

Editorial

Students need broad education

Raising liberal arts requirements for students who otherwise would ignore those courses represents a needed educational reform at UNL.

Last week, deans of the College of Business, College of Architecture and College of Agriculture spoke of proposals and plans to strengthen their liberal arts requirements.

According to UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale, such changes "are needed to broaden students' preparation for degrees."

But plans to expand students' range of knowledge go beyond, better preparing students for professional careers.

Broadened liberal arts requirements help promote the original purpose of the university: to produce "fully developed" people who are educated in a variety of topics, not just their specific professional fields.

Today's success-oriented students seem primarily concerned with attaining degrees in their specific, limited fields. Many fail to see the importance of a liberal arts curriculum, but many benefits exist.

First, requiring students to broaden their pool of knowledge justifies the wide curriculum base of the university. During this year's budget battle, the university was attacked for "trying to be too many things to too many people."

Gov. Bob Kerrey and others claimed that the scope of the university needed to be narrowed.

But university officials sternly opposed any budget cuts that would result in the elimination of programs.

For the university to defend its arguments, it must guarantee that students take advantage of the courses and programs officials fought to save. An increase in liberal arts requirements ensures that all programs will be used to the fullest.

Second, students with an expanded liberal arts background can function better in the world after they leave the artificial environment of the university.

The practical information taught in business, architecture or other professional courses accounts for only part of what constitutes a "fully developed" person. People play several roles in life, not just the one they "play" for a living.

The broader a person's liberal arts education, the easier that person will be able to fulfill other non-professional roles.

For example, a person with a degree in accounting with little or no liberal arts background has a limited understanding of the world.

Because of today's specialized education, such a person cannot fulfill the role of a "knowledgeable citizen," who can question political systems, contemplate the philosophy behind human existence and the operation of the world in general.

Since college students represent future generations who will run the world, they should have knowledge in many areas. Curriculum changes that promote a wider range of knowledge can lead the way.



Bar boxing? Bar football Health groups ignore facts in quest for safety

Like many of you, I'm a pacifist who loves violence. I abhor war, but if it's ritualized and presented as entertainment, it's a pleasant diversion. I'm a fan of violent sports. Rugby, football, boxing and hockey top my list.



Chris Welsch

A couple of health groups have singled out boxing as dangerous and are pushing for its banishment. The American Medical Association may soon be joined in its campaign against boxing by the American Public Health Association.

It's funny that these groups pick on boxing. Their reasons are simple enough: Boxing causes brain damage, some boxers get killed, and boxing is "the only" sport where the object is to "kill" the opponent.

Actually, boxing is safer than football in many ways. Look at the way each game is played.

Boxers are matched with an opponent of about the same weight. A doctor is at ringside. A referee calls the fight, usually at the first sign that a fighter is in danger.

In football, players chosen for their size and strength are equipped with fiberglass armor and pitted against each other in a form of war. The idea is to push the other side off your territory. Often several linemen, who usually weigh more than 250 pounds each, tackle one quarterback, who usually weighs substantially less. The results are seen on TV every week: Witness the shattered bones sticking out of the leg of Washington Redskin quarterback

Joe Theisman last week.

In football, you can hit from the back. Players, by their own choice usually, continue playing with injuries. Destroyed knees are a daily occurrence. Ask NU linebacker Marc Munford. He suffered ligament damage in last week's NU-KU game and is out for the season.

Why doesn't the AMA support a ban on football? Because it's near and dear to their hearts. Everybody loves football.

We glorify the players every day in the media. The bigger and meaner they are, the more we like them. This year's favorite star is Chicago Bear William "Refrigerator" Perry, whose enormous bulk makes him a particularly threatening gladiator.

Both sports exact a heavy toll on their participants. Players are injured, and sometimes they die. They go to their deaths at full speed and the public is always sad to see it happen. But mark the different reactions: When a kid gets killed playing football, it's a tragic accident. When a boxer dies, it's time to ban the sport.

Statistics about injuries and deaths in the two sports are enlightening. "Violent Sports" by Don Atyeo, published in 1979, quotes several fascinating figures.

There were 500 ring fatalities worldwide between 1900 and 1973. A high of 23 deaths occurred in 1953. The number of ring deaths has dropped dramatically since then with rule changes and quicker calls. Three players died in 1973. With mandatory head gear, shorter matches and bigger, thumbless gloves, that number could be decreased even more.

According to statistics provided by the NCAA office in Shawnee Mission, Kan., 899 football players died from injuries in the game between 1931 and 1984.

Aty eo quotes NCAA statistics that say another 400 were injured in the game and died after four days or more. Most fatalities occur in high school. The statistics include all football played in the United States, including sandlot games.

Aty eo writes that an average of 28 players are killed in football each year. That includes high school, college and professional football.

There are probably almost as many boxers worldwide as there are football players in the United States. Maybe more. The football statistics encompass 53 years; the boxing statistics 73. Even if there are more football players, a greater number die playing the game.

Injuries? It's true that many boxers suffer brain damage. Atyeo did not include exact statistics, but anyone who has heard Muhammad Ali in a recent interview knows the toll the sport can take. He sounds like a dumb old man, rather than the witty, eloquent athlete he once was.

Football also takes a heavy toll. Atyeo writes that an average of 32 high school and college players become paraplegics each year. NFL players suffer an average of 2.5 serious injuries per season, with injury defined as serious enough to keep them out of the game a week or more. The average NFL career is 4.62 years, the shortest of any pro sport. Half of former pro football players die by age 58. Half of former pro boxers die by age 62.

Boxing is a dramatic test of skill, speed and strength between two fighters. Football is a dramatic test of skill, speed and strength between 22 players.

Take your pick. Applaud the players who put their bodies and lives on the line for your diversion. And take a long drink of that beer in your hand. Welsch is a UNL senior English and journalism major and a Daily Nebraskan copy desk chief.

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There's nothing like a good 'brew': Coffee the last of columnist's vices

I no longer smoke. I use almost no salt. I haven't had an egg in years and I hardly drink any booze any more. I run in the mornings, sometimes work out in the afternoon and won't sit



Richard Cohen

in the dangerous summer sun even though it makes me look healthy and handsome. I am, I swear, nearly perfect, but God — are you listening God? I need my coffee.

Coffee is all I have left. I start the morning with it. I make some when I get to work and I drink it all day through. I have coffee after lunch and sometimes before dinner and always after it. I can drink it iced, but prefer it hot and have never met a cup I didn't like.

Now comes the usual bunch of scientists, this time from the Johns Hopkins Medical School, to rain on what's left of my parade. As I always knew they would, they have found a link between coffee and heart disease. They say that a person who drinks five or more cups a day is almost three times as likely to develop heart problems as a person who drinks no coffee at all. This finding is based on a 38-year study of doctors.

Alas and alack, I know deep down it is no good. This is the way it was with cigarettes. First, there was just a folk belief that it was bad for you, then rumors of scientific studies and then, catastrophically, the surgeon general's report. Goodbye ciggies. The same will happen with coffee. It is probably just a matter of time until we coffee drinkers are segregated in restaurants, admonished at dinner parties when we ask for a cup and held responsible for the forced landing of airplanes at London's Heathrow just because we had a cup of coffee in the no-coffee section. From this to socialized medicine is but a short step.

Please see COHEN on 5