

Editorials

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

Commentary

Equal voice or appeasement?

The special Faculty Senate meeting Thursday showed that with a little shove students can acquire the voice they deserve in academic matters but to change many faculty members' attitudes about the grading system will require some other method.

The meeting was called in an attempt to settle the dust that was stirred after the Faculty Senate unexpectedly passed a new grading system April 7 without conferring with students or the great majority of faculty members.

The Student Senate advisor presented two student instigated resolutions to the faculty members. One asked for a student-faculty committee to conduct continuing evaluations of the grading system.

The other resolution asked for a reconsideration of the "plus" grading system which already has become effective.

The resolution to create the faculty-student committee was passed by voice vote but the "ayes" were by no means a thundering roar of approval.

The formation of this committee, however, can not be degraded. It was exactly what the Student Senate asked for and it will insure that the appalling procedure by which the new grading system was carried out will not occur again.

It will be interesting to observe what faculty members are appointed to his committee and how they are selected. The committee should organize immediately, although it would be a little unrealistic to hope that the group could move as fast as the ad hoc committee which proposed the new grading system.

The committee however, should meet this semester to analyze the "emergency" scholastic situation which exists and early next fall present reasonable solutions to end the parade of grading changes the University is leading.

While the student-faculty committee was a favorable consequence of the meeting and idealistically could be an important test of student power at the University, the faculty's stubborn refusal to reconsider their vote on the new grading system left much to be desired.

First the conditions under which the vote occurred were questionable to say the least. The voting was very close with the faculty members voting for the measure sitting in the front and for the most part the Administration's backbenchers in the rear of the room. A correct count was never agreed upon by the several "hand counters" but the difference was no more than 10 votes.

It is understandable that many of the Faculty members did not want to lose face or incur the wrath of the Administration by reconsidering the vote. It is also understandable that the Administration would be adamantly opposed to a reconsideration and possibility of a change back to the former system when they are spending thousands of dollars to recompute programs.

It is not understandable however, that the Faculty Senate could think the abrupt change in the grading system was valid when students were not consulted about the switch.

It also will not be understandable next fall when the Faculty Senate will probably turn down any alterations in the system that the new faculty-student committee might suggest. This was evident Thursday after the negative vote to reconsider the system now when the process would have been much simpler rather than next fall after the system is more entrenched. So, realistically the formation of the faculty-student committee might prove in the long run to have been nothing more than an act of appeasement.

Cheryl Tritt

John Reiser

The last hope

For the health and well-being of the Republican party, the importance of nominating someone who can win the White House is obvious, but consider the importance of it to the nation.

None of the three Democratic candidates for the Presidency ought to win and the GOP owes it to the country to whip whichever one of them is nominated.

Bobby Kennedy has so far succeeded only in proving that he cannot do that which he considers most important — unify a divided country. The distrust and dislike of the man has astonished casual observers.

Particularly distressing is the contempt in which RFK is held by the business community, a group a successful President must enlist to help combat the problems of our cities and of the poverty-stricken.

The campaign of the unlikely Gene McCarthy is getting a little boring. If his Lincoln appearance is an indicator, his best strategy would be to go hide somewhere and make no further speeches.

McCarthy's principle qualification seems to be that he had the "courage" to come out against Johnson before Kennedy did, but how much courage did that really take?

Up to the time he announced for the Presidency, McCarthy had nothing but a singularly undistinguished Senatorial career which was going absolutely nowhere. How much courage does it take to risk loss when you have nothing to lose?

Finally, there is triple-H. Humphrey is identified so closely with the administration as to blunt his ability to seek new solutions to our problems.

As evidence of this, note the Vice President's mimic of the President's cold-shoulder treatment of the Kerner Commission Report on Civil Disorders.

To suggest Humphrey, who has been one of the administration's chief apologists, as the man to provide new leadership to a nation sick of the administration seems a little absurd. Nor am I charmed by the idea of John McKeithen as Hubert's running mate, as is now widely-reported to be a probability.

Unless the Republican party nominates Rockefeller, however, I still think the country will have one of the three Democrats as President. (Actually, I'm not very worried about any serious possibility of McCarthy being nominated.)

Rockefeller has a solid base of support among young people, although not of the crusading, frenzied type enjoyed by McCarthy or Kennedy. But Rockefeller seems the only candidate young people can share with their elders, who will, we must remember, also participate in choosing the next President.

