

# opinion/editorial

## Meager salaries leave Nebraskans hungering

The NU system and Nebraska lawmakers cannot hope to establish UNL as a quality learning institution by throwing a scattering of crumbs in the form of salaries and benefits to the faculty.

But that, sadly, is an accurate assessment of the economic plight facing professors and instructors on this campus because of Nebraska's reluctance to realize a strong, sound faculty is the lifeblood flowing through the veins of a vibrant university.

Somewhere along the line the simple equation that competitive salaries plus an environment encouraging growth equals a quality university providing quality education was forgotten. Although that equation seems fairly basic, it must not be widely known.

UNL ranks seventh of Big Eight schools in the area of faculty salaries. The showing made by this university in comparison to a sampling of nine other major midwestern universities is just as dismal.

Comparisons have been made between faculty salaries and benefits offered at Purdue University, University of Minnesota, Ohio State University, University of Illinois-Urbana, University of Wisconsin, Michigan State University, Iowa State University, University of Missouri at Columbia and UNL.

In those comparisons, UNL ranked eighth in professor salaries, and last in salaries paid to associate professors, assistant professors and instructors.

Nationally, faculty salaries at UNL rank in the bottom 30 percentile of salaries paid to faculty members at universities.

This is not a record the state can or should be proud of.

The effects of the pittance paid to UNL faculty in comparison to other institutions of higher education is not just felt in the pocketbooks of

UNL faculty members. Students and the university itself are pinched directly and the citizens of Nebraska suffer indirectly from this inadequate pay scale.

Expanding student enrollments in some colleges on campus and the inability for deans in those schools to increase teaching staffs proportionately translates into a declining level of quality instruction in many classrooms. Unless adequate financial resources are channeled into the NU system—specifically to its largest component UNL—the prospects of keeping this institution alive and growing will be bleak at best.

Recently, faculty salaries on this campus have not kept pace with inflation. This sad situation will have to be remedied before UNL can grow into a university featuring top-notch education and research to benefit the students in the classroom and the citizens of Nebraska.

## Cooke's actions not typical of press

Within the last year the press has come under some heavy criticism. Some of the criticism is well-deserved. For instance, the minute-by-minute coverage of the hostages' return to free land. And don't be quick to think we've heard the last about the hostages. There will be more, including an overkill of the first anniversary of the hostages' release.

The "You-are-Here" coverage of the recent assassination attempt left much to be desired in the area of accuracy. We were told that Reagan wasn't shot. And Jim Brady was supposed to have died.

have found that she stretched the truth about her life experiences.

The Post's Ombudsman Bill Green also points out that the editors could have been tougher on Cooke. They could have asked stronger and more direct questions.

The Post can continue to comment on things they could have done, but the bottom line is that Cooke was missing the professional ethics and integrity that are ingrained in journalists. And she should assume the blame for possibly tarnishing a profession and moreover, the prestige of the Pulitzer Prize.

Editors should be able to trust the professionalism of reporters. Just as people trust what they read in newspapers to be true. Likewise, reporters should have the trust of their editors to keep secret sources: real secret sources. Despite what some people may think, there are instances in which reporters cannot let their sources be known even to their editors. The reporter could risk losing the confidence of not only one source, but future sources. Moreover, if the issue were to go before a judge, the reporter and editors would be in court because all would know who the supposed secret source was. Who would run the newspaper, one of the editors' mothers?

Newspapers would set a poor policy if they required reporters, in every situation, to reveal their sources to their editors. A policy such as that would be very unrealistic.

Last week was sad for journalism because it proved that there are people who can't have the same ideals and morals that are shared by most true journalists. However, all journalists should not feel responsible for a person who decided to manipulate journalism practices for her own personal gain.

Journalism starts with people. People who are capable and responsible enough to fulfill very high professional standards. Janet Cooke was not one of those people.

barb richardson

News of Brady's death was followed by a Dan Rather commentary that made Brady sound like the unwanted ugly duckling of the White House. Last but not least, Frank Reynolds added to the television frenzy with his unstable presentation of his need to say, "Oh, my God." Pretty professional.

Despite these problems, there is one instance in which the whole press should not be considered responsible for the unprofessional behavior that was shown. That is the so-called misrepresentation of Janet Cooke. Because Cooke decided to lie about a story that was so well written that it won a Pulitzer Prize, some people have chosen to blame the press in general and specifically the *Washington Post*.

Perhaps the trouble all began when the *Post* hired Cooke. According to news reports, the *Post* didn't bother to check out Cooke's resume. If they had, they would



## Successful Columbia evokes nostalgia—and loss

The space shuttle Columbia is home safely. In its dust, some observations:

The Meaning—Whatever scientific or technological goals may or may not have been met by the flight of Columbia, it succeeded in carrying out yet another Reagan-era mission of making Americans feel better about themselves.

In a way it is done with mirrors: You set yourself a goal you know you can achieve, you stress the dangers inherent in meeting the goal, you stock the spaceship with human cargo to up the ante by implying the possibility of death—and then when you carry it out successfully, a sigh of relief can be heard across the country.

bob greene

We all know that. And yet it works. When the spacecraft landed safely in California, people felt good and proud. Whether this says more about the flight itself, or about our national psychic needs, is a point that can be argued.

The Show—To take a cynical view for a moment, it probably would be possible to create almost as much tension if you covered the flight of a Boeing 747 from New York to Los Angeles the same way television covered the flight of Columbia.

Not to belittle the Columbia flight. But as NASA recognizes, the show's the thing, and if the space adventures over the years have been anything, they've been good television.

The Missing Element—In the early days of the space launches, we used to take it pretty much on faith that the accomplishments in the outer atmosphere were going to bring a better life on Earth.

NASA still pays lip service to that theory, but no one really seems to believe it anymore. The space shuttle's major contribution will be to the defense industry, and that has always been the least likely area of government to help human beings in the way they lead their daily lives.

We used to say, "If we can send men to the moon, why can't we cure hunger on Earth?" The question hasn't been answered; it just doesn't get asked any longer. Yet, we can send men to the moon. No, we can't cure hunger at home. Now shut up and watch the beautiful pictures of the liftoff.

The Old Hands—You could almost taste the good feeling of reunion between the NASA folks and the veteran reporters who were once again covering a space launch for the newspapers and television.

Science reporters don't often get the banner headlines, and a lot of them have spent a long time missing the days when their beat—the space beat—was the most glamorous of them all.

The old space hands clearly were having a grand time covering the Columbia voyage. The stories they reported were important to them, but it was being back at Cape Canaveral that was really essential.

The Agency—We all love NASA so much, it's the one area of government no one really wants to criticize.

Normally when we read about the federal government, it is with a jaundiced eye.

But NASA has always gotten a pass from us. The space agency is the Disneyland of the government bureaucracy—it's supposed to be the happy place. So one of the most instructive things about the Columbia mission is how, in the years after Watergate, it reminded us that once in awhile we can feel as if we are partners with the government instead of adversaries.

The Yearning—Just below the surface of the Columbia mission was an almost palpable nostalgia for the Alan Shepard-John Glenn days of the very first space shots.

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