

opinion/editorial

Student group creates chance for involvement

UNL students who continually complain about unresponsive regent decisions now have a chance to try and change some of that—if they get involved, that is.

A recently formed political action committee, First in Responsible Education (FIRE), seems like an excellent idea to get more student control in university decisions.

According to the organization's goals, regent candidates who are supportive of student wishes and who will remain visible on issues concerning students will be elected to the NU Board of Regents during this year's elections.

Fund raising and active campaigning in outstate districts are being planned by FIRE organizer Mark Hirschfeld.

What better way of getting students involved in the political process, exposing student views, or ultimately obtaining regents who are responsive to the desires of the people they are serving—the UNL student body?

It would seem that such a political action committee could make up for much of the lost student

input which has unsuccessfully been thrown at Regents Hall for so long.

Too often, voters look for a familiar name rather than the regent candidate who is sympathetic to the university's needs. It's hard to be representative of both the university and district taxpayers when regents don't hear Lincoln's side of the issue.

Perhaps a successful venture by FIRE will be a start in correcting what has been perceived by many students as an unresponsive Board of Regents.

Campaigning will give students an opportunity to become involved in the political process. And if they are successful, it will give them a ready contact on the Board of Regents through which to voice opinions.

As Hirschfeld has said, even if FIRE does not succeed in getting a candidate elected, it will be a victory if students participate in the political process.

This is something which hasn't been done at the regents level for quite some time.

Harry Allen Strunk



English professors respond to Regent Prokop

Mr. Prokop's "Counterpoint" to the question of Mr. Strunk's plagiarism is sincerely distressing—not because he completely distorts the true issues involved (which he does), not because he unjustly blasts the strongest teaching department in this university (which the English department is), and not because he himself once was found guilty of indulging in the same type of literary impropriety (which he was—or has everyone forgotten?).

Rather, Mr. Prokop's "Counterpoint" is distressing because he has used the power and authority of his office to endorse and to stamp a deplorable type of academic dishonesty as not only excusable, but commendable (the article's subtitle reads: "He should be praised").

Mr. Prokop asserts that if Mr. Strunk "were selling that work to someone else, then the charges could be considered serious." But as an employee paid for his writing and editing, is this not exactly what Mr. Strunk has done?

Mr. Prokop concludes by claiming Mr. Strunk is under attack only because he "is not of the same cloth." But is that again not precisely the point? It is because Mr. Strunk holds the prestige and authority of Editor-in-chief that we expect more of him than we might of some misguided freshman. It is because Mr. Prokop holds the title

and respect of Regent that we expect more of him than some misguided businessman who believes that anything goes in a dog-eat-dog world.

Both Mr. Strunk and Mr. Prokop fail us, and miserably, not because of what they have written and plagiarized, but because of the shoddy example they have given when they should have done otherwise. We should not be angered but profoundly saddened and shamed by such a failure of leadership from those who should have known better.

David Híbler, MAMA
Asst. Professor of English

Pull together

From comments of "the Harvard of the Plains" to unbecomingly sarcastic defenses of plagiarism of Daily Nebraskan editorials, it would appear that some members of the NU Board of Regents would prefer to promote dissension on the UNL campuses rather than uphold its stated purpose as a representative body of the public trust in supporting and promoting this state's only public university.

Dr. Prokop chooses to defend Mr. Strunk's editorial as acceptable journalistic behavior when, by any academically acceptable definition of plagiarism, it is just that.

Credibility is imperative for paper

By Liz Austin

If there is one thing a newspaper can't exist without, it is credibility.

For a newspaper to be considered credible it must print only believable, reliable and trustworthy material. In its more glorified sense, to have credibility means one's actions are honorable and lacking in disgrace.

ombudsperson

If a newspaper is going to maintain its credibility, it cannot breach the trust its readers have in the newspaper. Readers rightfully expect the news stories they read to be true or at least the newspaper's honest attempt at

truth.

A repeated breach of the trust usually results in a loss of readers and a newspaper can't exist without readers.

This all boils down to the question, "Has the Daily Nebraskan lost its credibility?"

One act of plagiarism by one editor shouldn't result in a total loss of credibility for the Daily Nebraskan.

Unfortunately, it has resulted in a loss of some credibility and some readers. It is hoped these readers will give the Daily Nebraskan a second chance.

The Daily Nebraskan also will be under closer scrutiny by its readers and other newspapers. Another mistake of this magnitude probably wouldn't be tolerated.

But the impact of the incident will carry over into future semesters and from it has come a valuable learning experience.

Readers should give the Daily Nebraskan a second chance. Everyone should be given a chance to prove what he has learned.

Whether, as Mr. Strunk states in his defense, his act was unintentional, or whether it was overt, the fact remains the same. Without denigrating his intelligence or editorial expertise in any way, Mr. Strunk simply could have recognized that "Time magazine stated that..." and be done with it. No one expects Mr. Strunk to be an acknowledged expert on national affairs. Mr. Strunk's defense of himself was as weak as that of Dr. Prokop. An admission of error or lack of foresight does not harm anyone; rather may indeed elevate that individual in the public confidence.

Dr. Prokop's recent letter is unconscionably sarcastic. Such overt sarcasm is unbecoming of anyone of Dr. Prokop's obvious academic prowess (holder of a professional and academic doctorate), or of his present position as a representative of the NU System. Undoubtedly, Dr. Prokop wrote his letter out of insufficient foresight and anger and may be excused because of it.

One hundred and twenty-two years ago, Abraham Lincoln said, paraphrasing Saint Mark, "a house divided against itself cannot stand." By analogy, a university with the potential of NU cannot long tolerate such internal dissension as has been shown in recent Daily Nebraskan exchanges. Let us work with one another, rather than against ourselves, toward the betterment of UNL.

Lyle W Morgan II
Instructor
Department of English

Minority spokesman?

At last the most maligned of minority groups has found an advocate on the Board of Regents. There can be no question that this minority group is routinely discriminated against by professors, and that the Department of English is notoriously bigoted in this way.

Some teachers actively deride plagiarists in class, or at least belittle them by innuendo, and have been known to fail the work of such people without judging it on its own merits.

It may seem that Dr. Prokop goes slightly out of his way to maul the English department, some of whose members, if we can believe the evidence, may actually read Time magazine. But then no one who defines plagiarism as "unoriginal work" needs to learn anything from that department.

Dr. Prokop himself had reason, as I recall, to look up the definition of the word back in the winter of 1972, and no doubt can speak with some sensitivity on the issue of plagiarists' liberation.

R.D. Stock
Professor of English