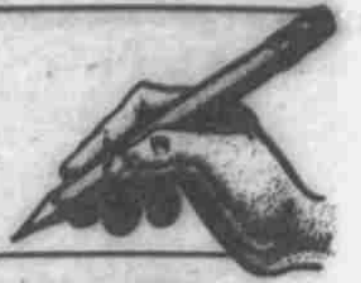


opinion



Faculty key to academic excellence

Earlier this semester, during a discussion between a group of UNL administrators and students, one student voiced his concern that perhaps the University of Nebraska was slipping in quality because about 10 administrators have resigned during the past year.

The administrator told the student he need not worry about the exodus because "it's the faculty members who make or break the academic quality of a school."

The answer should be comforting, but isn't.

It would seem that satisfied faculty members would make the best professors. Too many faculty members at this university don't believe the budget makers at the university or state level are looking out for the academic interests at UNL.

It is only natural for administrators to view their work as important but no more so than the needs of students for good instruction, which means fair salaries for the faculty, adequate equipment and a workable class size.

Salary levels for university faculty members is only one area of dispute which is part of what appears to be a widening gap between teachers and administrators here. The feeling of helplessness over working conditions made an organized faculty union a possibility last year. Faculty members were mildly appeased—at least for a time. But several faculty leaders have made it clear they will push for the union if the attitude that their interests are being slighted continues.

Too often faculty members' opinions and re-

commendations concerning academic matters are not given the weight they deserve.

A comment made recently by a veteran faculty member sums up the all-too-prevalent attitude: "After everyone else, the faculty comes first."

The teaching profession should be one of the most venerated. Truly excellent teachers are priceless (not an exaggeration to those who have been taught by one.)

Any of dozens of local and national studies can be cited to show that salaries for faculty members at the University of Nebraska are lower than those at most other Big 8 and land grant universities.

Beginning on page 7, the Daily Nebraskan today is publishing lists UNL faculty salaries. Some may not surprise you, others probably will. To the extent that faculty members determine the academic quality of the university, we all have a stake in putting their salaries at a fair level.

The Bereuter teachers are a step toward quality academics at the university and last year's salary increases are welcome, but nominal in many cases.

The editor who wrote in this space about the same topic last fall admonished that "you get what you pay for." Sound advice. Fortunately, we can find at least a little comfort in the fact that this is not true for some UNL teachers.

Making sure our faculty members are paid for the amount and quality of work we expect from them would be a great step forward on the road to academic excellence.

Voters' attitudes could be worse

By Don Wesley

"So what," my friend signed, "I'd do more good spending the day studying."

"But voting Tuesday won't take more than a couple of minutes."

"Yea, but what difference will one vote make?"

"The difference is that millions of other people are asking that same question and won't vote because they can't answer it. Only 52% of the eligible electorate voted in 1972. Uncast ballots have a multiplier affect. Because only one-half of the eligible voters will actually vote, each ballot cast is twice as important."

"Sure, but there's no real difference in the candidates."

"Ah, but you're wrong. There is a difference. Let me give some examples."

As I see the Carter-Ford campaign it seems to me what Americans will be deciding is whether or not they want change, with its potential benefits and dangers, or whether they think it best to stay where they are.

Carter is saying things could be much better in America while Ford is saying things are good in America but could gradually improve a little. I see a need for bold action, innovative programs and new directions. Such a

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hope is highly unlikely to be fulfilled with Ford as President. The past impasse between Ford and the congress resulted in impotent legislation unable to resolve our nation's critical problems.

Our nation has too many needs that go wanting and too many problems that keep nagging, to afford me the option of supporting Ford for President.

'Little difference'

In Nebraska's Senate race there might seem little to choose from between Democrat Ed Zorinsky and Republican John Y. McCollister. Both have taken nearly identical positions on the issues. The Senate seat they seek is held by the champion of mediocrity, Roman Hruska. I'd rather not see McCollister ascend to such depths.

In *The Almanac of American Politics, 1976*, the entry for McCollister reads: "There is little to report about McCollister's record in the House, except that he has been about as sympathetic to business on the floor and as a member of the Commerce Committee as one would expect from a Conservative Nebraska Republican . . . It is entirely possible, however, that this not terribly important congressman could become a United States senator by 1976."

McCollister is an ideologue unreceptive and uncomfortable with ideas and programs stained, to any degree, by the touch of liberal thought. Zorinsky, on the other hand, is less adamant and rigid about his position on the issues. I believe both McCollister and Zorinsky take the wrong position on most of the issues, but I think Zorinsky, through factual reasoning can be persuaded to soften or shift his position. There is no such possibility with McCollister, so Zorinsky's the one.

And there are other candidates who deserve special recognition. Steve Fowler, who is running for reelection to the Legislature, possesses an intelligence and political acumen practically unique to the Unicameral. Jan Gauger is a dedicated, open-minded, effective county commissioner. Lancaster County residents are fortunate to be served by her. Joyce Durand, who is running for the Public Service Commission, would be one of the most vocal consumer advocates Nebraskans would ever hear.