Militant opposition to Rockefeller comes only from a handful of right-wing types who are still waiting for results of a recount of 1964 ballots. In more troubled times, the public seems ready to discount the candidate's personal life as a factor in making the decision.

At any rate, my view is that the American people deserve better than Kennedy, McCarthy or Humphrey. The question is whether they will be offered a logical alternative.



William F. Buckley

The deterioration of McCarthy

It was a very bad weekend for Senator Eugene McCarthy, illustrative of the almost inevitable appeal, once you get out of that left wing, to radicalize your politics so as to attempt an end run around your opponent. What the senator desires, is to replace Bobby in the affections of the tough left.

As things stood when he entered the race, McCarthy had Johnson on his right, and Kennedy on his left. Why? It isn't really fair, in American politics, to demand that one exactly justify a politician's situation on the spectrum. He occupies it as a matter of the relations of forces.

But now, with the emergence of Hubert Humphrey who

will commandeer the right wing of the Democratic Party, McCarthy needs to build up his left, particularly in challenging Kennedy in Indiana. Accordingly, McCarthy has made a string of statements especially appealing to our old friend the knee-jerk liberal.

Then Senator McCarthy suggested that secretary Rusk resign. He was even so obliging as to designate his successor, Senator Mansfield. It is interesting to see a man who has so steadfastly in the past defended the prerogatives of the chief executive, forwarding advice to the President in tones that recall the peremptoriness with which Thaddeus Stevens used

to address Andrew Johnson. The notion that Rusk's resignation is critical to the success of the negotiations with North Vietnam is, of course, politician's voodoo.

Senator McCarthy should be gently reminded that he has won neither the nomination, nor the election; and he might also be reminded that almost one half of those who voted for him in New Hampshire, did so believing him to be hawkier than Lyndon Johnson; even as it has recently transpired that many of those who propose in Indiana to vote for Kennedy, will be doing so because, in the words of one interviewee, "he'll bomb the hell out of North Vietnam and end this war."

And then, finally, the iconoclast's pilgrimage to the shrine of the defamers of J. Edgar Hoover. Senator McCarthy tried half-heartedly to protect himself from utterly abandoned impiety by saying that his proposal that J. Edgar Hoover be fired had nothing to do with "the man." McCarthy is too skillful a practitioner to deal so carelessly with the language.

If he had meant to compliment Mr. Hoover on his accomplishments, he'd have done so. If he had meant to make a case for the automatic retirement of all public servants at, say, age 70, he could simultaneously have proposed the retirement of Earl Warren and John McCormack.

Professors Speak

A problem in evaluation

Editors Note: Dr. Lawrence Posten, this week's contributor to Professors Speak is an associate professor in the Department of English.

At the beginning of April, Bob Zucker sent me the faculty evaluation forms to be used in my classes. The following week the Faculty Senate voted down overwhelmingly a substitute motion by my colleague Robert Narveson to institute a High Pass-Fail system at the university.

The two events illuminate each other, I think, because both show that a very large percentage of the university community, faculty and students, have failed to think their way out of their present self-entrapment in the grading system.

First, the action of the Faculty Senate before the holidays. The intention of Mr. Narveson's motion was to retain the faculty's right to fail students but to replace the present A through D system with a simpler system that attempted only to separate perfectly acceptable students from students capable of going on to graduate work. (Obviously the system would require a different interpretation in the Graduate College.)

Mr. Narveson's motion, far from being revolutionary, was a modest and sensible attempt to counter the curious theory that the more levels of grade you can use, the more accurate the grading is.

While this may state the case accurately in some technical subjects where numerical exams are the most appropriate means of testing, it hardly applies to the humanities or even, I suspect, to the more imaginative-lytaught sciences.

The absence of any serious discussion on Mr. Narveson's proposal showed that not only are most of us faculty wed to the paternalism we decry in administrators, but we are

unwilling even to relax the insidiously hierarchical nature of the present system.

I am writing this before the special session of the Faculty Senate called for this week. That session may tell me more about whether there will be any basic changes in faculty attitudes in the near future.

The present faculty evaluation form—yes, I'm using it—turns the tables on the faculty neatly. What it does is perpetuate the insidious ranking which now pervades the university grading system. The teacher is ranked against eight other instructors whom the student has had most recently at this university.

