

opinion/editorial

Cooperation of administration a must

If there were ever a strange relationship in journalism, it would have to exist between the student press and college administration.

The two entities work for the same boss (NU Board of Regents), serve the same campus community, and sometimes have parallel views toward what they perceive as the best interests of the student body.

But that is where similarities end. Often the administration meets the student press with resistance and, at times, is downright uncooperative.

This isn't unusual from an authoritative body and is one of the challenges facing student journalists every day.

The handling of the student press can become somewhat comical when secretaries become the buffering zone between unresponsive administrators and a student journalist anxious to get the facts.

"Have you got his permission to do this story" and "he's out of the office today" are standard barriers thrown up for elusive administrators. It doesn't matter that someone just saw that administrator on campus. If it is his day off, he's not in. Sometimes an inexperienced secretary will be-

come flustered and will forget that the administrator is indeed a public official. At these times, a reporter might hear, "you have no right to ask these questions" or "he wouldn't appreciate the nature of that line of questioning."

Of course, there is always the sound of an angry telephone "disconnection" which for some reason can't be reconnected for some time because of a busy signal.

Then there are the "no comment" tactics employed by some administrators when questions come from student scribes. That works once or twice until major newspapers carry comments the same day from that particular administrator. At that point, a kind note demanding an explanation is sent from the Daily Nebraskan.

There is nothing more frustrating than administrators who perceive the student press as unimportant and fail to provide proper communication to the 22,000 students at UNL. When this happens, it does nothing more than reinforce a perception by students of an unresponsive administration which is insensitive to student needs.

Although every college administration in the

country can probably be accused of not cooperating with the student press at some time, UNL administrators generally have good attitudes toward the student press.

Meetings between editors and administrators are planned every semester and this provides the opportunity to voice complaints by either party.

Communication channels are usually kept open throughout the semester and an occasional reminder is usually all it takes to get a requested response from people who seem to work 26 hours a day.

Proper coverage of the administration is a deep concern to the Daily Nebraskan news staff each semester. To ensure that coverage, there is a reporter assigned specifically to cover Regents Hall and the administration in general.

By proper news coverage, administrative response to student questions and cooperative channels of communication, the student press and college administration can continue to serve the best interests of the people they serve—the UNL student body.

Harry Allen Strunk

FBI is testing morals instead of doing its job

WASHINGTON—Everybody seems to be disgusted (though not necessarily surprised) that some members of Congress apparently are willing to sell their legislative influence. I'm disgusted, too.

Everybody is feeling good about Sen. Larry Pressler, who, apparently inadvertently, has demonstrated his incorruptibility. I feel good about him, too.

But I have another feeling about this newest "sting" operation: the feeling that the FBI has strayed from investigating crime, which is its job, to testing morals, which isn't. The crime the agency has documented on videotape is of its own invention.

I don't want to prejudge the individual congressmen who allegedly accepted bribes from FBI agents posing as agents for "Arab" interests. It may be that some of them intended to report the bribe attempts and pocketed the money only as evidence.

But I am willing to believe that some of the legislators caught on videotape in Operation ABSCAM were taking bribes, simply and impurely. Even so, it seems to me that the FBI succeeded only in "solving"

the crimes it itself had created: that the congressmen who were caught with their morals showing were victims not just of their own greed but of official entrapment.

Lawyers tell me that a good layman's definition of entrapment is the situation in which the seeds of a crime are planted by the law-enforcement officers themselves. According to news reports, that is a fair summary of what happened to the

with thieves and fences who already have committed the crimes. In the second, no crime was committed until the authorities planted the seeds.

I freely admit planting seeds does not compel anyone to engage in instant agriculture. The seeds they sowed for Larry Pressler apparently produced nothing but crop failure. But the fact that some men may have succumbed to what Pressler was able

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embarrassed congressmen.

The operation reportedly began as a trap for big-time hoods trafficking in stolen securities and works of art. If the authorities had set up a phony fencing operation to attract the "hot" merchandisers, I wouldn't be squawking. But at some point, apparently, the FBI stopped trying to smoke out the possessors of stolen merchandise and started trying to smoke out the possessors of easy morals.

