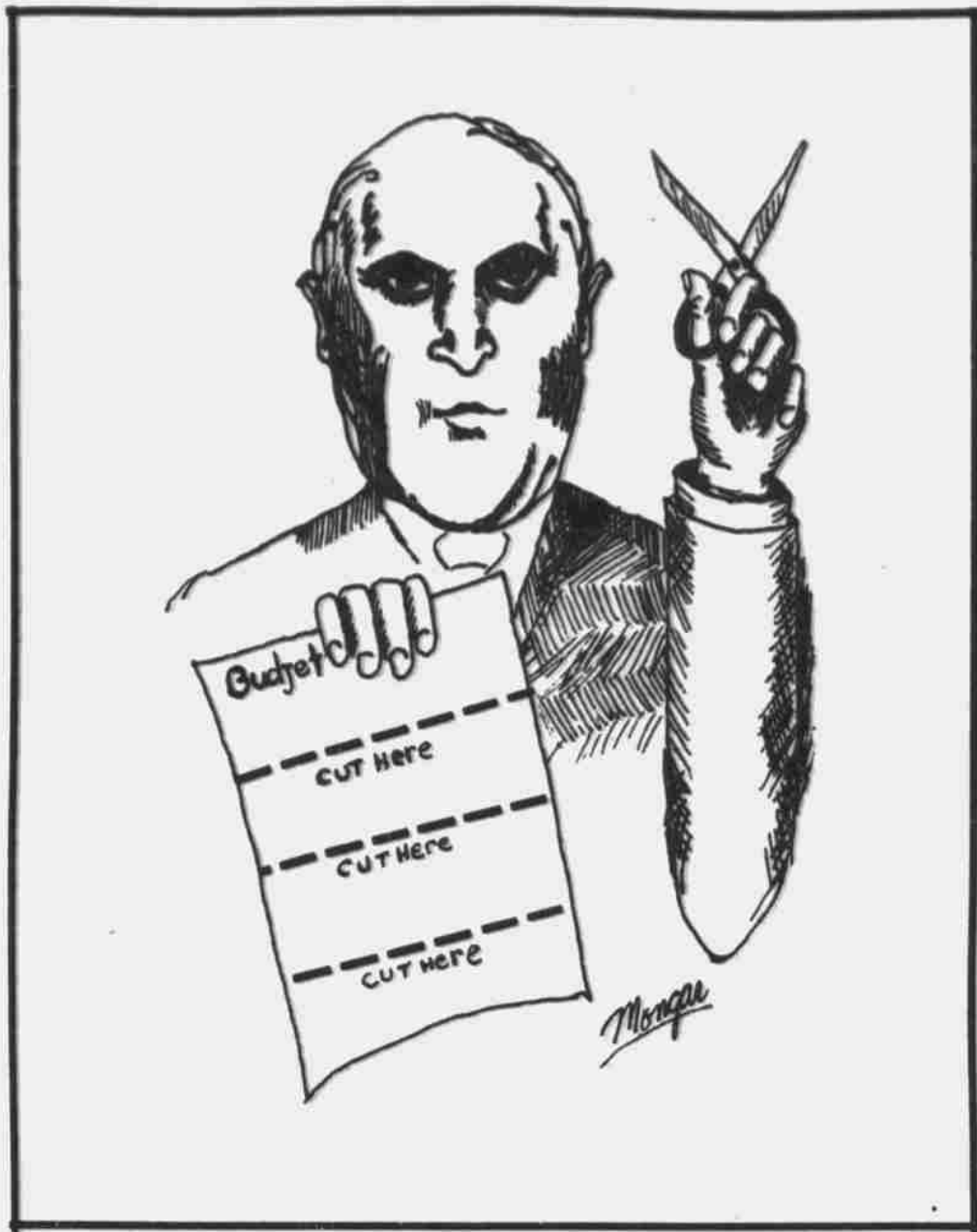


Perspectives



Salary raises unnecessary

Three chancellors were given pay raises of more than 9 percent at the NU Board of Regents meeting Saturday. The board approved increases of 9.2 percent for UNL Chancellor Roy Young and UNO Chancellor Del Weber. NU Medical Center Chancellor Neal Vanselow was given a salary increase of 9.1 percent as was NU President Ronald Roskens.

