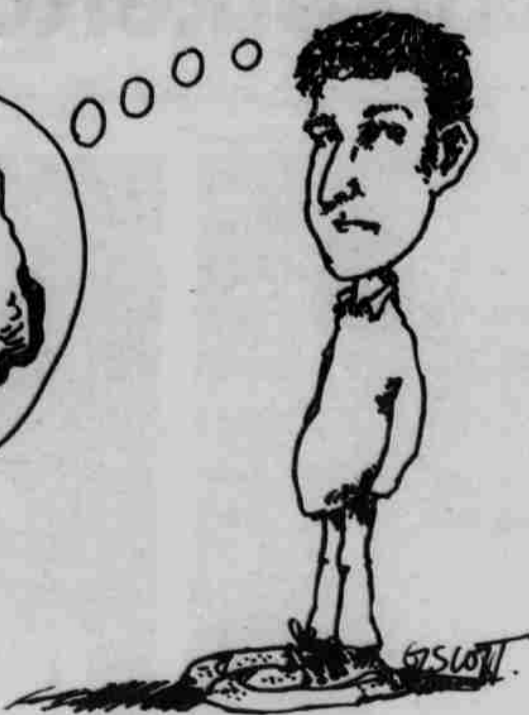
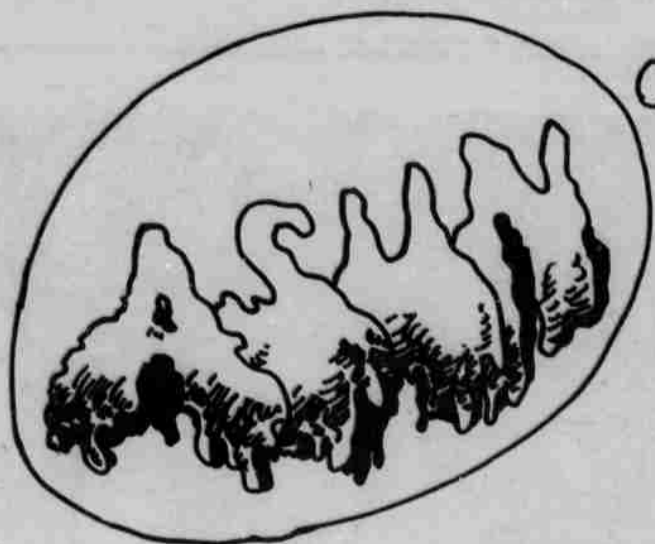


guest opinion



By Doug Voegler

Doug Voegler is a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences, majoring in political science. He is the newly appointed chairman of the Union Talks and Topics Committee.

Three years ago a common joke was to switch around the lettering in ASUN to spell ANUS. ASUN was in sad shape then and fully deserved that derogatory term. ASUN didn't do anything substantial. Even the Senators were not interested in the organization or ASUN activities. It was plagued with quorum and resignation difficulties.

ASUN reached an all time low in the elections of 1970. Only 14 per cent of the students turned out, electing Steve Tiwald president with only 900 votes.

For a while it appeared ASUN was on the rise again. Steve Tiwald, whether you agreed with him or not, was a dynamic and controversial ASUN President. Tiwald's party, the University Coalition, came up with some good ideas, such as involvement with PACE, five-cent Xerox service, a Student Day-Care Center (which has received no ASUN funds this year), a Student Record Store and ASUN Book Exchange.

Then ASUN and the University Coalition became stale. A productive and active year has been followed by a singularly pathetic record of non-accomplishment. Sen. Roy Baldwin put it well when he admitted "it has been a very disappointing year in student government," (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 27, 1972).

ASUN has been plagued again this year with quorum difficulties and mass resignations. At one meeting in January, seven new ASUN Senators were sworn in, one-seventh of the entire Senate. So far there have been between 12 and 15 resignations, or almost one-half of the Senate membership.

The serious student can ask himself, "what has ASUN done for me or for the University this year?" I'm afraid he would be hard pressed to come up with something of significance. ASUN seems to have two functions, to pass resolutions and to spend student fee money. Resolutions are cheap.

ASUN's budget shows where ASUN has committed its support. The diversity of expenditures shed light upon ASUN's function and actions.

This year alone, ASUN had a total budget of \$38,892.92. One expenditure which I call into question is \$144.52 spent for an escapade officially

described as a "Senate retreat." This retreat was held September 10-11 at Ester K. Neuman Camp south of Louisville. Its announced purpose was to get away from "the campus hassle" so that ASUN Senators could get together to decide the direction and priorities of ASUN for the year.

