

Student control . . .

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This new Publications Committee, as of January 1972, is composed of five students selected by the student senate, two faculty members selected by the Committee on Committees of the Faculty Senate and two professional journalists selected from outside the university by the chancellor alone. All of the above vote. Also there is a professional journalist who serves as a non-voting adviser, and who reports directly to the Chancellor. The chancellor is the designated liaison between the Publications Board and the Board of Regents. It is now appropriate to quote Thomas Jefferson and talk about control.

The Student Fee Controversy pamphlet concluded that it was the "anti-war, anti-administration, anti-foreign policy editorials and reportage" that substantially contributed to the drawing up of student press guidelines. (p. viii.) I would maintain that the drawing up of such guidelines hardly leaves the autonomy of the Daily Nebraskan intact. Instead, since January 1972, the direction of the Daily Nebraskan has been significantly changed, and not towards a freer press. Since January 1972, the newspaper has been milder, more docile and less inclined to be irksome to the Regents or the university administration. There have been interesting exceptions to this new definition of journalistic freedom. In fall 1978, the chief editor was Carla Engstrom. Under her editorship, the paper was openly hostile to the administration and their absolute control of the university. She criticized the tuition increases and so successfully exposed the characters of the present Regents through investigative reporting, that again there was discussion of further limiting the power of the Daily Nebraskan. In an interview conducted that semester with Regent Prokop, Prokop said the Daily Nebraskan "breaks all journalistic ethics" in their reporting the news. Because of this tendency, he recommended the newspaper be self-supporting. "If you go on your own and take the responsibility for the paper, you can write what you wish and any lawsuit which might come up will not be involved with the Board of Regents but with the people who write the paper." When Carla Engstrom was editor, we were informed that Regent Kermit Wagner was given a Presidential pardon in 1960

for grain-scale ticket fixing conviction in 1954.

The point is not that students lost interest in political and social problems in the seventies, but that deliberate invasions were made into their autonomy over student fees, and the ways in which they may edit and run their publications. Historical evidence proves it was more than just disinterest and changing moods that accounted for the disparity of student input. Measuring precisely how much was lost and witnessing the subtle erosion of our rights as students is alarming. But the real point remains that it isn't our fault this university is failing and that we have no input on its tendencies. Effectively, our voice was silenced eight years ago, and we have yet to recover from the intimidation. The issue is not one of control, but of who has it. If we are unable to determine the precise extent and effect of the Regents' decisions on student rights in the last decade because data is inadequate, we still must face the fact that we've lost what we once had. And that is a loss that any triumphant words about student freedom of the press only mock. We've lost freedom we once had.

It was in this context that I recommended "more student control of the Daily Nebraskan." I would like to abide by the 1918 Regents resolution as a minimum. But presently, the Editor's quotation of the resolution was a nostalgic longing for the independent past. I want to return to pre-December 1971 standards, and one way I felt of achieving better balance, for equality on the issue of who influences the Daily Nebraskan, was for ASUN to be granted a weekly column. Such a request seems to me not an opportunity for bias, but an effort at equality. Perhaps there are better ideas. If so, let's hear them and not the pious application of the words of Thomas Jefferson. A final proposal which I might endorse if all else is unfeasible, would center on the Daily Nebraskan being a non-affiliated student newspaper, totally self-supporting like Regent Prokop suggests, and a newspaper therefore totally free of administrative advice and the attitudes of an ASUN senator.

Tim Rinne
Graduate Senator ASUN

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

A	R	A	M	V	E	T	O	R	A	I	D		
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S	H	E	D	T	E	A	L	S	I	V	E	D	

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