

A 'Free University'

An informal structure that could involve University students in thinking, teaching themselves and searching for the answers to problems could be a tremendous contribution to education in this city.

A group of some of the University's most capable students are presently finishing plans for such an organization that would provide seminars, lectures and discussions on a variety of different subjects in addition to students' regular studies.

The term these students are using to describe this informal organization is a "free university."

To some people this may sound radical and quite unorthodox, but in reality it is anything but radical and quite appropriate to a university society.

A "free university" at Nebraska would be similar to a simple gathering of people discussing important topics except that it would be well organized and function in such a way that a variety of topics for study and discussion could be organized according to student wishes.

The idea of people organizing groups to pursue their own lines of inquiry is hardly original, but the Daily Nebraskan congratulates this group for forming a plan whereby the idea can be used at Nebraska.

There are many important problems, ideas, concepts, philosophies and kinds of knowledge that a well-educated person should be familiar with and understand. Unfortunately universities such as Nebraska often cannot afford for one reason or another to have classes on each one of these concepts. Schools also do not have space or the staff to conduct many classes where students can discuss ideas or exchange viewpoints.

Many students and faculty members complain about these modern educational problems, but few are willing to make a sincere effort at helping the schools correct this unsatisfactory situation.

Efforts to organize a "free university" in Nebraska's educational society is one of these sincere efforts to help improve the students' education.

In the 1966 summer issue of the United States National Student Association's "The American Student," Paul Danish, a former editor of the Colorado Daily, wrote an article explaining the concept of a "free university." The following quotes are taken from his article.

"First, they ('free universities') are raising questions which clearly are not being asked in the nation's traditional schools, and those questions just happen to be the ones which are most pressing to a great many college students.

"The elders might not like to admit it, but the cold war is a fact of life to the young, and the usual anti-boishivist shibboleths offered in justification of it are no longer credible to many of them. How many 'good' universities offer a course in Life in Mainland China? And how many 'good' universities are even willing to recognize the existence of let alone discuss it in the classroom.

"Getting the right answers is not nearly as important as asking the right questions, and it is the failure of American higher education to do the latter that has made so much of the college experience so frustrating for so many.

"Second, the free universities are giving the student a chance to take part in his own education. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. The most urgent shortcomings in modern education are not so much in content (which often has a way of becoming relevant in spite of itself even in the duller course) as in approach.

"The overwhelming fact confronting the modern college student is that he will spend most of his time being lectured at. The size of the class is of little importance; the technique of teaching by lecture is found in all disciplines and at all levels—and the modern student finds it

More Than An Activity

"It's not an activity—anything that takes that much time cannot be an activity."

That is one of the usual images of the Daily Nebraskan, but several other descriptions must also be added.

"It's not an activity—anything that teaches a member of the staff that much . . ."

"It's not an activity—anything that plays such an important role to the University and every student . . ."

"It's not an activity—anything that can be so personally rewarding . . ."

All of these are ways of describing

equally sterile in massive freshman courses and in graduate seminars.

"In a lecture situation, the student need only let his mind function as a tape recorder. If he remembers what is said, he does well on the exams. He has no sense of participating in a search for knowledge.

"It is in working out techniques for involving the student body as a work force that the free university could make a tremendous contribution. So far, it has done little more than serve notice that there is a desire on the part of students to assume such a role.

"That in itself might be enough to speed reform in the educational establishment, but even more can be done. Free universities do not have to be limited to reclaiming valuable educational techniques of the past; they can introduce truly original ones as well. At present, it is probably fair to say that most free university courses are taught by methods thousands of years old—that is, the seminar and the lecture.

"Both techniques are valuable (there is nothing inherently wrong with a lecture if a professor is indeed 'professing' something new, interesting or otherwise valuable) and to be practiced well they do not require elaborate or expensive audio-visual aids, but other techniques could be tried as well. For instance:

"Community theatre, in which a troupe of actors presents a play, interrupts it in the middle, and invites the audience to discuss what is happening, its meaning and its potential outcome. The technique has been used successfully in psychotherapy, and as a way of stimulating interest in social and political causes. Why couldn't it be used to teach philosophy, political science, or sociology?"

"Interdisciplinary study, whereby students and teachers with some training in various specialized fields select a contemporary problem and work together towards its solution. For example, suppose a group of fifteen or twenty scholars drawn from the Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences were to study the problem of how to feed the people of India.

"There are no doubt many other techniques that free universities could explore and their peculiar nature suits them uniquely to do so. If the above proposals were suggested to an orthodox institution of higher learning, their adoption would be obstructed by such considerations as grading procedures, degree requirements, campus social regulations, departmental jurisdictions, academic year calendars, political expediency and general bureaucratic inertia.