While this is only a minor expense, I feel it was a foolish and wasteful expense of student fee money. The Nebraska Union is filled with numerous rooms where ASUN Senators can get together to discuss priorities. If the Senators felt the need to escape "the campus hassle" in the second week of school, there are places in Lincoln, such as a member's apartment, which would have sufficed at minimal or no expense.

A total of \$2,200 was budgeted by ASUN for conferences. The largest expenditure in this total was to send 11 students to the annual National Student Association (NSA) Conference, held at Fort Collins, Colorado in August. This expense, plus the annual \$150 a year membership dues to NSA represents a substantial and questionable commitment by ASUN to this national organization.

In 1968, the student body voted to join NSA. We often hear student leaders talk of student "self-determination", yet last year ASUN decided that the student body need not vote on continued membership in NSA and kept this issue from the spring election ballot. Our affiliation with NSA should be voted upon yearly.

As long as we are affiliated with NSA, only one or two students should go to the NSA conventions at student fee expense. They could adequately report the activities of the conference to the student body and to ASUN. All other students who wish to attend these conferences should be able to, but at their own expense.

Last spring, the University Coalition ran with a platform calling for "educational reform, human rights and student services." Out of a budget of nearly \$39,000, ASUN has budgeted only \$1,150 to the Committee for Educational Change.

As of Jan. 12 only \$328.09 of this had been spent. According to Sen. John Theisen (Daily Nebraskan, Dec. 2, 1971) no Senators came to the first organizational meeting of the ASUN Educational Reform Committee. Theisen said that he, "got the feeling that ASUN doesn't care about educational reform."

Another priority was human rights. ASUN budgeted \$6,618.00 to human and legal rights. As of Jan. 12, 1972, only \$1,072.03 has been spent in this vital area. The case with student services is similar. The imagination of ASUN is so barren that large sums of money have to be spent on conferences and retreats to dream up ideas for student government.

It is important to point out once again that nearly one third of the budget (general \$2,000; office \$3,000; salaries \$6,564.48) is spent merely to sustain ASUN. The President of ASUN receives \$925 per year, and the first and second vice-president each receive \$625 per year in salaries.

Last year ASUN promised the students they would be allowed to vote in their dorms, or in lunch lines, making it simple, easy and convenient for them.

ASUN has recently set the date of ASUN spring elections for March 22. Last year ASUN claimed that lack of time to overcome the technical difficulties involved with this required them to have student voting only in the unions. With almost a year now to work on this problem there can be no excuse if ASUN fails again this spring.

ASUN has failed to open itself up to students of differing and opposing viewpoints. ASUN is characterized by a definite lack of diversity. Student elections are not perfect, since only 20 per cent of the student body usually votes, and therefore ASUN can not be truly representative of the student body. However, a responsible ASUN might have used the many resignations as an opportunity to appoint new senators with differing viewpoints. ASUN should be a forum, where all the sides of an argument are brought out and debated.

While ASUN has talked and talked, vital areas of student concern are being neglected. Reorganization and restructuring of ASUN itself is the most important.

The present ASUN constitution was approved in 1966. ASUN was created as the successor to the traditional University "student council." An attempt to change it in 1968 failed due to lack of student interest. Things have dynamically changed in those few years. Campus enrollment has jumped to over 20,000 and student character has changed. It is time to take a serious look at the structure, power and purpose of ASUN, and come up with a student government for the 1970's rather than the 1960's. ASUN should be expanded to include more students in responsible functions.

ASUN executives should coordinate the efforts of the various functions and factions of ASUN and guide them toward their stated goals. Present ASUN executives function more as "super-Senators."

ASUN has spread itself too thin. It has tried to take on the problems of the world. Just this past year we have seen ASUN tackle the abortion issue with a proposed bill which would have taken \$1,000 to set up a loan fund for students wishing abortions. They have taken on the entire area of sexual oppression of women and understanding of homosexuality with a \$500 Women's Resource Center and a \$3,000 Time-Out Conference. They have committed \$2,677.44 to "Justice in America."

I am sure that all these groups that are interested in these problems appreciate the interest of ASUN, but it is primarily the efforts of these groups, such as the Woman's Action Group or the Gay Action Group that do the most in these areas.

ASUN would be better off if it would concentrate all of its efforts on only one or two areas and then pursue these until some effective solution has been reached.

Continued and repeated ineffectiveness in student government will result in the loss of what little self-determination we now possess. I close with this question: When a man is sick and tired and needs a blood transfusion, would you give him new, fresh blood, or would you recycle the same old, tired blood through him again for one more try?

Coffee House Free Concert

Chet Nichols

8:30 PM
Thur & Fri
Feb 10 & 11
Union South Crib

