

Evaluation and hiring-firing of University faculty

Editorials

Commentary

Flexing muscles

It is difficult to envision Nebraska students flexing the muscles of their student body in social protest.

But it is impossible to conceive of them demanding an increased part in planning their education. University of Nebraska students — unconcerned for the most part and unorganized in general — have not even reached out for academic power.

In fact, administrators and faculty (not student leaders) have too often been the initiators of committees designed to bring together the three segments of the college community.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, an active and interested minority of students. They are concerned with what they are learning and critical of how they are being taught.

Without the support of the uncoordinated student body, these people are unable to accomplish something as basic as a Faculty Evaluation Book. (Insufficient leadership hurts, too.)

It is time now for these students to enlist the help of faculty and administrators who are interested in improving education at the University. To be sure, the concerned educators are also in a minority.

BUT A CONCERTED coalition of all those who seek significance in education — be they students, instructors or otherwise — could be effective in accomplishing the establishment of accurate faculty evaluation.

And once the coalition can accomplish this immediate end, it can extend its consideration to other areas.

Ed Icenogle

Slipped disc

... by J. L. Schmidt

This is Howlin' Wolf's new album. He doesn't like it. He didn't like his electric guitar at first either.

"Blues singers like John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Jimmy Reed keep hanging around to remind musicians, critics and public that you can't keep the blues buried, forgotten and discarded."

Those were the liner notes from the Chess Records Company album of John Lee Hooker singing the real folk blues. Interestingly enough, the Chess Records Company now puts out under the label of Cadet Concept Records, and they still publish blues, but the new style of white folks blues, complete with electric guitar amplification.

HOWLIN' WOLF'S new album is one of many in the genre of old folk blues that have been revived and electrified to satisfy today's market. The ten songs have the basic roots of blues combined with some of Howlin' Wolf's personal philosophy

"Everybody says they don't like the blues, but you wrong. See, the blues come from way back and I'm gonna tell you somethin' again, the things goin on today ain't blues, (i.e. Liberation Blues Band), it's just a good beat that the people carry."

The album begins with the old standby "Spoonful" to which Howlin' Wolf adds the comment that electric guitars make some pretty queer sounds. This is followed by "Tail Dragger" and another old favorite, "Smokestack Lightning." The latter of these features mainly work on the electric flute, by Donald Myrick. Wolf's voice is used mainly as a fill-in as it is in the next song, "Moanin' at Midnight" with a low wailing chant.

THE LAST SONG on this side comes closest to the old saying of "Listen to what he's sayin'." "Built for Comfort" must strictly be analyzed for lyric since its musical qualities are lacking.

According to Ralph Bass, a production engineer for Chess, "A blues singer has to stretch out. Each time he sings a particular blues, he may change lyrics or stretch out differently. The important thing is — listen to what the man has to say. I don't mean the modern blues singer but one from the old school, one who accompanied himself with guitar, harmonica, washboard, or any other instrument that helped him tell his story."

SIDE TWO STARTS with more wierd electrification, an electric sax on a real oldie, "The Red Rooster." Howlin' Wolf has his heart in it by this time and he carries it through the rest of the cuts right up to his little comment before the final cut of "Back Door Man." This is a six minute, seventeen second piece in which he really shows you how to pick the blues, the real folk blues.

To better understand the essence of the blues, one should compare and contrast a new sound record with one of the early folk blues albums. The differences are easily recognized and may tend to turn you into a follower of the old school again.

Pick up on Howlin' Wolf and stretch out.

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Student demands are soaring for a role in the hiring and firing of faculty members, but at present the strongest control students exert over faculties is through published course critiques, according to Newsweek.

"Begun at Harvard University as far back as 1924, these course evaluation booklets at first were usually no more than consumers' aids to finding "gut" courses, esoteric subjects, and melodramatic lecturers and at times seemed merely undergraduate parodies of professorial quirks. But in recent years, with the growth of the student-power movement, the course guide has become an integral part of students' efforts to gain a voice in decisions about their education."

THE NUMBER of such course evaluation booklets has risen in proportion to student restlessness. In 1965, there were less than 50 guides. This year there are hundreds published by campus newspapers, student governments, and other organizations.

The handbooks sometimes exert strong influence on faculty decisions, as is the case with UCLA's 362-page "Professor Evaluation Survey." Chemistry professor E. Russel Hardwick, chairman of the academic committee that recommends all faculty hiring, firing, and promotion, says that "when we discuss the promotion of a professor, a copy of the professor evaluation book sits on the table."