"Further the very questions raised in free universities are of such a nature that they readily lend themselves to new approaches to instruction. At the Experimental College of San Francisco State College, for example, a course entitled 'New Forum: Non-Verbal Seminar,' is offered. The course is 'an exploration in the use of non-verbal media of expression and communication. The phenomena of colors, textures, sounds, odors, lines and motions will be presented individually and in a variety of relations. There will be no class discussions; the instructor will speak only at the opening and concluding meetings."

"At the University of Texas, a free university is offering a course in Scientology, a subject that involves, among other things, a form of personality analysis using a lie detector. While one hesitates to suggest that students in a seminar on revolution might profit by trying to overthrow the local government, the topics potential for studying within the group such aspects of revolution as charisma, agitation, dissatisfaction and alienation should be obvious.

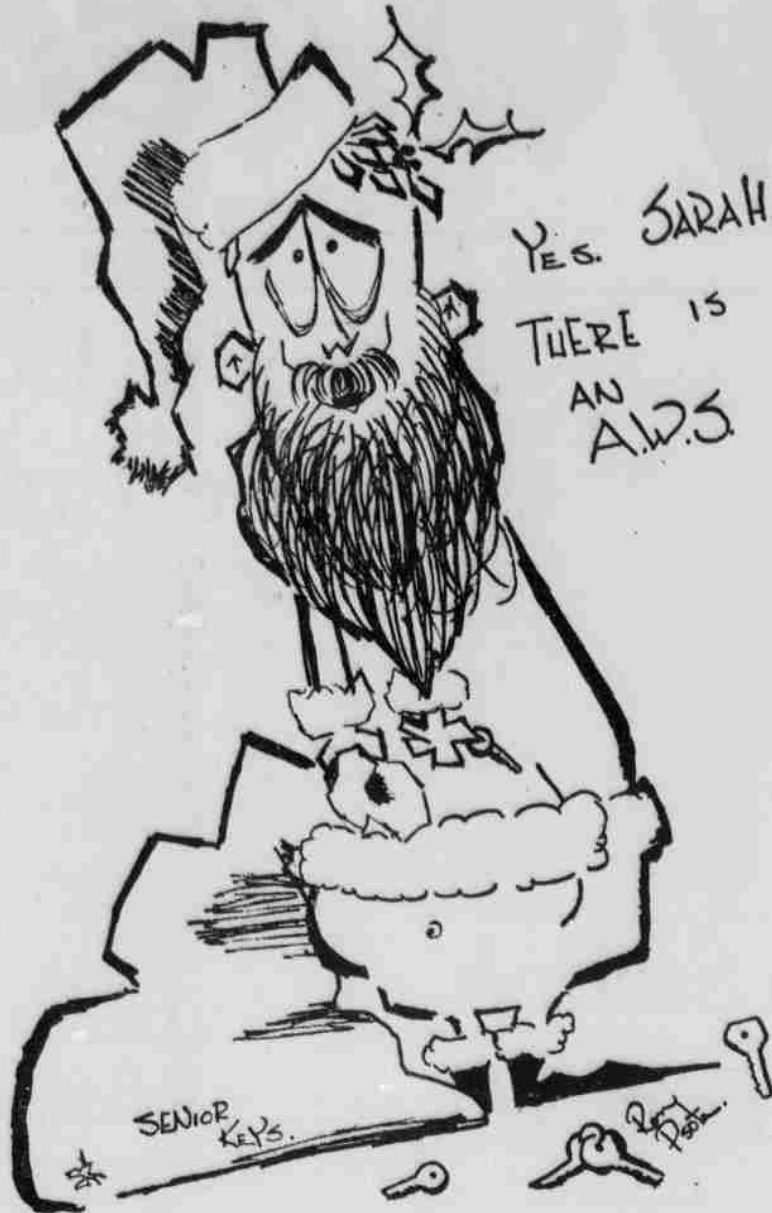
"There is reason enough for it. There is a growing feeling that the present organizational patterns of our society are inadequate and irrelevant for our needs. All over the world, social structures are being challenged as perhaps never before in history, and American higher education is hardly immune from the pattern. It is safe to assume that as the process of bureaucratic menopause continues, the search for alternatives will become more urgent."

the Daily Nebraskan and the students who work on the paper.

A member of the Nebraskan staff will experience these feelings and find himself involved everyday in all aspects of the school.

Applications will be available Friday in the paper's office, the School of Journalism and the student activities office for next semester's staff.