Potato bad as peanut

"Yea, alright, but I still don't think either Ford or Carter deserve to be President," my friend continued, undaunted. "When Ford became President after you-know-who resigned, I was in Europe with some Irish friends. I told them all I knew about Ford, since they had never heard of him before. When I finished one of my Irish friends sighed, looked at me and said, 'He sounds a bit like a potato, don't you think.' I agreed and have ever since. Ford, as Mr. Potato, is no less appetizing than Jimmy Carter as Mr. Peanut."

You may believe that, but I do not. It seems to me that voters demand a great deal of their candidates and little from themselves. You may wish for candidates, profound program proposals from political parties, and star-lit statesmen but such a wish will come true only "When wishing is having and having is giving . . ." e.e. cummings.

Until voters are willing to give of themselves most political candidates will continue to be uninspiring. Here it is, only days before one of the closest, most important elections of recent times, and you don't even think you'll vote. Aren't you ashamed?

"Yea, but things could be worse," my friend droned.

"How's that?"

"I could be apathetic."

Little difference in candidates highlights insignificant mistakes

By Nicholas Von Hoffman

"Almost entirely fluff" complains Howard K. Smith on the television; ". . . tiresome, little men clawing for Lincoln's chair," declares George F. Will in the newspapers. At no time in this century have both candidates been regarded with such contempt and/or disinterest as Ford and Carter.

John W. Davis and Calvin Collidge may strike us as the dwarfish equals of Carter and Ford, but at least their partisans in 1924 regarded them with some seriousness. In this campaign the most that people can say for the top

sitting in the Rose Garden and issuing a few statements. The party managers would take their words and, with the party platforms, mobilize the troops to go out and, using music, handbills, speeches, free lunches, gratis whiskey and serious debate, attempt to convince the voters and then get them to the polls to cast their ballots.

No campaign

Today there are no troops. One reason there is so little difference between political parties is because neither party really exists. There are no campaign activities, there are no campaign workers, there is no political campaign. Here and there you'll find a few figures like Mayor Daley who still have a political organization that involves people doing things. But for most of America, there are no parades, no meetings, no activity whatsoever except what we see on TV and the rehash of the same the next day in our newspapers.

Elections are closed affairs conducted by candidates, technicians and journalists. The journalists, although they think they sit to one side and observe, are in fact what constitutes political activity in our democracy. In the great permanent silence of our civic life, what is a campaign except media activity?

Where does this leave a presidential candidate? He goes about the country preceded by advance men who bribe school children and the inmates of old folks homes to turn up at the airport to give the impression the politics of the past still exists.

Pictures, please

From airport terminals to shopping center lots our candidates move, seeking to provide the media with picture opportunities, as they say in the trade. They must be short and they must be repetitive in what they say because they only appear to the supine, televoter in two-minute bursts.

When there were political organizations, the members tried to carry the meaning of speeches to those who weren't in the hall. The political party was a major means of communicating with an electorate. The parties have vanished; you can't fill a hall, and the only way you can get a large audience to listen to a speech is to put in on all three networks simultaneously. The Ford-Carter debates had to blank out the competition because we have nothing in our public mythology to explain only 18 per cent of the viewing audience caring to watch.

Under these circumstances, how can the candidates possibly come out looking like anything but tiresome imbeciles? Granted this is a flat period in which even the third party candidates are either dilettantes or fruitcakes, but even so how is a candidate to look good under such ground rules? There are ways. A handsome, overpoweringly sexy spellbinder, the nightmare media-disco-jockey-celeb-power-eater who lives in the collective social imagination; he could come, and we idiots who're no brighter than our candidates will be misled into thinking we are in the presence of greatness.

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of their ticket is, "Well, your candidate is even worse than my candidate."

The two of them together are such a bad odor in the nostrils of the electorate that many people are starting to get mad at them. Their mediocrity is beginning to be regarded as a moral defect, a sign of sin rather than the badge of a modest genetic patrimony.

Yet these aren't the first two dullards, the first two decidedly non-great men to vie for the presidency. Good government and sound policy can't wait on the arrival of great men because such people are by definition rare occurrences.

Shortcomings more obvious

Rather we should be asking ourselves why Ford's and Carter's shortcomings are so irritably obvious to us when those of Alton B. Parker were invisible to his followers in the 1904 campaign against Teddy Roosevelt. Why are Democrats ashamed of Carter and Republicans ashamed of Ford, or why do they each perceive the limitations of their own candidates with such unusual non-partisan clarity?

One of the answers to this question goes to the nature of modern election campaigns in a moment when there is no significant division between the two men. If one were for war and one were for peace, we wouldn't let the little slips and sloppinesses of the mouth bother us. We'd overlook them.

Instead we have the modern television campaign which would strip a Jefferson or Gladstone of their dignity and leave them looking like gasping, repetitious fools.

Ideally, a president should make perhaps six or eight full speeches or statements on what he thinks are the most important questions of the day and what he would propose to do about them and how. That used to be more or less how men ran for office.

For a long time they did the Jerry Ford equivalent of