OF COURSE, FACULTY response is not always enthusiastic. Martin Duberman, Princeton historian, sympathizes with student demands, but

says that the majority of his colleagues view the books as "a joke — the course evaluation is just an elaborate gimmick to give students the illusion that they have power."

Dartmouth dean Leonard M. Rieser complains that the critiques play up to a certain type of professor, "while at other times they are critical without compassion."

Most faculties are unwilling to allow student power to exceed a consultant role on tenure decisions.

While the University is currently lacking an adequate evaluation of its faculty, organized analysis of teaching performance is gaining national stature as a part of student power. In a recent issue, Newsweek magazine commented on the topic.

"The traditional faculty view is that scholars should be judged by their peers. Professors maintain that students can judge only classroom competence; students, they say, do not have the knowledge to judge competence in scholarship and research."

"**THERE WILL** be a very strong tendency by the faculty to hold onto the hiring prerogative," says Sanford Kadish, chairman of faculty appointments at Berkeley law school. "Just as physicians don't want their standards set by patients, the faculty doesn't want its standards defined by students."

Some professors, however, believe that the faculty should be open to student criticism.

According to Berkeley sociology professor William Kornhauser, "The faculty, in its resistance to educational innovation, is emerging as the most conservative body on campus. The faculty operates as a guild; it is primarily interested in protecting its own interests. Soon the students will have to wage their battles against the faculty rather than the administration."

STUDENTS WORKING on evaluation guides encounter problems in addition to faculty opposition.

Some guides, such as the University of Wisconsin's "Course and Teacher Evaluation," are "little better than a computer print-out of the scaled responses of students to questionnaires about courses and faculty."

Staffs such as Dartmouth's "Course Guide" are undergoing re-evaluation to make themselves more understanding of faculty problems and sentiments.

"Some students are moving beyond course reviews to more direct methods of influencing teaching; the Stanford student government has hired Britain's Joan Robinson, a 66-year-old Marxist economist, to teach spring quarter. Says Stanford economics chairman Lorie Tarshis, "She probably wouldn't have come if we had asked her, I think she was tickled to be asked by the student." But even without such action, students have other ways of influencing the selection of faculty. "The students," says Donald Reich, Oberlin's dean of arts and sciences, "vote with their feet."

De profundis

... by Fred Schmidt

The first segment of History 198 (or Sociology 198 or English 198, whichever you prefer) has come to a close. Participating instructors from the history department can relax for the rest of the semester and listen to their colleagues from the other departments attempt to lecture on "The Negro in American Society" to the faceless multitude crammed into Love Auditorium.

There are inherent difficulties in teaching 350 persons the history of the black man in America in only nine one-hour lectures. And even those few hours were not always put to the best use.

Professor Sherman's lecture on slavery in Latin America was one of the finest presented: it was also the least relevant. Other lectures flopped not because of the material but because of the lecturers: Professor Duly's flippancy and Professor Rose's endless nervous pacing on stage did injustice to their topics.

ON THE BRIGHTER side were the concise lectures of Professors Rawley and Braeman treating the crucial issue of the course — the black man's struggle for equality. Dr. Crowl, in his excellent introductory lecture, freely voiced his own opinions concerning racial problems; his colleagues would have done well to follow suit.

Reading for the course is heavy but generally worthwhile. (One book never arrived at the bookstore and had to be dropped from the agenda.) The department is to be congratulated for having an essay exam rather than the expected multiple-choice epic.

If the curriculum for the history segment left a few things to be desired, the students enrolled left more. Most of the students are genuinely concerned about the plight of black Americans and many signed up for optional, non-credit discussion sessions on course material. But a large segment of the class seemed to become disillusioned when they realized that the course was not just a carefree excursion, a "slumming" lark, and that some hard work was required on their parts.

WITH MORE and more students skipping, seats are no longer at a premium as they were the first few days of class. But no matter where I sit during lectures, the ever-present chatter about FAC's and laivalering is inescapable.

(Can't you just hear them when they return home to Arthur or Ord or west Omaha? "Oh, I took this course in Negro history and I know all about it!" Mention Frederick Douglass to them six months from now and they'll probably ask what house he's in.)

Hopefully, the past five weeks have been the start of a solid program concerning the black man's role in society. The course is aimed at enlightening white students and that is as it should be.

However, the fact that the University is currently unequipped to offer a good black studies program is no reason for not planning such a program for the future.

There is a real and crucial need for both an expansion of the current course and a black studies program to make college more relevant and worthwhile for the University's ever-increasing number of black students.