In the first case, you are dealing

to resist does not settle the matter for me.

Where, I keep wondering, is the evidence that these men would have engaged in bribery—in this particular bit of bribery—if the FBI hadn't talked them into it? Where, by extension, is the evidence that maybe three-quarters of the members of both houses wouldn't have been tempted if the bribe had been sufficiently attractive?

I suspect that if you made the temptation great enough, with

sufficient payoff and sufficient likelihood that we wouldn't be found out, a healthy majority of us Americans might find ourselves lured into a criminal act.

But it doesn't follow that we are a nation of crooks and that most of us ought to be locked up in preventive detention. None of us is pure, but it is not the business of law-enforcement officers to transform us from potential crooks into actual ones.

In the earlier local "sting" operations that apparently provided the model for ABSCAM, the FBI and the D.C. police simply set up a phone fencing operation and let it be known that they were in business. The "hot" merchandise they attracted had already been stolen; the crooks were already crooks—at first. It seems reasonable to suppose that, later on, some people who hadn't yet stolen anything might have been tempted into thievery by the easy availability of a top-dollar fence.

But in the present case, all the FBI had, apparently, was a list of potential outlaws. There was no actual crime until the FBI contrived to create it.

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Control over foreign universities often is shared

Note: this is the second part of a column dealing with universities overseas.

Although much or all of a foreign university's money may come from the government, control usually is shared, with the government taking a back seat. Students have more power than here, in most cases, sometimes closing universities completely by going on strike.

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"Germany has a tradition of free universities," Maria Nussbaum said. "Control is shared by professors, the administration, and the government. Our student parliament has power over some university policies, plus a lot of influence."

Jose Da Costa said that although the University of Vicosa, Brazil is a federally financed school, "the rector of the university has the most power. He is normally a professor appointed by the deans of the colleges."

Exams are a major part of every foreign university system but are sometimes quite different from those at UNL.

"We don't have multiple choice exams (in Ife, Nigeria), only long essays," Tony Ofili said. "You might write a 30-page history exam with a three-hour time limit."

Cheranjit Sodhi attended the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, India.

"At PAU, we have grades A to F, but very few get an A. If you get two Cs, you go on probation; a third C will get you expelled," he said.

Sodhi deemed himself lucky to have gotten by this easily, saying that "most other universities have one exam per course—a final at the end of the year. The questions are sent by a professor from another university, and the grading is done at yet another school."

"This ensures that students read outside materials to get complete information, because the questions may not come from texts their class is using," he said.

The government steps into the grading process in Pakistan. Naeem Adamjee said that "universities run on the same grading system as UNL, but general colleges—far more numerous than universities—have national exams graded by the Board of Education."

"The grades are first through third division; first division is 60 percent or higher, but is not easy to achieve. Seventy-five percent is 'distinction,' like A+ here. No one gets a perfect score, except maybe a genius."

Entering a foreign university is often more difficult than entering an American one, even for foreign students. Entrance requirements vary widely, but either exams or a high school diploma, or a combination of both, are needed.

"It's very difficult to get into the government

universities (in Japan)," Kahoru Tanaka said. "We must take five subject exams, which are math, Japanese, history, English, and either physics, chemistry, or biology. And then we have five more exams, which differ between the universities."

Once you're in, the situation may be drastically different from UNL. Some systems are more rigid, others more flexible. West Germany, for example, gives students much greater freedom in selecting their classes. Registration is no hassle, either, Nussbaum added.

"You register a week after classes start, by sending a note to the registration office saying you are taking the class. There's no limit on number of students for any class, except on the higher levels. Some of those require professor's permission to enter," she said.

In Nigeria and Japan, the system is more restrictive than here, and this is what convinced Ofili and Tanaka to attend UNL.

"In Japan, it's almost impossible to change majors. But before entering we should apply for a certain field. At Hokkaido, my major is environmental engineering. I became interested in anthropology but couldn't switch majors. That's why I came here," Tanaka said. She plans to return to the University of Hokkaido next year to complete her major.

Even if everything seems different on the surface, it all boils down to students, professors, textbooks and exams.