At the same board meeting, the regents raised tuition for students and gave faculty members lesser pay raises, ranging from 8.5 to 9 percent.

It seems fairly obvious who comes first with the board of regents.

With drastic budget cuts, threatened program cuts, rapidly depleting cash reserves, about 120 vacant faculty positions that cannot be filled, and not enough money to fund even freshman English composition courses, it is outrageous to see administrators, who already earn much more than faculty members, receive such raises.

Students and/or their parents, through higher tuition rates, will pay these salaries. And as students and their parents pay more for the privilege of a college education, they will suffer more too.

They will suffer from the inconvenience of overcrowded or closed classes that can delay graduation and make college more expensive than it already is.

They will suffer from having overburdened instructors who are not being paid enough to keep pace with inflation. And finally, they will suffer because they will not receive the quality of education they most certainly are paying for, and need to have in order to compete for jobs with thousands of other college graduates.

The NU Board of Regents is composed of elected officials who supposedly are representing the university's best interests. As elected public officials they also are supposed to be responsible with the state taxpayers' money.

Disguised politics is dirty politics

By Randy Essex

Recently, two or three cases of what appears to be a fairly new bit of naivete in political life have cropped up in news reports.

It seems fairly consistent for officials to tell the public something that no reasonable and/or educated person would believe. Unfortunately, that practice has become so common that we don't even seem to notice anymore, or worse, we don't identify it.

Maybe it all started with Gen. William Westmoreland's "Light at the End of the Tunnel" speech. Or, maybe it was Nixon's "Cambodia" speech. Anyway, somewhere along the line, we started to either believe, or shrug off things officials say that are too outrageous to be real.

The problem is that many of these people are elected, and therefore we have the right to expect more intelligent statements from them.

This is one of the latest popular, but non-meaningful statements: "It wasn't politically motivated."

NU President Ronald Roskens said it about the Regents' five-year plan, and Gov. Charles Thone said it about President Carter's stop in Grand Island to see the tornado damage.

Let's try not to be too silly.

The regents are elected officials. I hate to use what apparently is a dirty word, but that makes them politicians.

The running of the university has become increasingly political with Roskens running in everybody from teachers to insurance salespersons to support last year's budget request before the Legislature.

When asked about the impressive array of support at the budget hearing, Roskens said it was not solicited. Apparently, he expected the inquisitor to believe all those people just happened to drive in from all parts of the state, and it was only coincidence that no two of them represented the same interest.

Sorry, President Roskens, I don't buy it.

While not guided by traditional politics, mostly because few people take interest in what they do, the regents are as political as any board of elected officials in the state.

And Thone's statement that Carter's trip was not politically motivated suggests that our governor is either blind to Carter campaign tactics or has jumped from the Reagan camp and the Republican Party.

Of course, Thone really couldn't attack Carter as using the disaster to get votes, even if that's what the president was doing. The president's visit could mean much needed federal aid for the city, and the state is not about to attack the method by which it is obtained or approved.

And that is appropriate. The subject of this column, however, is inspired by Thone's comments that Carter had no political motive.

Sorry, but I can't buy that one either. Ever since Edward Kennedy started his challenge for the Democratic Presidential Nomination, Carter has used federal funds in a successful attempt to gather votes. Some, if not all, of those grants were needed, and served a good purpose. But, they also were politically motivated.

Carter has done little for Miami, apparently having written off the black vote as alienated by the battle against inflation, which blacks are fighting in disproportionate numbers just as surely as they fought the Vietnam war in disproportionate numbers.

Yet the needs of the Liberty City section of Miami are just as great as those of Grand Island. If humanitarianism is the motive for Carter's generosity, it makes no difference how a city became a disaster area. What matters is that people living there need help.

