

Black student needs must be met

Now is the time for UNL to stop. Stop ignoring the needs of black students.

UNL and its administrators refuse to recognize the fact that black students have needs. Black students have emotional, academic and social needs which have consistently been disregarded by the Massengale administration.

Guest Opinion

Basic emotional needs such as trust, respect, equality, encouragement, kindness, compassion, friendship, pride, dignity, love, enjoyment, security, confidence and consideration are absent in the lives of black students.

Now is the time for UNL to provide an environment to instill, and then nourish the emotional needs of black students.

On the academic horizon, UNL employs about six black faculty members. There are about 285 black students enrolled this year, according to Multi-Cultural Affairs' records. This calculates to the alarming figure of one black faculty member to every 47.5 black students. One person that understands the struggle that 47 black students are experiencing.

In the "usual" classroom situation (class taught by a white faculty member), black students have to try twice as hard just to be equal. A white student just has "to be." How nice it would be for a black student to walk into a classroom and have the chance just "to be." One might be surprised by the change in attitude and academic performance of black students.

The feeling of equality will never exist at UNL unless black students can hide the color of their skins. But why should they? They have no reason to feel ashamed.

Now is the time for the Massengale administration to take steps to create and enforce equality and security for black students (and faculty) in and out of the classroom.

After the classroom, where are black students to go for relaxation?

Black students return to the dorm room where they are faced with a white student who has never seen a black except on television. And although a dorm is not what most would consider the "ideal" home, it is all many students have.

Black students have encountered silence in the halls and in the rooms they enter. Black students have been harassed when they play "their" music and tortured when they listen to their white counterparts' music.

More than 10 years ago, the Nebraska football empire made a commitment to black students: the Culture Center. During the last year or two, research has been done, recommendations have been made in order to find a new home for students of America's ethnic groups.

Yet the Massengale administration is running from that commitment. A commitment to provide a comfortable environment for the black student. A place where black students can withdraw from the system and regenerate the strength to deal with this foreign system is a necessity.

The Massengale administration is running fearfully from making a commitment because of the cries of white Greeks, alumni and regents who hold vast misconceptions about black students.

Now is the time for the Massengale administration to take the "right" stand to support the needs of black students.

Now is the time for the Massengale administration to actively recruit black faculty and students... and more importantly, retain them.

Now is the time for UNL to provide a true "learning" environment. Education is the only weapon against ignorance.

Now is the time for UNL to provide equal opportunities.

- Equal opportunities on the academic scene.
 - Equal opportunities to enjoy life on the social scene.
 - Equal opportunities to obtain emotional security, stability and satisfaction.
 - Equal opportunities to be recruited for jobs that will lead to financial security after graduation.
- Now is the time for the Massengale administration and UNL to stop. Stop being comfortable with the little bit that it does for black students.

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