Campus opinion . . . Infant deaths

Dear Editor:
Perhaps the VISTA representative's statistic was misquoted or misinterpreted by your staff writer (February 28, Hyde Park article), when she wrote "Twenty-eight percent of infants in this country die."

The infant mortality for the United States is about 2.4 percent for all infants, and about 4.0 percent for non-white infants, if you talk in percentages.

However, death rates usually are expressed in numbers of deaths per 1,000 live births (as any Public Health 012 student knows, I hope) and this may be where the misinterpretation resulted, although our overall infant mortality rate has not been near 28-1,000 since 1950.

While public health has had some successes in maternal and child health programs, there is yet a longer way to go. Can we add quality as well as quantity to our extended life expectancy?

Sincerely yours,
Carl J. Peter
Asst. Professor
in Public Health

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"GENTLEMEN, WE MUST FACE THE GRIM POSSIBILITY THAT PEACE COULD BREAK OUT AT ANY MOMENT."

GOP wants South support

by Flora Lewis

Washington — Despite the grumbling disenchantment of Southern Republicans with the Nixon Administration so far, national Republicans are pressing hard to build up a Southern base. And they are optimistic.

One major reason is their confidence that Southern Democrats will rebel if the national Democratic Party pushes through the reforms ordered at its Chicago convention. The reforms banned the unit rule and high-handed methods of picking delegates.

Laws will have to be changed in 28 out of the 50 states to meet the new standards for picking delegates. Democratic National Chairman Fred Harris asked Republican National Chairman Ray Bliss over a month ago to make it a bipartisan effort. Many of the state legislatures are Republican controlled, and besides that would take the partisan stigma off reform bills.

Harris never got an answer from Bliss and now he's waiting for one from Bliss' successor, Maryland Rep. Rogers Morton. The Republicans are inclined to enjoy the Democrats' dilemma — insist on reform and infuriate the South or dawdle and infuriate the liberals.

THE FIRST PLACE the new rules have been applied was in a special convention in Tennessee to pick a candidate for the 8th Congressional district. Rep. Robert A. Everett (D.) died and an election is scheduled for March 25.

After a long, steamy hassle, the Democrats picked Ed Jones. But an independent, a Negro and a Wallaceite will also probably run and split the vote. The Republicans, who couldn't even put up a candidate last year, used the unit rule and quietly chose a bright young state legislator, Leonard Dunavant, who is called one of the "new breed." They expect him to do a good bit better than the 25% the last Republican candidate got in 1966.

Some local Democrats were delighted with their show. State Rep. Tommy Powell, a Memphis labor leader, said afterwards of the free-for-all convention, "This has done more good than anything I can remember. We got beat but we got a chance to come and have our say. It was fair, at least. This has never happened before."

BUT THAT ISN'T likely to be the majority reaction, and all the less the further south the new

rules travel. In Mississippi, which hasn't gone for the national Democratic candidate since 1948, a state headquarters has been opened for the new Mississippi Democratic Party recognized in Chicago.

The state chairman, Charles Evers, and the national committeeman, Dr. Aaron Henry, are blacks. The national committeewoman, Mrs. Patricia Derian, is white and white liberals like Hodding Carter are prominent. But the national leadership doesn't hide its fears that most white Mississippians will, as they put it, "drift away."

Black registration has gone up dramatically in the South, especially Mississippi where 59.8% of those eligible were on the rolls in 1968, compared to 6.7% in 1964. But not many voted.

And many state legislators are switching to the Republican side.

At this point, it is precisely state and local officials that the Republicans are after in the South, in hopes of building not just a volatile, rebellious segregation party that is embarrassing elsewhere but an entrenched organization.

HALF A DOZEN prominent Georgia state figures switched to the Republicans last summer. Eight to ten are teetering in Louisiana. Expert Republican head-counters expect solid gains in state and local elections in Florida and Virginia this year, and good news for their side in Georgia, South Carolina, and Texas.

The complaints from Southern state chairmen about Health Education and Welfare Secretary Robert Finch, who is pushing school desegregation laws, don't worry the national professionals too much.

"We don't want the whole Wallace crowd to move over," one said. "We want people who are ready to commit themselves to the Republican Party at all levels, from alderman up." They are getting some, what the Democrats tick off as the "country-club set."

Four who made the switch have good federal jobs now: Postmaster General Winton Blount of Alabama, Undersecretary of Agriculture Paul Campbell of Georgia, Assistant Attorney General Will Wilson of Texas, White House special counsel Harry Dent of South Carolina. And Texas' Republican Senator John Tower got his man in to head the Small Business Administration, over Sen. Dirksen's choice.

Republicans may hold the line on schools, but they aren't giving up the South.

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