

guest opinion

Tom Weist, a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences, is a member and past chairman of the Arts and Sciences Advisory Board.

I have recently talked with some students around campus who have completed the foreign language requirement at least two years ago with a grade of 'B' or above. I asked them, "How do you say 'put the chair in the corner,'" or I gave them some other short sentence to translate. Six out of seven thought a while and said, "I don't know," the other finally stumbled through the translation."

—from a student's letter on the language requirement

No rule of the College of Arts and Sciences has drawn as much criticism as the language requirement. No other requirement, in the students' opinion, has as little value to their education. None seems as easily forgotten.

The University's role in society and in students' lives has changed. In 1900, four per cent of the 18-20 age group attended college. Today, 48 per cent attend. Most likely the student of 1900 was either rich or he was gifted and interested in being a professional scholar. Today he is most likely neither.

A "liberal education" probably served the needs of the student of 1900, but it does not serve the needs of today's students. Not all students have gifts that blossom in a liberal education, and not every student will need a liberal education.

Students have written 45 letters to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences concerning the language requirement. The letters called for more vocational emphasis in their educational program. The vocational aspect of college education is implicit in the mass enrollments of American colleges. If the curriculum is to meet the current student's needs, it must allow for a greater variety of students choosing among a wider variety of opportunities.

The curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences is facing

its first major revision since 1954. Priority in this revision must not be given to "maintaining the standards of the college," or to producing "men who have an acquaintance with all the fields of human endeavor," or to producing "cultured men" or to avoiding asking colleagues "to break their rice bowls and leave."

Priority must be given to the education of all the students on what they need to know. This duty to the student and his individual needs is the ultimate mission of the college.

Requiring that each student take four semesters of a language no longer serves this mission. For the vast majority of students who do not plan to be professional scholars, a second language is not a vocational need.

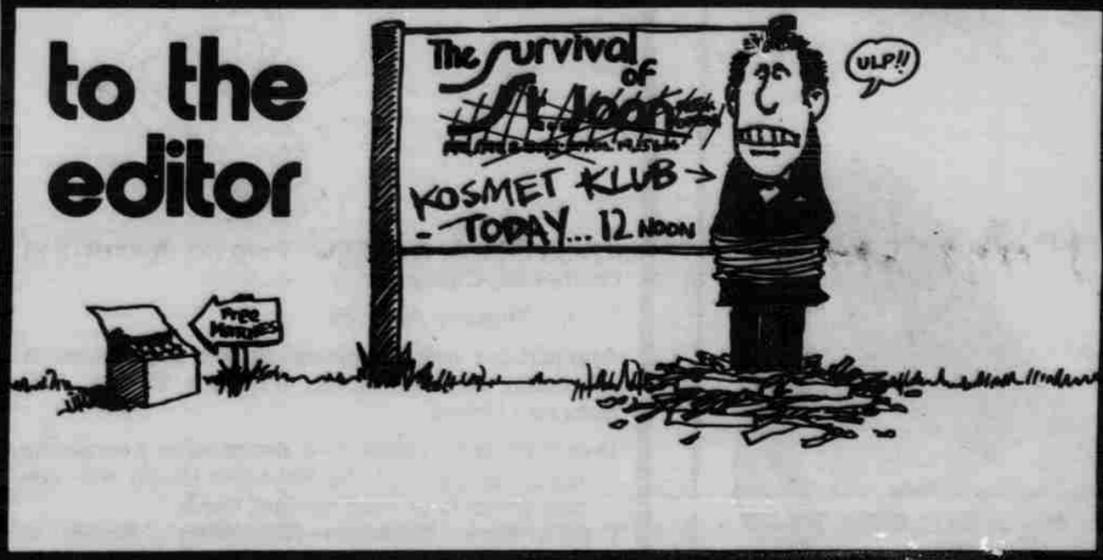
Those who claim four semesters of language gives students a necessary understanding of "cultural pluralism" need only consider what the average student retains from language study. Those who make the untested hypothesis that four semesters of foreign language is the most efficient way of giving students an understanding of cultural pluralism should look at those same results.

There is no better evidence of the failure of required language study than the students' hostility toward it. The vast majority of students hold the opinion that the language requirement "wastes their time" and their time is better spent in "more useful areas."

We have come to accept that the best evidence of a professor's teaching ability is the opinion of his students. Similarly, the best gauge of a course's value is the opinion of the students taking it.

Required language study does not serve the needs of most students. It does not serve their vocational goals nor does it use their talents to give them social or cultural insights. Required courses must serve the needs of the students.

to the editor



Roasting the reviewers

Dear editor:

I was a member of the cast of *The Survival of St. Joan*, and would like to make a few comments on the review in the *Daily Nebraskan*.

