



James Cole, UNL professor of psychology and the newly elected head of the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union (NCLU).

NCLU President: Institutions take rights

The president of the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union (NCLU) board of directors said an "absolute interpretation" of the First Amendment doesn't mean unrestricted personal freedom.

"But in the United States," continued Jim Cole, newly elected NCLU head, "powerful institutions have tended to deprive individuals of their rights."

The 39-year-old UNL professor of psychology was chosen by the 20-member board to succeed Lincoln attorney James Kelley for a one-year term. Cole also is director of UNL's Clinical Psychology Training Program and teaches part time in the Centennial Education Program (CEP).

Individual rights

"I'm generally concerned with the role of people in authority in society," Cole said. An individual's rights, he said, are often put up against the institutional rights of society.

Noting that his psychology background has influenced his involvement with NCLU, he said, referring to mental institutions, "mental health professionals can often control individuals." Cole said NCLU helped draft The Mental Health Commitment Act, introduced to the Unicameral Tuesday by Sen. Tom Kennedy. That bill more clearly defines the rights of a person who faces commitment to a Nebraska mental institution.

"If this bill passes," said Cole, "it will be a model for the United States. It's one of the first of its type in the nation."

Cole has been at UNL for ten years and became a member of NCLU two years ago. He has been involved with the American Civil Liberties Union "off-and-on" for more than a decade.

Two chapters

NCLU has two chapters, one in Grand Island and one in Lincoln. The executive board directs the activity of several committees and a legal panel made up of lawyers. According to Cole, there are committees on the rights of women, American Indians and other minorities, prisoners and mental patients. There is also one on the right to privacy.

Cole said NCLU has 1,000 members who pay dues and work on committees. Two students in CEP have shown an interest in working with the organization for semester projects, he said.

Sabbatical system investigated

By Mary Kay Roth

The University of Nebraska has no sabbatical system for its professors, and many members of the UNL faculty think the time for such a system has arrived.

A sabbatical is a leave of absence, with pay, granted to teachers for additional study.

Because of increasing interest in establishing a sabbatical system, a nine-member ad hoc Faculty Senate committee has been formed to investigate possibilities.

Everett Peterson, committee chairman, hopes to present a proposal to the Faculty Senate in April. If it is approved, the NU Board of Regents could discuss the suggestion at their May meeting.

The Regent's Bylaws already provide for a sabbatical system, Peterson said, however none has been established yet. He said he hopes the committee can provide the needed impetus.

Not just a vacation

"We plan to stress that a sabbatical is not just an extended vacation," Peterson said. To erase this image, his committee is considering calling the sabbatical system something such as "Faculty Improvement Program."

"The program would serve students as well as faculty," Peterson explained, "because by retaining our outstanding faculty, everyone would gain. With an upgrading in the quality of education and research, the community as a whole would also benefit."

Prior to World War II UNL had a sabbatical system, however with increased enrollment it became impossible for teachers to take off time.

Peterson said UNL then decided to concentrate on faculty salaries and benefits until UNL could again handle a sabbatical system.

"We are at that stage now," he said.

Creative research and study

Max Larsen, interim dean for the College of Arts and Sciences, said sabbaticals would allow teachers time for creative research and study. Teaching loads at UNL are fairly heavy, Larsen said, so any outside work must be done on the teachers' own time.

He cited the new English Dept. film section as an example. English teachers developed the new

section with the time between their regular classes.

Larsen said another reason sabbaticals are necessary is that some research requires materials not available in Lincoln, and travel is inevitable.

Most other major universities have extensive sabbatical systems.

UNL opportunities limited

However, the present opportunities at UNL are limited, Larsen said. The Research Council of the Faculty Senate and the Henry Woods Foundation, each grant yearly sabbaticals.

He pointed out there are usually five or six times more applications than the number of sabbaticals to be given.

"It's disheartening to the faculty," Larsen said, "because lots of good, creative people are not given a chance." Both students and faculty lose, he added, when morale is low.

Sabbaticals would "rejuvenate" professors, Larsen explained, because they could take off time to learn new techniques, improve their teaching skills, or do research in their field of expertise.

Projected costs a barrier

The projected cost of an NU sabbatical system has been the largest barrier in the past, he continued, but added that he thought most estimates have been exaggerated.

Larsen said it might be possible to begin a small-scale sabbatical system with the present funds. Since student enrollment is decreasing and UNL funding remains constant, additional funds should be available.

Robert Haller, professor of English, associated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), agreed. He said the actual cost of such a system would be lower than estimates indicate.

The cost of a replacement teacher will be less than the salary of the original professor, Haller explained, because the professor will have been at UNL at least seven years. He added that the substitute will probably not be needed for an entire year, because most sabbaticals are no longer than one semester.

Many UNL teachers will not be able to take sabbaticals, Haller said because of family reasons or lack of teaching experience.

Poetry series proposed for ETV

Satirical poetry from the last two centuries will be the topic of a studio taping open to the public at the Nebraska Educational Television Network (NETV) Sunday.

The 30-minute program, entitled "Anyone for Tennyson?" is being produced as a pilot program for a potential national public television series.

The First Poetry Quartet, a nationally known ensemble of actors and actresses, will present the program which will include readings from the works of Dorothy Parker, John Betjeman, Mary Alcock, John Dryden and others.

The proposed series aims to show that poetry is a delightful form of entertainment as well as an important cultural heritage.

Ron Hull, network program manager of NETV, said performers including Dustin Hoffman, Rex Harrison, Joanne Woodward and Dame Judith Anderson, have indicated willingness to participate in future programs if the series is accepted for funding for national television.

An audience is needed for the taping, which will be Sunday, from 4 to 5 p.m. in the network studios at the NETV Center, 1800 North 33rd Street. Reservations can be made by calling 472-3611.

Taping programs before live audiences throughout the country will be part of the NETV network plan for the series with emphasis on university and college communities.

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