

opinion/editorial

Prokop needs civics lesson

ASUN's diversity not reason for axing fees

Although the NU Board of Regents failed in its efforts to rescind the student fee refund policy, it's a good bet that the issue will rise again from the murky minds of NU's management.

Chairman Robert Prokop of Wilber led the effort to rescind the May 1980 policy that was designed to give students a stronger voice over where their fees were spent.

The policy allows students to apply for a partial or full refund of Fund A programs. Fund A fees include the Daily Nebraskan, the University Program Council, the Nebraska State Student Association and the ASUN Senate.

Prokop told UNO student Regent Florene Langford that because student regents have threatened to file lawsuits against the university for denying salaries to student body presidents he doesn't favor funding those organizations.

The proposal lost by a 3-4 vote, but Prokop's reasoning is an indication that the matter may not wither away.

Prokop said fights amongst the senators concerning policy and criticism of the senate as published in the Daily Nebraskan show that the students are not mature enough to warrant the fees.

Perhaps an elementary lesson in civics is necessary for Prokop.

In any policy making body like the senate, there are bound to be differences of opinion on the issues they address. That is a natural outgrowth of their collective representation.

The senate does not need a unanimous vote on every issue for its legitimacy. The regents, in their authoritarian fashion, would prefer the senate to resemble the Soviet Politburo instead of a democratic body.

So, according to Prokop's logic, if the senate has internal differences and the Daily Nebraskan is critical of them, then their funding should be stopped.

Prokop even used a Daily Nebraskan editorial as part of his reasoning. But actually, we'd rather get rid of the regents than the senate. At least the members of the senate and their respective committees are truly concerned about the rights of students at UNL.

Senators may not know who they really represent but they are the only voice students have on campus. The regents answer only to themselves.

Prokop makes a curious argument. Does he want total uniformity and agreement on campus

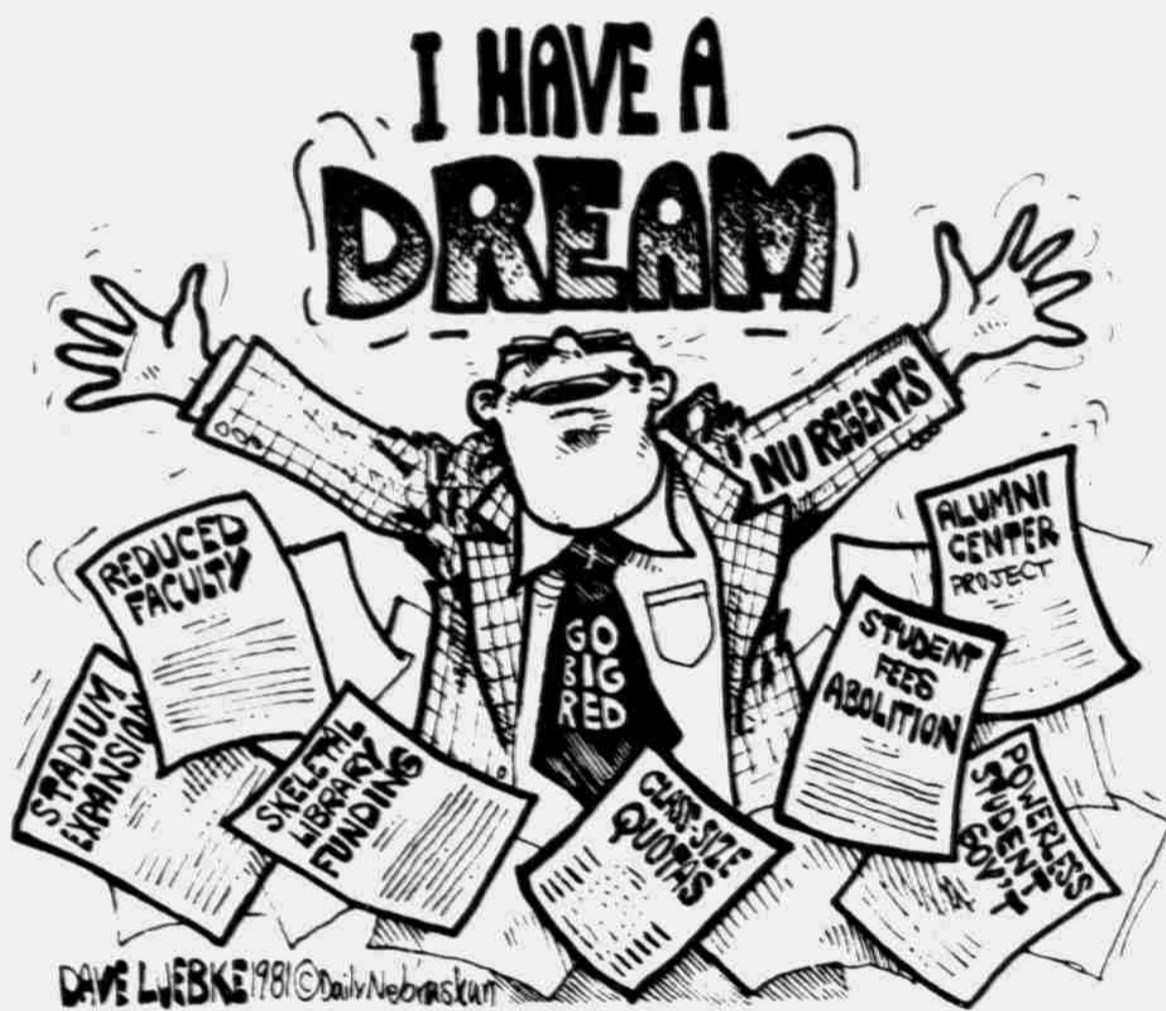
issues? The senate should not speak with only one voice. That would deny many students the only chance of effective representation they have.

