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Dr. John Silber addresses NU Teaching Council Convention.

Dr. John Silber: 'Undergraduate teaching in America needs substantial improvement'

Undergraduate teaching in American universities is in need of substantial improvement, according to Dr. John R. Silber, Dean of the University of Texas College of Arts and Sciences.

Keynoting a special University of Nebraska conference on the improvement of instruction, Silber said that faculty members are judged too often on their publications and not enough on their teaching ability.

The student-faculty conference, held over the weekend, was sponsored by the newly formed NU Teaching Council. The conference was intended to raise, discuss and confront some of the basic issues in education, according to Dr. C. Peter Magrath, moderator.

Silber condemned the "publish or perish" doctrine which so often guides promotions of faculty members.

"About 90 per cent of what appears in humanistic journals need not have appeared," Silber stated. "And about 85 per cent of what appears in social science journals need not have appeared either."

Silber, who is an internationally recognized philosopher besides being a university administrator, suggested that professors be denied tenure if they publish something unworthy.

"People describe faculty members by saying, 'professor X is a one book man and professor Y is a two book man,'" Silber remarked. "If a guy doesn't have two or three books published by the time he's 45, then he's dead."

Silber also condemned the preoccupation with research. Much of what is called research, like publications, could just as well go undone, he said.

"Certainly there are effective teachers who are engaged in good research as well," Silber said. "But with some of this, research has reached ludicrous proportions."

During his seven years at Texas, Silber has initiated an extensive program of student evaluation of teachers and courses and appointed a student ombudsman to investigate student complaints.

"The whole problem is that the man who goes to class and brings something alive for his students is not recognized," the dean said. "We should recognize a person who can teach for meritorious services."

Silber theorized that publications actually take two forms — the usual articles written for scholarly journals and oral publication, which occurs in the classroom.

This oral publication should be taken with as much seriousness as written publication, Silber said.

"We can do something about these problems," Silber said. "We ought to evaluate undergraduate teaching."

He suggested comprehensive student evaluation, which is done at some universities including Nebraska, and a form of peer-evaluation, where teachers would observe other teachers in the classroom.

"Teacher evaluation forms graded by computers are worthless," Silber stated. "A short essay by each student is necessary because the intellectual level of the student is important."

Students say remarkably perceptive things which couldn't be learned any other way, he added. Administrators can learn much about courses and teachers by asking students, Silber said.

The keynote speaker held about publication of student evaluations. A

book, hopefully evaluating nearly every teacher and course at NU will be published, but Silber said that professors have a right not to allow publication of their evaluations.

It is also important for classes to be visited by a professor's colleagues, Silber noted. Classes ought to be placed under scrutiny by teacher's colleagues just as books and articles published by faculty members are, he added.

Following the keynote address, which was attended by several hundred faculty members and students, a seven-member panel commented on Silber's remarks.

Dr. Bailey Donnelly, chairman of the physics department at Lake Forest College in Illinois, said that large universities have overemphasized research while small colleges have under-emphasized it. Both have suffered because of the mis-emphasis, he added.

The dean of the graduate college at

the University of New Hampshire, Dr. Trevor Colbourn agreed heartily with Silber. Too many professors are pouncing a typewriter because they want recognition and promotion, he said.

Other members of the panel, which discussed the issue further and then answered questions from the floor, were: Dr. Jonathan Collett, assistant professor of English at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.; two University of Nebraska students, Pat Tisdale and John Marcotte; Dr. Harry S. Allen, director of institutional research and planning at NU; and Dr. Wesley C. Meierhenry, chairman of the department of adult and continuing education at the University.

The conference concluded Saturday morning with another panel discussion on the improvement of instruction at the University of Nebraska. A panel of five NU students and five faculty members discussed the issue.

Proposal would allow custom-tailored major

A recent program proposed by the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee would allow any NU student to design a personalized course of study aimed at obtaining a major in a field of study currently not offered.

However, the proposal, known as the Integrated Studies Program, would still require that the student fulfill all the general requirements of his college before participating in his custom-built curriculum.

Don Stenberg, a student member of the curriculum committee, explained that the program is designed for the last six semesters of a college career. Although a student would still have to take general requirements, he would have three years for special interest study.

The Curriculum Committee approved the program at its last meeting and recommended it to the Department of Arts and Sciences. If that department also approves the program, students could conceivably begin obtaining a major in anything from Black Studies to Russian Culture to Golf Course Design.

Stipulations
There are some stipulations, however. Besides fulfillment of general prerequisites, the proposed program requires a minimum of 50 credit hours to obtain a major with at least 15 of those hours taken in one department.

Moreover, the student must design his outline of study and obtain a faculty sponsor. Ultimately, the student must get the course of study approved by his college dean.

C. Peter Magrath, Dean of Faculties, said participants in the Integrated Studies Program "would have to demonstrate academic competence and

motivation to be allowed to pursue his own special program."

"But," added Magrath, "students could demonstrate this competence and motivation merely by the content and presentation of his proposal to the College."

Magrath originally introduced the integrated studies plan in 1968 while he was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Human Studies Program

Magrath's proposal was based on Brown University's "Human Studies Program," which has existed at that school for several years. Brown's program is similar to the Integrated Studies, except that, according to Magrath, at Brown it has involved only third and fourth year students and carries a fairly high grade average requirement.

The Curriculum Committee in recommending the proposal noted that the Integrated Studies Program is yet another aspect of a movement that has been developing at NU.

The committee said this movement included new majors, such as those in Latin American studies, Classics, Linguistics and Renaissance studies and new classes such as the "Negro in American Society" class and the Centennial College.