Admittedly, they were right about show not allowing much room for characterizations, but they forget completely that it is an opera form not a drama form. The emphasis must be on the music and dance in a production which depends upon ensembles. Many things could have been perfected, but remember this was not a Broadway production. The cast was entirely amateur.

Kosmet Klub was founded on class plays 61 years ago. The Klub has held to the tradition of allowing non-professionals to participate in the spring show. You don't have to be a drama or music major to be involved since it is not affiliated with either department of the University. I think the review may have hurt this effort more than Kubert and Gray realize.

The fact that we, the cast, are amateurs doesn't mean the show was bad. On the contrary, the show was an outstanding effort. It infuriates me to think of the months of work put into this production only to have it ripped apart by a review like the one given in the *Daily Nebraskan*. The production placed a great deal of responsibility on all the people involved. Most of the performance weight rested upon the principal actors, many of whom were very experienced and generally over 30.

The choreography of the show may not have been totally fantastic at all times, but the majority of dances were well done. I know this was the most difficult dancing ever attempted in a Kosmet Klub production, requiring physical endurance and flexibility. Tryouts attested to this.

If your review hasn't done too much damage, participating in these productions may continue to involve future cast members who care about this

University's activities and traditions and who love music and dance.

Kay Johnson

Journalistic delinquency

Dear editor:

The *Lincoln's Gazette's* sensationalism without fact is by far the most effronted insult to journalism this campus has ever seen. I am referring to the two articles about the "Rag" in the *Gazette's* last issue.

Those people assume too much in their publication(?). They assume we know the facts when, in the first place, they don't even know them. Name calling is the policy of juveniles or people who think like juveniles. In doing so they make an assume or anybody who will bow down to mere rhetoric of facts.

It seems to me that Doc Kurtenbach's integrity (which is one of his most important principles) seems to have gone down the drain. By the sound of his own voice, and the applause of the groundlings he inevitably makes the jump from logic to mere rhetoric.

Any fool can come without destructive criticism, but it takes a man to come out or up with constructive criticism.

Gordon E. Musch

Visionary complaint

Dear editor:

Although I am in basic agreement with the review on "St. Joan," it seems to me that our overly-vehement critics have struck out on one point. Kubert and Gray give high praise to the technical portion of the play. They evidently didn't notice the many viewers who had to move to other seats in order to see even a portion of the screen, which was blocked by the enormous steeples. Anyone seated on the sides had at least one-fourth of their vision cut off by those very poorly placed obstructions.

It seems that Kubert and Gray were in such a

frenzy to write just another scathing review that they failed to notice what was a major objection to many members of the audience.

Mark Lowry

Freedom fighters

Dear editor:

In Pilger's "Vietnamization or automated genocide" editorial, Monday, April 17, he said, "Yet, while it has remained clear that military efforts in that part of the world have been ineffective, Nixon again responded with more American military movement."

I would bring to Pilger's attention that were it not the American involvement it is highly probable that all of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam would now be "liberated," as the North Vietnamese say. If he doesn't think that sounds so bad, I suggest he try writing anti-government policy editorials there to see how long his editorial "liberty" lasts and whether he might consider fighting for that freedom.

Craig Johnson

Cursory coverage

Dear editor:

In your editorial of April 13, you suggest that part of the blame for Nebraska being a "cultural wasteland" can be laid at the feet of those students who fail to take advantage of those fine opportunities brought here by various campus organizations. Perhaps so.

I should suggest, however, that this year a good share of the blame for that failure can be attributed to the performance and the editorial policies of the *Daily Nebraskan*. A case of this performance happened last weekend involving the free concerts given at the Nebraska Union by the McCoy Tyner Quartet and by Doc Watson. The former are among the foremost avant-garde jazz musicians in the country. The latter is simply the best flat-picking bluegrass and mountain guitar player who ever lived. Nothing like either has ever been here. Both concerts were underattended, in part, I think, because of the refusal of your entertainment editor, Larry Kubert, to publicize either event, save in the most cursory fashion.

That my ox is somewhat gored in that Kubert refused to print an article I wrote praising and publicizing Doc Watson, as he refused to print one by Vic Lewis on McCoy Tyner, is true. That his further bumbling meant the two articles could not be published elsewhere in the paper is also true. But that this adequately represents his performance all year is true as well.

Time and time again Kubert has refused to publicize significant cultural events on campus because space was needed to push the James Gang and Grand Funk Railroad. And Jesus Christ as Mick Jagger. And other trivial, equally expensive events in no way connected with the University.

As long as the *Daily Nebraskan* has such a policy, your sanctimonious attack on the taste of University students seems odd.

Cater Chamblee