Any full-time student with at least a 2.0 average who wants to be involved in University life and likes excitement and hard work along with a great deal of personal satisfaction is eligible to apply for a position.



Bob Samuelson's All The Lonely People

Recently I received a letter in the mail which was the apparent result of several columns dealing with the subject of AWS and women's rights and hours. In fairness to the opinion which is in some ways opposed to my own, I thought that in support of the traditional democratic ideals, I would present it for all to consider.

"Dear Mr. Samuelson," (she went on.)

"There seems to me to be a dangerous situation afoot on the University campus at the present time concerning the liberalization of women's hours and other rules. (I have a daughter who is a co-ed, and I'm worried.)

"At the heart of the situation lies the criminal and mistaken assumption that there should be equality between sexes. This assumption is absurd, to say the least, and I should know because I am the mother of two students now attending

the University of Nebraska. They are twins, Elizabeth and Edward, age twenty.

"There is no question in my mind that Edward is much the more mature of the two, and I have evidence to support this fact. I will give one instance of his maturity.

"He is so conscientious about his car. Not once has he stayed out later than 1 p.m. because of car trouble. (I happen to know this is unusual for a boy his age because Elizabeth dates boys four and five years OLDER than Edward, and she gets home late regularly because of car trouble—not to mention running out of gas!)

"Edward is also more conscious of matters of, well . . . of, er, the sexual processes . . . (so to speak.) He has been breeding pigeons for seven years now. Elizabeth, I am sure, doesn't have any knowledge of, well . . . the birds and

the bees . . . (so to speak.) A mother KNOWS things like this about her children.

"When I sent my twins down to Lincoln two years ago it was only with the knowledge that my little Elizabeth would be protected. When her sorority sent me a questionnaire about whether or not to accept senior keys, well, I can tell you I WAS SHOCKED.

"To think that in just a few months my Elizabeth would be able to stay out until ALL HOURS just makes me shudder I tell you!

"There is one encouraging thing at any rate. I have heard the Associated Women's Students has decided to have a constitutional convention. I am certainly glad about this. We NEED to get back to the original ideals of our constitution, and it's about time someone realized it. Yours in H.M.S., Mrs. Victoria Gladstone,"

STEVE ABBOTT'S AGENBITE OF INWIT

Samuel Johnson reportedly said that one is more influenced by the chance books one reads than by those which are part of systematic education.

Why this is so I'll not consider, but as a matter of experience (i.e. my own), the truth bears old Sam out.

One of the books which I remember most clearly from undergr days is an aphoristic little volume by Ezra Pound, "The ABC of Reading." I don't remember how I came across the book, certainly not through accepted channels (I did ask an English prof. about it once and his remark was disparaging).

Anyway, EP was against the system and ever since it's him I've heard, not Rexroth, Goodman, Mailer or the usual rebel heroes.

Certain sentences just stick in your mind like, "Any general statement is like a cheque drawn on a bank. It's value depends on what there is to meet it." The insight is not so original, but that's the first time it had come to me and as Pope said: "True wit is nature to advantage dressed, what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

In some ways Ezra seems decidedly anti-intellectual. "For every reader on books of art, 1,000 people go to look at the paintings. Thank Heaven!" But three pages later:

"Greece and Rome civilized by language . . . The man of understanding can no more sit quiet and resigned while his country lets its literature decay and lets good writing meet with contempt, than a good doctor could sit quiet and contented while some ignorant child was infecting itself with tuberculosis under the impression that it was merely eating jam tarts."

What Ezra was against was not intellectualism but a phony ratiocination. "The greatest barrier," he said, is probably set up by teachers who know little more than the public, who want to exploit their fractional knowledge, and who are thoroughly opposed to making the least effort to learn anything more."

Ezra was unorthodox, impatient and unstable. He did not fit accepted academic patterns and was coughed up out of America like common phlegm. Later he was tried for treason for pro-fascist broadcasts he'd made during the war. Should we turn our back on him because of these factors?

Most people can't make a distinction between a man's personality and his work. They refuse to grant Allen Ginsberg any poetic merit because they object to his sexual propensities. They refuse to see any merit in Nietzsche's philosophy because the man died in an institution. We so often

categorize the whole in terms of the part.

When you shut others out you shut yourself in. You shut yourself in when you begin to dry up. American education suffers because there is nothing else except the existing system.

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Campus Opinion

School Means More Than Grades

Dear Editor: Your featured story on page one of the Nebraskan for Dec. 30 (on the lack of many departments approving the pass-fail system) and your editorial of the same day (on the non-intellectual atmosphere at NU) go hand in hand.

