

Eco 1—education

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Ten years ago, those who expressed concern about the state of the world's ecology were instantly branded as fanatics or anti-progressives.

Today, however, the ecology bandwagon is one that nearly everyone seems to be hopping on. For many it has become the Cause of the Year.

Ecology is of more than bandwagon importance. Insincere cause-followers who hop from issue to issue will be of little help in maintaining a continuing watch on the quality of the environment.

Students in today's higher education systems must develop a true ecology consciousness—not the sham idealism professed by fair-weather devotees but sincere, reasoned thought about the plight of the earth.

The responsibility for developing this consciousness falls on institutions of higher learning, including the University of Nebraska:

How has the University of Nebraska done so far, in its development of ecologically-based programs? And what can be expected in the future?

In September, 1971, President Varner authorized a study, to be made by Dean Howard Ottozon, to inventory University personnel and programs involved in environmental activities and to devise a plan for coordinating University resources in a unified approach toward solution of environmental quality problems.

This was, of course, a big order. But Ottozon's report, completed in August, goes a long way toward shining some light on the questions involved.

According to the report, the University currently has many well-based ecological

programs. Most visible of these are undergraduate courses—more than 350 said to be "environmental in nature" on the three NU campuses.

Moves have been made toward a special environmental health major in the College of Arts and Sciences. To continue its coursework in this area, the college of Agriculture has discussed forming a Department of Natural Resources.

Within the College of Engineering and Architecture, the former School of Architecture has changed its name to the School of Environmental Development. This seems to indicate the intent of moving the school in the direction of environmental studies in the future, although not much movement in that direction has been detected yet.

In addition to regularly-scheduled courses, hundreds of small "special topics" classes on environmental problems have been conducted. And in courses not directly-related to ecology, many have readjusted their curricula with the environment in mind.

In addition to regular classwork, many faculty members have succeeded in receiving research grants from the federal government and other sources. More than 120 of these environmentally-based research projects were in progress during the summer.

Further, the Conservation and Survey Division, the UNL Extension Service, the Cooperative Extension Service and UNO's College of Continuing Education all conduct projects environmental in nature.

Clearly, the University has much going on in the way of environmental-consciousness studies.

The main problem with the system is, however, that it lacks coordination. Currently, there is much inefficiency and duplication as a result of the hodge-podge work being done.

The obvious answer to the situation is the environmental institute, as outlined by Ottozon's report. This institute could provide a unique service, clearing up the red tape involved in coordinating ecological projects

for the entire University. It could also coordinate and make known what the University now has to offer in that area.

While operating basically with a "hands off" philosophy on the specific study areas, it could take away much confusion, while adding little in the way of censorship.

Thus far, nearly all efforts in ecology have been made by the faculty. It is about time the University as a whole took over part of the responsibility.

It has been speculated that the institute will have a hard time obtaining funds. The ecology, it is said is at the bottom of the University's priorities.

It is time those priorities were changed. The ecology cannot wait.

Jim Gray

Fill-osophy

With ASUN Senate resignations piling high, it's becoming more imperative that the vehicle for filling senate vacancies be overhauled.

Only a month of school is gone and seven senators—one-fifth of the entire body—have quit.

To date, new senators are picked primarily by a committee of volunteers from the senate who are selected by an executive, meeting at a time set by an executive and, in fact, including an executive.

This executive participation clearly is unconstitutional.

"In case of a vacancy in elected representatives," the ASUN constitution reads, "a replacement to fill out the expired term shall be elected by the senate . . ."

Currently, the senate merely rubberstamps selections made by the committee.

The intent of the constitution is that the senate, by itself, should fill the vacancies. Such has not been the case.

The executives either should willingly step out of the process or be forced out by a senate mandate. The senate should lay down its own firm procedure for filling future vacancies.

Randy Beam

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