College of Arts and Sciences

"The Centennial College will probably not handle the Integrated Studies Program despite the college's experimental nature," Stenberg said. "The College of Arts and Sciences has proposed the program, will determine its feasibility and will direct it."

The Arts and Sciences College is probably the only school which would find the proposal applicable, Stenberg added.

"Architecture and Engineering both rely on fairly structured curriculums, as does the College of Business Administration," Stenberg said. "Teachers College needs all available time for education classes and the College of Agriculture already has a similar type of program called 'Ag Honors.'"

Stenberg added that only Arts and Sciences is broad enough to have such a program work. "This would especially work for pre-law and pre-med majors," he said.

"For those students who don't want or need traditional majors the Integrated Studies Program could be very helpful.

Student architects' proposals on slums denied hearing by professional group

Architecture students were denied Saturday the opportunity to present to a convention of the American Institute of Architects a program depicting slums and suggesting that professional architects are neglecting urban housing problems.

Student architects had been invited, according to Kent Abraham, to present a program of what they had learned at their student convention in Houston to the convention of professional architects, which was held this past weekend in Lincoln.

It was indicated that it would be possible for the students to present their program in the evening, according to Tom Piper.

The students this last week began putting a program together. Creating awareness was their immediate goal, said Abraham, and creation of professional techniques to alleviate many of the problems of cities was their long range goal.

The intent was to sensitize, through their program, the professional architects of Nebraska by relating housing problems to professional responsibility in the community.

During the week, the students asked to be allowed to present their program before the awards program Saturday evening, rather than at the business meeting Saturday afternoon. The reasoning behind their appeal, said Abraham, was because they needed an effective platform for their ideas and because of technical reasons.

At a meeting Thursday night, the officers of the student chapter came to the conclusion that problems began to appear as a result of an article printed in the Daily Nebraskan that morning. The article stated the concerns of the student architects and announced a meeting of all interested students on Friday afternoon.

The article was, according to the officers, misconstrued by various members of the AIA, who then reconsidered the invitation they had extended the students.

The executive board of the AIA met Saturday afternoon, and voted against allowing the students to present their program that evening.

The students were then faced with a problem: they had what they believed was a vitally important program but they had no one to present it to.

Late Saturday afternoon, the students

mimeographed a position statement, which they passed out to the professional architects before the awards program.

The position statement expressed concern with:

- community design centers
- contacts with minority group high school students explaining what architecture is
- setting up training programs for minority students
- college scholarship and recruitment programs for minority students
- development of a joint action plank with students and members of the profession
- accreditation of the six non-accredited black schools of architecture.

These were the specific goals developed at the national conventions in Portland in 1968 and in Chicago in 1969.

Mr. Gunnar Berkerts, the guest

speaker at the awards program, who had earlier in the week expressed concurrence with the students' position, also announced to the professional architects that the students' program would be shown elsewhere for all concerned AIA members after their awards program.

Approximately ten members of the AIA and their wives showed up for the program, which was a series of representative slides of Omaha's North side, accompanied by a tape of music, meetings the students had held and Omaha North side residents' comments on their environment.

If they had been able to present their program at the convention Saturday night, the students had planned that they would meet with a committee of professionals within a week to discuss specific goals. The students would then offer themselves as a resource for the professional group to utilize.

Popularity is secondary to BS&T

by Sara Schweider
Nebraskan Staff Writer

Evidently, Blood, Sweat and Tears is not all blood, sweat and tears.

"We really dig what we're doing and where we're going," noted BS&T drummer Bobby Colomby.

"We happened because a bunch of us just got together to have fun. Getting popular and making money is secondary to that."

And Colomby is the epitome of that statement.

Unaffected, with a kind of tempered wholesomeness, Colomby talked openly and enthusiastically about the group.

"A nine-piece band is a great thing," he said. "We'll outlast any other band because with nine people, you just don't get on each other's nerves as much as these three-and four-member groups."

He told about a major group of four members who had played together for 12 years and hadn't spoken to each other for 9 of those years.

However, there are personality conflicts in BS&T, too. There was one conflict going on backstage after the performance between lead singer David Clayton-Thomas and two other members of the group.

"He was upset because we lost the audience on the last number. Two guys

weren't getting along well and it upset Clayton-Thomas even though the audience never knew what was going on," Colomby said.

"That's another good thing about a group like ours," Colomby added. "There is safety in numbers. We're not the slightest bit nervous in front of a crowd because we have so many people. In fact, sometimes our lack of self-consciousness causes problems."

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CSL listening to 'any complaint or suggestion'

The Council on Student Life will hear suggestions and complaints Tuesday from students about any aspect of student life at the University of Nebraska.

"The CSL will not be able to be effective unless it is well informed about what students are concerned about well supplied with suggestions from students," stated CSL President Dr. John Robinson.

The CSL meeting will be Dec. 9, at 2:30 in room 215A, Nebraska Union.

ASUN-selected positions open

All students interested in the following ASUN-selected positions should apply in the ASUN office by Tuesday. Positions now open include: the graduate or professional-at-large Student Senate seat; a Student Court member of junior standing; Pub Board member, sophomore only; and two students for the Nebraska Union Investigation Committee.



When things are good, they're very, very good. This week-end was very, very good. From left to right: Allen Mosley, Jazz and Java; Jeanie Dietrich, Christmas Carol Concert; David Clayton Thomas, Blood, Sweat and Tears; John Brandstetter, Christmas Carol Concert; George Binger, Jazz and Java.