

# editorial

## ASUN-YAF court case may have bittersweet effect

It looks like Student Court can dust off its robes and prepare for a court case against the Young Americans for Freedom.

Judging from the heated reactions YAF has evoked in many students, this may turn out to be one of the most emotional cases in recent court history. But despite the political intrigue this issue may create, it is more important to examine what this court case is going to mean.

At this point, those hoping for a brilliant victory against YAF may be bitterly disappointed.

Although it is up to ASUN President Ken Marienau to recommend action to be taken against YAF, it seems unlikely that YAF will be abolished. Marienau has said that he is personally op-

posed to revoking the YAF constitution.

As it is now, YAF meets off campus and receives no student fee support. If the court rules against YAF, it stands to lose the use of the student bank (its account has had a long-standing balance of \$17), free rental opportunities in the Nebraska Unions and the "prestige" of being a recognized student organization.

ASUN officials have proposed development of an ethics code for student organizations, based on a subcommittee investigation of a UNL YAF letter mailed last fall.

Now this is a positive action, and one we applaud wholeheartedly.

This ASUN-YAF case, whenever it happens,

will not be too effective in stopping the flow of YAF letters sent statewide.

The letters protesting the use of mandatory fees for speaker programs and the more recent ones demanding that NUPIRG give up its rent-free space in the Nebraska Union have been created, typed and mailed by the state YAF chapter.

The student fee letter was endorsed by the president of the campus chapter, but that is the extent of the campus YAF's involvement in the letter campaigns.

Perhaps the ASUN-YAF case will bring about positive changes for student organizations.

But no matter which way the court rules, statewide activity will continue.

# ASUN

# YAF



## State legislators deserve credit for override of veto

The Legislature is to be complimented for its override of Gov. J. James Exon's veto of capital appropriations at UNL.

In a 30-9 vote, an excellent margin, the state senators restored money for plans to restore and renovate UNL buildings.

Some of these buildings are in dire need of improvement, and it is heartening to see the Legislature has the same opinions.

Architectural Hall and the Former Law Building need the renovation. A competition last fall produced some excellent designs for the planned improvement and it would be good to see them used.

The money the Legislature restored in LB956, the state capital-construction appropriation, will help reach that goal.

The Architectural Hall is registered in the National Register for Historic Places and deserved added attention.

In addition, the restored money in the bill will be used in planning improvements for the Temple Theater Building, which, like the Architectural Hall, can use the attention.

To see such support of the university's physical condition, as well as the academic condition, is outstanding.

Both adequate monies for faculty salaries and adequate facilities where the students can be taught are extremely important to the university and its ability to attract top-knotch students and faculty.

The Legislature deserves credit for helping reach these often allusive goals.

## Centennial College alters some experimental 'traditions'

Centennial Education Program is not, repeat, *not* becoming traditional next year, despite what you may have read in this space last Friday.

The program housed at Neihardt Residence Center is not only adopting the methods of traditional university departments, it is even altering some of its own traditions.

The result is less tradition and more experimentation, which is Centennial's purpose.

ray  
walden

Normally, I wouldn't begin a column in such a negative tone. The reason is that the headline over it last Friday, "Centennial program becomes traditional in 10th year," was wrong.

Superficially, some changes in Centennial's registration process substitute structure for the near anarchy of the past eight years. But the underlying commitment to alternative, innovative education appears to be untouched.

Among the changes is a course description booklet outlining 18 vaguely titled three-hour courses; this replaces open registration for six-hour block labelled only "Centennial Course." One effect is to move the decision time for what to study from the first two weeks of a semester to the middle of the previous semester.

The loss of some flexibility is compensated by a gain in quality, according to former Senior Fellow Barbara Smith.

This may be a desirable move for UNL's most prominent experiment in education. Time will tell, as with any experiment. But I still have some reservations.

The expected gain in quality on Centennial's academic side may prove too

costly on other fronts.

At the root of Centennial is the belief that education should mean personal and intellectual growth of the student, not just short-term retention of information. The coercion of grades and faculty pressure is at best unproductive. Centennial believes that the best environment in which to develop self-motivation is one which allows a student to design his own educational goals and methods.

Former Fellow Roger Welsch wrote in 1974 the best definition of Centennial that I have seen: "It is a program of processes rather than items, and the principal process is learning—not learning any particular thing, to be sure, but learning how to learn, a process missed by most of the general public and a distressingly large part of the University community."

With luck, Centennial can keep from lapsing into the easy standard formulas for learning. Easy for faculty because their authority is not challenged nor their methods questioned; easy for students because they can drift into an undergraduate degree without taking the risk of identifying their own values.

Without luck, new Centennial fellows will find the revised program format similar enough to the mainline departments from which they come that they will feel little pressure to try any but familiar teaching methods.

Smith, who this month became the dean of an experimental college in Washington, argues that this program deterioration won't happen.

She also disagrees with my opinion that one of the best effects of Centennial is floundering. By this theory, developed during debates on the Commons Room carpet in years past, new students bring with them a trunkful of long-held ideas about what education is.

Under the old system, said student finds

himself in an alien land, where the old ways don't work. He waits around for someone to tell him what to do. But instead of teaching, the professors are talking about self-motivation, and academic exploration.

The student is enrolled for six hours of credit, but has nothing in particular to study, except what he can scrounge up for himself, either alone or in groups.

Al Dittmer, UNL ombudsman, described the process in the 1974 "The Centennial Experience": "In many instances, the student for the first time in his life is really given the choice to choose, and he reacts by sitting back and choosing to do nothing." Doing nothing, he wrote, "is a very important transition stage between being 'others' directed and being self-directed."

In a vacuum of coercion, the floundering students, as former fellow Sky Houser wrote (op. cit.) "need a chance to test out

the notion that the values by which they organize their lives are, in fact, their values, and not merely intellectual hand-me-downs."

In self-directed study, according to Houser, students "are immediately confronted with the boundaries of their own (and the Fellow's) ignorance; this awareness tends to increase, not diminish, if the project succeeds. They are denied the solace provided by the answer to the question: 'What do we have to know for the test?' The answers to their questions must suit themselves, though it is part of the Fellow's role to influence their standards and prevent them from too easy satisfaction."

If Centennial can preserve this spirit of self-confrontation in its 10th year, it will continue as the most vital source of freshness in the academic community. If not, it is time for more experimentation.

## letters to the editor

### Who's the turkey?

Cinema critic J. Marc Mushkin, must realize that one of the hazards of publishing one's comments is that people will read them. So I offer no apology when in reply to his panning of "An Unmarried Woman." I inform him that he is wrong; the turkey in the theater was he, not the movie. "An Unmarried Woman" is a rich, hearty slice of life, fresh, 1978, New York City, in the groove of life. It's about a woman trying to get back "into the stream of life" after the shock, pain and disorientation of her husband's leaving.

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