

opinion/editorial

UNL student leader shortage creates problems

For UNL students wondering what is going on within student government, the student court and other leadership positions on campus—it is fairly easy to recognize the problem.

Before complaining about messed up elections, ASUN's actions and minimum student responsiveness, it's time to step back and analyze the situation at Nebraska's largest university.

Too few students assuming too many leadership positions on campus have caused a closed system anarchy flanked with complications among the upper ranks.

The most recent example of complications through conflicts of interest arose in the student court during cases brought against the Electoral Commission. Here we found two of the more noteworthy

student politicians on campus, Joe Nigro and Bob Gleason, stepping down from judging the case because of conflicts.

Nigro was the campaign organizer for the US party while Gleason felt compelled to represent presidential candidate John Parsons in his charges against the Hare ballot system.

The high circles continued to interweave as Justice Mari Lane also found herself excluded from the case because of her membership in the Electoral Commission.

Although a new student justice was appointed for Gleason's resignation, the appointment brought with it charges from both sides of manipulation during the senate appointment process including two absentee votes.

But conflicts of interest aren't new and occur all the time among

the ranks of UNL student leaders.

It was no mistake that outgoing ASUN President Bud Cuca was sworn-in to sort ballots during last month's elections, even though he had already made a public endorsement for John Parsons and the STAR party. The Election Commission was simply bogged down without adequate help and was forced to use one of UNL's more prestigious student leaders.

Or consider the student fee allocation process and someone like John Kreuzer who served as Union Cations Board simultaneously. Making recommendations for student fee requests on two boards has to become quests on two boards has to become somewhat conflicting when the fee money comes from the same source.

And it was no mistake that the Daily Nebraskan was honored this

semester with three new Pub Board appointments consisting of a student court justice and the outgoing ASUN president and vice president. Applications were so slim that the openings were thrown at any senator that walked through ASUN's front door.

There have been problems at UNL this spring and there will be problems next spring.

Perhaps the culprit, student apathy, will soon be recognized by the student body and some of those problems can be eliminated.

But before we all begin throwing rocks at the Electoral Commission, Student Court, ASUN or the Daily Nebraskan, let's face up to the fact that at least a minority of UNL students are trying and that the majority may be letting them down.

Harry Allen Strunk

Students should be outraged at election violations

Before students too easily dismiss events from their minds, it is a prudent time to clear up a few matters regarding the ASUN elections that took place two weeks ago and the behavior of the Student Court in the week following.

Students should be *outraged*—not because of who won or didn't win—but because their rights—*your rights*—were blatantly infringed upon. Instead of outrage, though, the strongest reaction regarding the whole affair has been confusion or resignation. Nobody really realizes how badly the election process was botched up.

Imagine for yourself what the response would be if a national election were held and the body running the election didn't even know what type of voting system they were using or how they were going to count and validate ballots! If the instructions mandated on Presidential ballots were so vague and unclear as to promulgate mass confusion and render the voters' "choices" as totally ineffective! Of if some 5 million votes were cast aside and ignored because of lack of clarity regarding the ballot. (The same number, relatively (500), were invalidated in the ASUN election!)

How many of you knew exactly who and what you were voting for? How many of you knew how your votes were going to be counted? How many of you thought that the "Hare" system was going to be used?

How many of you realize that you may have actually been giving a first place vote to a candidate that you did not support but "preferenced" 3rd or 4th because you had to?!

How many of you realize that not a single executive candidate that was "elected" was actually the first choice of a majority of the voters in compliance with the regents guidelines?

Many factors bring foreigners to UNL

The decision to attend a university in a foreign country does not come easily. This semester, that choice was made by over 800 people—the foreign students at UNL.

Next comes an even more complicated choice: which of the thousands of universities in the world should one attend? Although their primary purpose for being here is to study, a wide range of reasons brought our foreign student population to UNL in particular.

andré everett

The reputation of certain programs attracted many of them. Our journalism, agriculture, engineering, and architecture departments, among others, are respected around the world.

Prabha Unnithan, a Malaysian graduate student in sociology, said, "I was studying in India before, but I felt the quality of education and research in the social sciences would be better here. I came to Texas first, because they offered me an assistantship."

"But the quality there wasn't up to my expectations. The program didn't have any direction. Of the three other universities that accepted me, UNL offered the best combination of program and cost."

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Is it right that 500 people who took the time and effort to vote should have their vote not even counted?

Some people recognized, and were appalled by, the countless abuses of voters' rights, your rights, and the many improprieties about the election process, and tried to do something about them. Diane Walkowiak, Paul Grabowski and John Parsons should be commended for their attempt to protect the students' rights. As is consti-

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tutionally provided for, they brought their grievances before the Student Court, naturally assuming that the merits of their cases would be heard, let alone be rationally discussed.

However, Student Court, in the form of three "law" students, once again reared the ugly side of its head and dismissed the Parsons suit on a legal technicality. (Walkowiak had withdrawn her petition because she felt she could not receive justice from the Court—Jeane Dixon, move over.)

The Court dismissed the petition based on the "timeliness" of the filing. Though the Court had full knowledge of the fact that grievances had been brought to the Electoral Commission before the election, they dismissed the case merely because the fact was not specifically mentioned in the petition. Nor would they take the 30 seconds necessary to ask the parties involved if such grievances had been brought.

Actually though, the point is moot because all of the causes of action (complaints) contained within the Parsons petition could not have been known until after

the election! The ballot used (with only one write-in) was not seen by the voters until election day. The printed sample ballot was markedly different from the one actually used. The fact that the Electoral Commission said they were going to use the "Hare" System but in fact did not could not have been known in advance. And Mr. Parsons certainly couldn't have known in advance about the numerous students who would approach him about their confusion over the balloting method.

The simple fact is that the three "law" students on the Court decided (3-2 vote) to play real-life court and find some legal technicality on which to dismiss the case so that they could absolve themselves of the responsibility of having to decide the issues. They were probably getting laughed at by their buddies across town and didn't have the guts to continue. I'm sure Justices Cook, Langland and Young are sleeping much better now?

Though the Electoral Commission seriously erred, it was at least sincere in its efforts. Three members of "Student" Court, however, consciously erred and that's the really sad part. It is indeed scary that Student Court no longer belongs to the students. When issues are decided in a legalistic manner, beyond the scope of understanding of non-law students, then you as members of ASUN have effectively been deprived of your constitutional right to check the functioning of student government.

I urge you to stand up for your rights and not let yourselves be apathetically trod upon. You have been abused and you deserve a response.

Brad Belt
ASUN Senator

letters to the editor

when we needed it. Last but far from least we are very grateful to all the poll workers for making election day run so smoothly.

On behalf of the electoral commission best of luck to Renee Wessels and the new ASUN Senate a most successful year.

Rockford G. Yapp III
Chairperson, Electoral Commission

Conflicts undesirable

After reading the March 19th issue of the Daily Nebraskan, it appears to me that our editorial page has become a battlefield for personal attacks, rather than a source of thought provocation. The intent of both the editorial on the Publication Board appointments and the guest opinion of Hubert Brown seemed to me to criticize and comment maliciously upon the individual characters of conspicuous persons in the university community. These sardonic derisions are both undesirable and unnecessary on the editorial page of our university newspaper. Never again should such personality conflicts make their way to the pages of the Daily Nebraskan.

Becky Stingley
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