The instructor is graded against the other eight in eight different categories. While some of the categories are a little silly, they are probably no sillier than some of the criteria to which students have occasionally been subjected by faculty.

The trouble with elaborate rankings, whether of students or of faculty, is that they often result in hierarchies which bear little resemblance to reality. Should an interested but inexperienced non-major in English be subjected, in his exams and papers, to the same criteria as the distinguished English major in the same class?

Similarly, is a student talented in science but not in English really in a position to compare meaningfully the "scholarship" of a faculty member in his own field with one in English? Or even to evaluate how successfully the two men guide a class toward "clearly understood goals?"

Indeed, the faculty evaluation form goes beyond the dangers of the grading system to some brand new ones.

One question, for instance, reads: "How many of the instructors (listed) are more sensitive to and appreciative of the personal circumstances of the individual student than Your Instructor is?"

Now the trouble with that question is that a student who never once ventures into my office to find out if I'm human may very well avoid me because he thinks I'll be insensitive to his problems. It's all rather circular, you see, but it knocks down My Grade.

Take another one: "Compared to Your Instructor, how many of the instructors at the left contributed more to your own intellectual maturity and more to your ability to deal effectively with important problems in life?"

There are two very different questions here. The question of intellectual maturity is something which, as I pointed out to Mr. Zucker, I'm only

Dan Looker

Grim realities: call to action

When Richard Nixon came before the cameras and microphones last Saturday in Minneapolis, his carefully cultivated good cheer was on the grim side. He was going to talk about the problems of the cities this time.

He talked of a "financial crisis" and said, "... for any candidate ... to come before the American people and tell the poor that right now the Federal Government is going to massively increase spending programs is dishonest, a cruel delusion, and I am not going to join in the game, whether it costs the election or not."

Nixon was taking the easy way out, by simply having no civil rights program.

The hard truth is that our oldest, biggest, and most threatening national problem is not the dollar or Vietnam, but the ghetto and racial hatred. Nixon ignores it and McCarthy and Kennedy have tended to gloss over it. What really needs to be done is so difficult that it is risky for any candidate outline it.

Keeping Order. No one argues with this in principle but the methods used. Congress has done little except to pass a few ridiculous bills about crossing state lines.

For the long range, gun control legislation is imperative and should involve some constitutional changes. In an age of tanks, mortar, rockets, and helicopters an individuals right to carry a rifle is ludicrous. The job of keeping order should be left to police and the army—not old west style vigilante committees roaming the suburbs. For this summer there should be a temporary ban on all sales of ammunition.

Police need to hire more Negroes; they need to employ more non-lethal weapons in an un-antagonistic manner and they need to do more community-relations work. All this takes money, and it will take federal aid.

Massive federal and private programs. We have the resources for this, contrary to what Richard Nixon says, but we have to make some choices. We don't need highway beautification programs, superhighways in the desert, or a superlone transport, for example, when ten million Americans are starving.

To be effective, both industry and the government will have to be involved. The areas that need attention include:

—Education. This area should include extension of early childhood programs, federal aid to public schools, and more scholarship programs for colleges. Here we are not dealing with today's generation but tomorrow's. We can't afford another generation of disadvantaged, bitter Negroes and poor whites.

—Jobs. This will be up to industry for the most part, with federal prodding and encouragement.

—Welfare Programs. These need complete re-vamping. Present programs encourage broken homes, illegitimacy, and breed resentment. A minimum income is needed. It is true that a handout discourages initiative, but federal income assistance at the subsistence level that just keeps a family from starving is not a handout.

—Housing. This will include restoring slum housing and building new housing units. This will be expensive and will require tax raises, but in the long run it will be the cost of saving our nation.

In order to implement these programs we must cut back on military spending now, get out of Vietnam soon, and raise taxes. We must face the prospect of national austerity and this is what political candidates with a conscience must be willing to admit.

Breaking up the ghettos. This involves getting the Negroes who can afford it to move out, moving whites into the ghettos and building federal housing outside of the ghettos. But all the open housing laws and programs that Congress could pass won't solve this last barrier. Private groups from real estate agencies to churches, and the ever-important individual will have to be involved.

In the final analysis, the ghetto and racism is not the government's problem, it is everyone's problem.

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