

In Our Own Words | Staff Editorial

Oracle headache becomes a migraine

It seems that ever since former LCC President Paula Cunningham resigned amid controversy with the multimillion dollar Oracle software, the college's Information Technology problems have spiraled out of control.

The first major dilemma the college faced occurred in 2006 when financial aid disbursements were severely delayed.

Additionally, some students were paid more money than they were supposed to receive. The college later sought to recoup money lost to the erroneous payments, but announced late last year it had abandoned these efforts.

Nearly one year after Cunningham tendered her resignation, the college is experiencing further IT difficulties.

This time, the detriment to students has happened at a terribly inconvenient time.

When registration for spring classes began in November last year, the chance of accessing the Oracle system was hit or miss. The office of *The Lookout*, not to mention the entire campus, buzzed with conversation about how problematic and irritating it was to register for classes.

According to a Campus Communication e-mail, the problems with financial aid and the student registration systems arose the week of Dec. 10. The memo also revealed Oracle was due for a year-end upgrade, which the college hoped would address the software's performance issues.

As confirmed by the memo and the ensuing frustrations undoubtedly felt by students, faculty and staff alike, the upgrade failed to cure Oracle's ailments.

"The upgrade addressed some functional issues that needed to be resolved, but not the underlying system errors that have continued to cause system errors and create instability and risks for all our Oracle systems," LCC President Dr. Judith Cardenas wrote in the memo.

This instability, as mentioned by the memo, plagued another crucial division of student registration. More specifically, a recent glitch in the financial aid system affected recipients of federal aid by crediting their account more money than they should actually be receiving. LCC has made it clear students will not receive the extra money credited to their accounts.

It is completely understandable why the school would not pay out more money than it needs to. The problem is all too reminiscent of the school's fumble under the Cunningham administration.

The school explained itself to faculty and staff in the form of a Campus Communication memo from Cardenas:

"We believe this error occurred as a result of the system's instability. When staff tried to send the calculations from financial aid to the student accounts, they did not appear in the account in the usual timeframe. Believing that system instability caused the transfer to abort, staff repeated the process, resulting in errors in the paid amounts."

While it is worth noting LCC had already noticed a problem with the Oracle software in early December, it would have perhaps been advantageous to notify not only faculty and staff of the glitches, but the students as well.

Considering only college faculty and staff receive

Campus Communication e-mails, students were left in the dark in regards to the specific problems the school faced, with the exception of a letter sent to recipients of financial aid checks.

Not everyone receives those checks. It would have been courteous of LCC to at least e-mail students because when the problem lies not only with financial aid, but registration as well, *everyone* is affected.

Here is our bottom line: the chaos, disorganization, frustration and headaches need to come to an end.

Nary has a semester gone by without some sort of technical error experienced college-wide that hinders registration or, especially, financial aid.

LCC has a practice of examining other community colleges and universities for new ideas and final verdicts in deciding stipulations for new policies. We would love for our school to meet with the much larger Michigan State University and other community colleges to discuss these policies. For example, Delta (in Saginaw) and Kalamazoo community colleges allow students to purchase their textbooks with a voucher representing the remainder of their financial aid money not already spent on tuition.

It would be wise to examine these practices while seriously addressing recurring problems that tend to lower student morale. During recent semesters, LCC has done a better job of addressing some of the more serious problems.

This semester, the school seems to have been sent back to square one.

When, LCC, will you fix the problem instead of sweeping it under the rug until the next semester comes?

Editor's Rant | Zane McMillin

Completely captivated with a band from a place called Issaquah

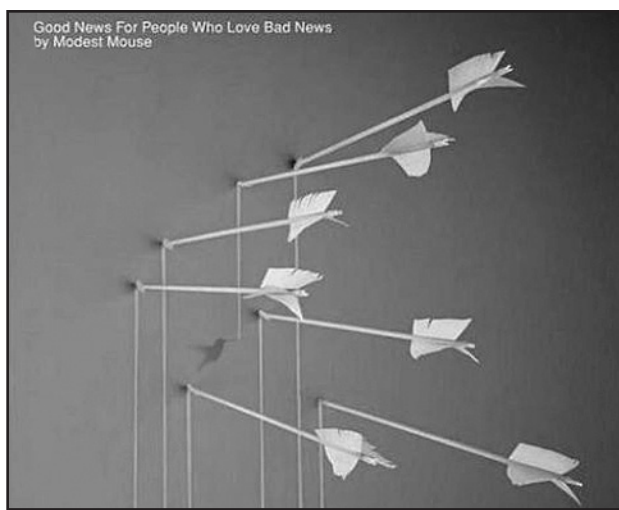
When I first heard of the Issaquah, Wash.-based band Modest Mouse, I was crammed in the coach cabin of an airplane headed for São Paulo, Brazil.

One of the girls in our group had bought a *Spin* magazine at the airport in New York and a headline that ran across the top of the page announced an interview with the band on page so-and-so.

After reading the article, my curiosity was piqued. Upon returning home, I purchased the band's newest album (at the time), "Good News for People Who Love Bad News."

It was love. It was unlike anything I had ever heard before. Usually, I listened to music my friends at the time were listening to. This typically meant long sessions of Metallica, Godsmack and a whole plethora of similar, terrible music.

Modest Mouse was my introduction to the world of lesser-known bands and singer-songwriters. I am refraining from using the word "indie" because most people I know who call themselves indie get all pissed



when bands "sell out." I could care less how a band handles their record company, and all things considered, my music generally won't play on the Top 40 radio stations whether the band "sells out" or not.

That's a whole different argument for a different day. I am here to tell you about Modest Mouse.

The band's lead singer, Isaac Brock, has an incredibly unique voice I guarantee you will not find elsewhere.

At times, his voice treads the fine line between singing (Brock's voice can be

described, at best, as melancholic) and yelling. I don't mean screamo and I don't mean the disgusting, guttural noise produced by most metal bands. I mean yelling that complements the at times mellow, at times upbeat music that never fails to disappoint.

Since first listening to "Good News ..." all the way through, Modest Mouse quickly worked its way into my heart. When I purchased an earlier album, "This is a Long Drive for Someone with Nothing to Think About," it solidified the band as my favorite. Years later, no

band has come close. (Modest Mouse is my favorite band, whereas my favorite stand-alone singer-songwriter is Sufjan Stevens.)

I own all of the band's CDs, and one day listened to the entire collection while I cleaned.

I strongly feel that Modest Mouse has evolved from some of their earliest music ("...Long Drive...", "The Fruit That Ate Itself") to complex new sounds that remain as original as they always have been ("We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank").

While I prefer their old material, I still love the newer albums because the band manages to stay completely original while experimenting with new sound elements and production.

My personal favorite songs include "The World at Large" ("Good News ..."), "Little Motel" ("We Were Dead ..."), "Tiny Cities Made of Ashes" ("The Moon & Antarctica") and "Whenever You Breathe Out, I Breathe In (Positive Negative)" ("Building Nothing Out of Something").

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