With Cuba refugees being pumped into Miami under Carter's direction, taking potential jobs, and food away from indigenous poor, Miami's needs are quite pressing.

The point is this: our political system, although not perfect, is in fact a political system. And, politics and politicians aren't inherently dirty.

We aren't going to make them disappear by pretending they aren't politically motivated, or by saying that they aren't.

The dirty politicians, to me, are the ones who try to disguise politics by telling the public that politics is not politics. It's almost 1984, I think.

Affirmative action plan needs strong commitment

By Kim Wilt

It should come as a surprise to no one that the NU Board of Regents unanimously approved the university's affirmative action plan Saturday.

The regents apparently wishing to be thought of as neither reactionary nor progressive, have committed themselves to nothing more than a statement of their own version of good faith, in regard to the hiring and training of women and minorities.

ASUN President Renee Wessels has said there are no provisions in the plan for the recruitment of women and minorities, or for revising curriculum to recognize that people other than white males attend this university. Furthermore, half the jobs targeted to be filled by women are secretarial or clerical.

Anyone with even a sketchy knowledge of prior regental actions should have expected that such a plan immediately would meet the board's approval. Here was a made-to-order way for them to

state support for their high-sounding principles of affirmative action, without actively committing themselves to handing over any control to those who are standing at the door, sticking in cautious toes.

Perhaps it is time for more than cautious toes. When a man can say with a straight face, as Regent Ed Schwartzkopf did, that he is "weary of these sanctimonious platitudes about civil rights," that says something not only about that man, but about the quality and quantity of commitment to affirmative action, and the larger goal of eliminating sexism, racism and every other form of discrimination, at this university, and in our society.

When an administration can come up with such a weak, meaningless plan and a regental board can approve it (while self-righteously harrumphing that commitment to change "must be within us" not just on paper) and all of this can seem logical, rather than surrealistic and 1984-twisted, then it is time to realize that affirmative action plans may be less than what is needed. In other words, paper goals just aren't going to do it.

Can we realistically expect a white, male administration and a white, male board of regents to see affirmative action as important? If it were not for the federal dollars involved, does anyone believe that this issue would even be considered at all?

It is time to realize that oppression is not restricted to the active proponents of

discrimination, the ones who make the headlines by their membership in the Ku Klux Klan, or the ones who sexually harass female employees or co-workers. They can at least be fought against, legally and rationally. Few would see their actions and beliefs as realistic or acceptable.

It is the passive ones, those whose commitment to social justice runs about as deep as a mud puddle, who are the more dangerous. How can you argue against someone who seems to have your better interests at heart?

That kind of person (or institution) cannot be fought against as easily, because he, she, or it seems to be moving in the same direction you are, with the same goals and beliefs. They can make those who urge or demand change seem ungrateful and shrill.

"Too soon, too fast," is the slogan here, as is "Now you're asking too much." And some will agree, believing they really are asking too much, afraid they will lose whatever slender hold on equality they have been given. And therein lies the problem, because this kind of argument can make people believe that equality and the elimination of discrimination is something that should be given, and gratefully received with the same kind of exclamations and thanks normally re-

served for eight-year-olds on Christmas morning. But watch what happens when the eight-year-old says is isn't enough, or it isn't what he, or she asked for. The word "ungrateful" is often heard in such cases.

Equality isn't a privilege or a gift, it's a right. No one should have to ask for it, or settle for airy promises, or feel guilty about insisting on it. And no woman should be able to say that the lack of it doesn't affect her, or matter to her, and mean it. There is no reason for allowing change to be slow, incomplete or only on paper. It is not written anywhere that discrimination must be seen as "only" a black problem, a female problem, or a Hispanic problem. Yet, too many have accepted that this is simply the way it must be. Too many are willing to let others, usually white males, set the pace for rectification of ongoing wrongs.

In the play, "The Little Foxes," playwright Lillian Hellman has a character say, "There are those who eat the earth, and there are those who stand around and watch them eat it."

If the commitment to equality and elimination of discrimination continues at its current leisurely pace, we may wake up one day to find that the earth has been eaten away from under us.