It's really sad that Prokop uses critical Daily Nebraskan editorials as part of his argument. We may criticize them on select issues, but we still defend their necessity

on campus.

Perhaps, the regents will soon realize that playing politics with the student fees will only result in more, instead of fewer, problems.

Someday the regents will realize they are unable to mold UNL in their own image. Let's hope it's soon.



Knowledge gained outweighs space program cost

For fans of space exploration, Saturday's premature landing of the space shuttle meant cutting short that increasingly rare fix of watching mankind challenge its curious spirit.

For opponents of excess government spending, it likely will be used for some finger pointing and cries of "foul" concerning NASA's cost effectiveness.

casey mccabe

But NASA's ever dwindling budget is minuscule relative to defense spending and White House redecorating. Space critics — those who claim to enjoy the *McNeil/Lehrer Report* more than *Star Trek* — are perhaps overlooking one major point: when you quit reaching for the stars, it's bound to take the wind out of your sails.

If the money diverted from the space program actually was used for the benefit of the many have-nots populating the earth, it would be easier to concede to the critics' position. But that hasn't been the trend as there seems to be a discrepancy as to what constitutes the "good of man-

kind."

Some think hiding hundreds of nuclear warheads in a desert at a far greater cost than any NASA project makes more sense. This attitude should be met with a resounding "Kiss my asteroids" from taxpayers. The problem is scientists are feeble lobbyists when competing with others who want a piece of the budget pie. A slogan like "Don't Criticize The Space Program With Your Mouth Full Of Tang" doesn't really help.

Scientists traditionally have had the problem of explaining the wonders of knowledge humanity has eternally striven to acquire to people who want to know what it means in dollars and cents. After all, why would anyone let Michelangelo paint the Sistine Chapel when a couple of guys with a few coats of interior latex could do it faster and cheaper?

NASA can point to the number of trained people it employs, the consumer benefits that have come from space technology and the many practical applications an item like the space shuttle has going for it — including satellite repair, weather and atmospheric observations and locating mineral deposits.

But it is rather sad to watch our space program having to beg for handouts. You can beam back incredible photos of Saturn from a billion miles away, but if the econo-

my is faltering back here on earth some will be inclined to say "So what?" The desperate quest for funds has even sent scientists to the military in search of backing.

That, of course, defeats the purpose. The most valuable asset of the space program is perhaps the least pragmatic. Some would take no interest in it unless Skylab fell on their new Trans-Am. But for millions of others, the sheer endeavor of space exploration makes it a unifying force. For some it may be patriotic, for others it is simply a demonstration of the human spirit.

After all, there isn't anything particularly incredible about a rocket launch anymore. Yet much of the country stops in its tracks for the few seconds it takes to watch one. In a world where few people comprehend the inner workings of a toaster, it seems only fitting that a government could help finance something to fascinate its world weary citizens.

The earth looks beautiful from outer space. In an orbiting position, it is impossible to detect that it is inhabited by petty, bickering lower chieftans. That is a vantage point we should all have a chance to view someday.

So let those who want to sweat over their *Wall Street Journals* do so. But don't cut off those of us who willingly support the peaceful quest for knowledge — something history never provides with a price tag.

daily nebraskan

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Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available in the newspaper.

Letters sent to the newspaper for publication become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

The Daily Nebraskan reserves the right to edit and condense all letters submitted.

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Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication, and requests to withhold names will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Submit all material to the Daily Nebraskan, Room 34, Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588.

letters to the editor

Writer's critique biased

Chuck Lieurance's review of the Chris Williamson concert was obviously biased. In his own words, the concert was "well received," there was "unity among the crowd members" and the audience "clapped and sang-through-out most of the concert." These statements suggest to me that the audience enjoyed Chris' style and agreed with her philosophy.

However, he chose to evaluate their positive response with negative value judgments. He said the concert reflected "flaky liberalism" and "absurd '50s idealism." If he interprets the ideals of peace and freedom as shallow, then it is Chuck who is out of touch with reality and totally absurd.

Doris Pleskac
Junior, University Studies