby university programs and communities that have historically lacked access to such food growing spaces.



Today, the changing landscape of Moss Street provides a window into broader networks of capital. 2025 sees UO facing a financial crisis, caused in large part by a decreasing number of newly admitted out-of-state and international students.⁷⁶ As these students pay far more in tuition than in-state students, the university is forced to increase overall enrollment in order to meet status quo finances. This is, of course, an attempt at maintaining the administration’s vision of an incessantly expanding, ever larger research institution, which is a far departure from its liberal arts roots, and difficult to square with environmental sustainability or care. Though the UO has long eyed east campus for housing development, it is as attractive a time as ever to convert what is viewed as buildable surplus land into economic input 37

via tuition dollars.

Both the CASL and the Grove illuminate much of how power constructs the landscape and lives of students. Although “sustainability” does occur at the UO, it is far from an overall institutional value or pursuit. But at times, radical efforts towards it are celebrated and supported. CASL represents perhaps a cautionary tale: that an inspirational pursuit as such can fall into disrepair and abandon due to lack of continuity and proper planning — which can easily happen when projects rely too much on individual passions. The Grove, however, shows us perhaps an inverse reflection: that a similar effort can be in, but not of the university — it can find support despite being threatened by parts of the institution. Students can transform space through embracing a vision, and acting collectively to take responsibility for the ground beneath them.

In sum, though place-based aspirations at UO may be fragile, they show us the beauty that can be found in the corners and edges of our institution. And they prove to us that even when the university fails to care for students that we can care for ourselves. Today, the Grove Community Garden is a rare example of this: students bursting from the cracks of the university, full of life — coming together to collectivize resources, build community and meet their own needs.



A crane from the impending development project looms over the Grove in the summer of 2025.

And of course, this is a place that we are losing soon.
Like so many other things; in tremendous fashion.
An inevitability that makes me shake when I imagine
the special sorrow of a bulldozer treading over soil
we have held in our hands.
And so as I have prayed to myself over and over again these past six months:
May we lose this edge with grace.
May we burst from the cracks of the
foundations
they pour over us.
And remember the wind that scattered us;
the soil that grew us;
and the mystery that we are still here.
To you my love and abundance, who have taught me
how to take responsibility for myself
and the space I occupy.
May I transmute my grief into praise!
May my full belly sing to how you all have loved me.
For truly,
We will both be born again.
Me in places unknown
And you just a block up Moss Street.

Questions As You Visit

At 1801 Moss: What does it feel like to be in a development zone, a landscape of rapid and sharp transformation?

At 1605 Moss: Visit the new Grove — how does the space compare to the character of the CASL or old Grove, as conveyed via this entry?



AFTERWORD

This guide is the culmination of the efforts of many, primarily of the UO People's Guide Project: a group of roughly ten undergraduate organizers

who have been inspired to dynamically re-imagine what the University of Oregon has been and will become. Our efforts have been heavily supported by the UO Radical Organizing and Activism Resource (ROAR) Center and The Nightly Ruby newspaper. We have taken much of our insight from A People's Guide, a popular geography project that aims to build spatial understandings of power internationally. Laura Pulido, Collins Chair and professor in Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies and Geography here at UO, is a series editor of the larger project and has been instrumental in the development of our local explorations. The first edition of our campus guide was created in the summer of 2024, and we are overjoyed to release this further refined and expanded version to you in the fall of 2025.

Of course, this edition (the second) is but one contribution toward showing how power works at the University of Oregon, and there is much we were unable to include. We encourage you reading this, whether hot off the press or in 2076, to continue where we left off — investigate the history of your favorite places on campus and tell others what happened there. This is the *People's Guide*, after all.

For our part, we plan to release a long-form pamphlet in 2026 to further deepen our analyses, which will include both the contents of this tour guide as well as accompanying essays which address broader struggles and manifestations of power. We are excited to share a tentative table of contents below. Keep your eyes out and drop by the ROAR Center (EMU 006) sometime to check in on this work.

- *Prologue* // The Ground Beneath Us: Kalapuya Illihi
- *Tour Guide* (Contents of the Second Edition + lots more supplemental material)
- *Supporting Works*:
 - A People's Timeline of 150 Years of the University of Oregon: 1876-2026
 - A People's Guide to the Erb Memorial Union (EMU)
 - A People's Guide Campus Policing: From EPD to UOPD to the 'Demonstration Education and Safety' (Demo) Team
 - A People's Guide to the 1%: Who Bought and Sold the University of Oregon, and What is The Board of Trustees?
 - Disclose, Divest! A People's Guide to Campus Divestment Campaigns
 - A People's Guide to Organized Labor
 - Liberated Space: Geographies of Power and Reclamation
 - A People's Guide to the People's Guide: Acknowledgments and How We Did It
- *Epilogue* // UO 2076



Ed from United Academics teaches student workers picket line songs during their 2025 strike. Maggie Schnobrich

"Revolutions are made out of love for people and place."⁷⁷

—Grace Lee + Jimmy Boggs

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By Valentine Bentz

I have found so much meaning in and on the grounds of our campus, but it would be worth little without my comrades, co-creators and mentors. To those who have and contributed their brilliance to this project: **thank you for bringing this guide to life.** We do it for the people of this place, and especially those in the struggle: then, now and tomorrow.

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Alternat-U



DIVEST
BY +
DISCLOSE

NO MONEY FOR GENOCIDE

**IF I MUST DIE
YOU MUST
LIVE TO TELL
MY STORY**

**LIBERATION
GROWS
HERE**

**FREE
PALESTINE**

Free

**ALL POWER
TO THE PEOPLE**

The University has struck not to stop our education but to make it real to the world. The Alternat University emphasizes a principled and ac sition to Vietnam, T perialism, and Repression

**CAMPUS
DEMOCRACY**

RIGHTS

**LIBERATE
THE EMU!**

Students take Johnson Hall; stay all night

**WHO ARE THE REAL
OUTSIDE AGITATORS?**

protected against under the Bill of Rights.

the situation faced by two of the Meyerhauseres of felony "riot" brought by the state.

is "acted in concert" by people who allege

ity of the federal government's indictments st

pression last A

The scene which took place in the ROTC building yesterday is a what has been this society every

trial), the New York Pant... are the Chi

and the United Brothers... with publi

Blacks by another

s society tries to

their politics. There is

yesterdays: the people have to get themselves together and unite a

on being laid on us by the ruling class of this university and o

3 CHARGED FOR ROTC DEMONSTRATION

Today, three more of us are being brought before student court on ch

erly conduct and disrupting the educational process last spring at A

ation during ROTC's practice for its graduation ceremonies. This case

to that of the Meyerhauser Five because three people

legal acts of a