As long as there are teachers, and especially chairman of departments, who think the only reason why I am here at the University is to get a "good grade" then there will be no intellectual atmosphere at this school. I thought the pass-fail system was one step ahead in the sophistication of the University until the 1966-67 second semester class schedule reflected its disappointing nature.

I raise only one question: how can I convince the administration that what I determine a successful course is not the grade I receive, but what I can adapt to my personal goals?

Larry Eckhott

Would You Believe?

Dear Editor, Would you believe that during vacation I met a coed who came in at 2:30 a.m. on a 2 o'clock night and nothing happened to her?

Where could such a thing happen? Not at the University of Nebraska, that's for sure.

The coed was my sister, a high school senior. She got to CHOOSE the night she wanted to stay out until 2. She didn't have to get a pink slip, sign out, ask for a key, or have her date pay a penny for each minute she stayed out after 1 a.m. When the weather unexpectedly got bad, she didn't have to call her residence director to explain that she would be late. Her residence director TRUSTED her, a mere girl of 17.

When she came in a half hour late, she did not have to sign in on a late minute sheet, expect a call to court on Thursday afternoon or prepare herself for a weekend campus.

How unfortunate for her that she will be coming here to school next year! Granted, she won't have to sign out or in (except for certain occasions) and she can look forward to having key privileges when she is a senior.

But, she will have her "late date" nights chosen for her even though she may not be able to take advantage of it that particular night. She will not be as fully trusted as she was when she was at home. Her reason for a ten minute lateness may be received with an "I really don't believe you" attitude.

She will be unable to go home on certain "all-University occasion weekends" (unless she gets a pink slip and leaves before 7 p.m.) even though she may not even have the least bit of interest in the event.

I hope that she and the rest of the freshmen women next fall will have heard enough about the changes that must be made in AWS structure and rules so that they will want to take part in the constitutional convention. If changes aren't made, I have a feeling that my sister will wish she would have gone to a school where she could have found the same trust in her that she now finds at home.

If the University, through AWS rules, wishes to act "in loco parentis", it should take its cues from the modern day parents it's acting "in loco" of.

Polly Rhynalds

'Battle Of New Orleans'

Dear Editor: We would like to submit this poem for publication in your letters to the editor column. (Sung to the tune of the "Battle of New Orleans.")

In '67 we'll take a little trip Along with Bob Deaney down the mighty Mississippi We'll take a little beef and we'll take a little beans And we'll whip the Crimson Tide in the town of New Orleans.

We'll fire our passes and the team will be a-runnin' We'll score twice as many as we did a year ago. Go Big Red and keep the Crimson runnin' From the Sugar Bowl to the Gulf of Mexico.

Hup, run, pass, score Hup, run, pass, score

Oh, Big Red Says we can take 'em by surprise If we use their on-side kick and cut 'em down to size. We'll hold their line and we'll see their faces swell Then we'll throw a few more passes and really give 'em hell.

Chorus: We'll fire our passes till we melt their defense down Then we'll hand it off to Wilson and he'll run 'em in the ground.

We'll see Meylan blitz and powder their hind legs And when the game is over, the Bear will lose his mind.

Kent Cockson Ray Depa John Kranda

Union Magazines Need Change

Dear Editor: Judging from the magazine stand in the Union, one would think that students confined their extra-curricular magazine reading to such topics as hot rodding, sports and clothing fashions.

Indeed, it seems exceedingly odd that "Playboy" is not sold there since it ("What kind of man reads 'Playboy?'" caters to all of these interests and more.

"Playboy," for those who want to buy it, is available elsewhere in town. But where can the students who want "Ramparts," "The Realist," "The Monthly Review," "Dissent," "The New Republic," to name a few, go to buy a copy?

You have hailed the virtues of expressing all shades of opinion, so you might suggest to whomever is in charge that we be given a better selection of magazines in the Union.

Al Spangler

Dear Editor:

"Viet Nam Profile" is a film we believe a large segment of the students will want to view for a deeper understanding of the drama being enacted in that country, today.

The World Vision film producers have put together a film depicting the courageous service of AID personnel, heroic ministries of military chaplains, the prayers of aboriginal mountain villagers and some answers to those prayers, along with scenes of bustling traffic and typical city life being interrupted by the sudden shocking horror of war.

If you are staunch enough to watch heart-rending scenes of suffering along with thrilling scenes of Christian service, then join us to watch "Viet Nam Profile" Friday at 7 p.m. in the Nebraska Union. Two showings and a discussion will be held at that time.

Joe Webb, Treasurer Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship