

opinion/editorial

New restrictive policy puts quantity over quality

As is often the case at UNL, the central administration has announced a new policy, but we have heard very little comment on the measure from students and faculty members.

The policy, already in effect for next semester, will delete classes that do not draw enough students to meet quotas determined by administrators. If enough students do not pre-register or do not appear on the first day of class, the course will be cancelled. In the past, enrollment was evaluated after two weeks of classes, so students had a chance to go through drop and add.

The administration says the measure will save the university money, that UNL cannot afford to offer classes that are under-enrolled.

Although this reasoning seems sound in a period of fiscal troubles and budget cutbacks, there are those who worry the measure will endanger the already eroding quality of education at UNL.

Some instructors in the humanities, and no doubt in other fields are concerned that specialized courses that help to round out a student's education will be eliminated. They fear that discussion classes that can accommodate only a few students may be done away with, that graduate courses and seminars usually filled with

only a few students will be wiped out.

Administrators try to calm such fears by assuring us that minimum enrollment standards have been set according to class level and type. For instance, a studio class or a graduate seminar will not be expected to draw the same number of students as a chemistry lecture. Administrators also say exceptions will be made if a class can be justified, that is if it can be shown to be a necessary part of the curriculum.

No doubt, however, administrators' definition of "necessary" will not always coincide with the views of students and teachers. Will this policy eliminate valuable humanities classes? If not administered with care, it certainly could. As one English instructor warns, the ultimate end of such a policy could be the teaching of classes of thousands in Memorial Stadium.

At the core of this issue is the on-going struggle between administrators' pocketbook concerns and the academic needs of students. Too often these interests clash. Administrators trained to balance the books and streamline university spending may forget this university was set up to educate, develop thought and promote research.

But even if administrators and department

chairmen can ensure that only unneeded classes will be eliminated, there is something inherently wrong with a policy formulated without consulting students.

Is the administration willing to take the risk that serious students who want to study in more detail and depth will pass up UNL to study at other universities that offer the courses they want? In the long run, the university may lose money in the form of tuition. And that oft-quoted figure of Merit scholars attending UNL may drop if challenging courses are not offered for students who excel.

Why not prolong the period in which students can enroll and still save a class? Not everyone can make up a viable schedule during pre-registration. With the new policy, a student may want to add a class but find that it no longer exists.

Although it may be too late this semester to fight the policy by pushing students to pre-register, students and faculty members can still voice their concerns. Perhaps, with a concerted effort, we can change the philosophy underlying the operation of this university and turn UNL into a true institute of higher learning.

Martha Murdock



Men gone but not forgotten

Editor's note: Veteran's Day, 1981. For Vietnam Veteran Dave Bauer, it is a time to reflect on the lives of three men who fought in the Vietnam war. Two were killed fighting and another committed suicide.

Dear Red, Jay and Eddy,

Red, I've never forgotten what a love for life you had. You were hard to keep pace with. I should have figured that life in a civilized world would be loving to you. At times I actually figured you were on your way to the pen. Many probably never thought how noble you were inside, or would become. Your nobleness was a product purely of yourself.

guest opinion

Revenge for your death was perhaps part of my reason for following you. I wish I could have been there to stop the "bullet," to yell at you, or knock you down. Or to coax you to hold your temper. I remember how mad you used to get. If you lost your temper like I remember, "Charlie" needed protection from you! But, damn it, you couldn't stop them all yourself! God Bless you Red.

Jay, you were like another brother to me. I remember the old black and white Chevy you had. It couldn't drag a dead cat through a quarter mile! Let alone another car! That didn't stop you from trying. I wish I could have been there when your end was creeping upon you. You needed an old friend. God Bless You Jay.

Eddy, I never knew you personally. But, I think of you in the same way that I used to think when I looked up at the moon. I used to yearn for a bond or a link, a tie with home, and I'd look up in the sky and think, they can see the same moon I'm looking at. It was a shame what small comforts you could make yourself live with. We were from the same little town back in the "world." We knew the same people. I wish I could have protected your plane. God Bless You Eddy.

Red and Eddy to me, you're not numbers 57,691 and 57,692 that died in Vietnam. You have names. You were real, you have families and friends and things that you left behind. Jay, you were the same. You also were in the military, but, you didn't die in Vietnam. You died elsewhere in a stressful world.

I'm sorry I couldn't protect you three men. But, I'm proud to have known you and I just want you to know I haven't forgotten you. God Bless You.

Dave Bauer
President
Student Veterans Organization

Less known of 'little mishap' better for Soviet commander

It's hard to work up very much sympathy for a member of the Russian navy, but I can't help but feel a little bit sorry for Lt. Cmdr. Pyotr Gushin. He is the skipper of the Russian spy submarine that ran aground in Swedish territorial waters.

Sure, it is possible to think of him simply as the enemy, and gloat over his colossal error. But if you get past a uniform and a rank, you might just get one Mr. Gushin, just a guy doing his job, drawing his pay, and not asking any questions. Then he makes a mistake like this and has to go in to see the boss.

pat clark

The scene: A naval base in Russia. Lt. Cmdr. Gushin has just been called in to see his commanding officer.

"I'll bet you're not surprised that I called you here," says the commanding officer, pouring himself a little vodka.

"Well, no," says Gushin. "I imagine you heard something about my little mishap in Sweden."

"Little mishap!" thunders the commanding officer. "When I spill a little beer on my tie, it's a little mishap."

"Okay, I understand the case a little," says Gushin.

The commanding officer pulls out a cigar. "That's not what I'm interested in," he says. "I called you in here to find out what you were doing in Swedish waters."

Gushin begins to perspire. "You know the story," says Gushin. "We went off course."

"Sure that's the story," the commanding officer says. "But you and I both know how reliable that story is. It comes out of the same file from which we got the 'Russia has no designs on Afghanistan' speech."

"But that was the official government story," Gushin says. "Do you mean our government would lie to the whole world? Do we have something to hide?"

"Well, no, it's not that we have anything to hide," blushes the commanding officer. "It's that, uh . . . , that if we told the truth, it would be distorted by the lackeys of the imperialist press!" he says, obviously relieved. "So, we decided it would be better for them to distort a lie, so that we could hold the true story untarnished as always. And because of our government's actions, the truth can now be brought forth. And I think it would be a fine show

of comradeship if you, Lt. Cmdr. Gushin, told me that truth."

Gushin pauses for a minute. "You really don't have any idea what went on, do you?" he says finally.

"Of course I don't!" the commanding officer says. "That's what I've been going to all of this trouble not to say!"

"In that case," Gushin says, "to the best of my memory, everything happened just exactly as the government said it did."

"Are you going to tell me you weren't on a spy mission?" says the commanding officer.

"Nope," says Gushin smugly.

"And you managed to go off course by over half the width of the North Sea?"

"An error, I'll admit," Gushin says.

The commanding officer mumbles to himself for a time, visibly upset. "Okay, I'll take that explanation," he finally says. "But let me tell you something. We don't let mistakes like the one you made go uncorrected. Do you know why you miscalculated your course and found yourself in Sweden? It's because you failed to concentrate. Well, in our system, we have a series of camps, at which you will learn how to concentrate. We call these camps . . ."

"Don't remind me," says Gushin.

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