

Editorial

Delayed decision on admissions policy dangerous

Members of the NU Board of Regents are already dragging their feet on an admissions policy. That could be a dangerous mistake.

Saturday at the board's monthly meeting, the regents postponed a decision on whether to adopt some sort of admission policy at NU or keep the current "open admissions" plan. It was the second delay on such a decision. At its February meeting, the board heard two different admissions proposals with the intention of picking one, or an alternate last week.

The regents delayed a decision because, of course, they wanted more information. One would have thought "more information" was what they gathered between Feb. 20 and March 28. Their wait-and-see attitude could endanger any admissions option because the very group it is aimed at — high school students, principals and counselors — may read it as a stall. The students may believe that regents are not serious about steepening admissions requirements and in the process exclude themselves from attending NU.

They would be wrong. It seems clear that some new plan will be adopted.

One proposal for admissions was introduced by James Moylan, the board's president from Omaha. Moylan thinks NU should establish entrance standards according to a high school student's class rank, grade average, entrance test scores or some combination of these.

Another option was proposed by NU President Ronald Roskens. He has suggested a plan, admittedly vague, re-

quiring high school students to complete at least four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies and two years of laboratory science before entering NU.

Those who turned out at Saturday's meeting were, by and large, critical of Moylan's plan. They argued that entrance tests such as the ACT discriminate against ethnic minorities and that low scores on the test would keep twelfth-grade graduates out of the state university.

Roskens' proposal was also criticized, mostly by those who want no admission plan at all. But the president's plan makes sense and should be endorsed by the board and then initiated — full speed ahead.

Roskens' admission plan is a good idea on several inter-related points. Requiring students to complete specified courses in high school would better prepare them for college. Countless thousands of freshman have entered the university, this year and in the past, ill-prepared for university studies. By doing so they have put an unfair burden on prepared students by requiring a slower class pace and requiring more of a teacher's time and attention.

Additionally, any plan that may ease enrollment totals and thereby save money has merit.

Roskens' plan can only be a step in the right direction because it would adequately acquaint students with the basic disciplines before they enter college. And it will prepare those who, after entering NU, enroll in colleges with admissions standards of their own. At UNL there are several. Among them are the School of Journalism, the

College of Architecture and College of Engineering and Technology.

The plan is not perfect; it has its kinks. What the regents and company must do now is work out those kinks before May 15, their next meeting. They must be prepared to sell Roskens' admissions plan to the high school principals, counselors and students across Nebraska. They must emphasize that college is not something 18-year-olds do to bide time, that students must be equipped to pursue higher education.

They must make a strong and specific statement, and most importantly, follow through on it. They ultimately will be responsible to ensure that Sue Student from a small-town high school completes four years of English, so when she graduates she can come to the big state university. That will definitely take a lot of work.

And while the regents determine what courses high schoolers should take and how to ensure they take them, the regents must listen to critics of the plan and find ways to allow "late bloomers" into NU, how to enroll non-traditional students who attended high school 20 years ago, how to offer an education to veterans seeking higher education and to professionals seeking a second degree.

Admissions requirements are a good idea. But the details must be solid before initiating a plan. On a decision as important as admissions, the kinks can't be left to trial and error.

Patti Gallagher

Free stamps give incumbent an edge

It's always tough to be the underdog, but when it comes to U.S. congressional campaigns it's nearly impossible. In Wednesday's *Omaha World-Herald*, candidate Richard Fellman said the incumbent, 2nd District Congressman Hal Daub, is abusing franking privileges, which allow congressmen to use the U.S. Mail for free. The problem is that Daub isn't doing anything out of the ordinary.

Take the 1st District here in Lincoln as an example. Every so often we all get a newsletter with "Doug Bereuter Reports to Lancaster County" written across the top in big, bold, black letters. It has lots of pictures of the congressman. (He's very photogenic; you have to be in his line of work.) He is usually shown smiling or empathizing with constituents.



Matthew Millea

Although the ostensible reason for these mailings is to inform the people, the congressman can't seem to resist the urge for a little self-promotion. The last "Keeping in Touch" I received from Bereuter proudly proclaimed his 98 percent voting record and concluded with "Best Wishes, Doug: Member of Congress." (How wonderful to be on such intimate terms with my elected representative. It's almost enough to make me forget it was addressed "Postal Patron.")

This kind of direct mail campaign is paid for by taxpayers regardless of what they think of Bereuter, Daub or the rest. (It's interesting that senators don't engage in such gratuitous informing of the constituents. Maybe that's because they only have to run every sixth year, not every second. I've noticed J.J. Exon doing pretty much the same thing on television, but he has a lot more clout than these mere congressmen.) Candidate Fellman estimated the cost to the government for seven Daub mailings since August 1 at more than \$250,000.

Privileges like free publicity for incumbents have always been a part of the political game, but the candidate who challenges a well-entrenched incumbent may face newer and more formidable challenges. The rise of political action committees has made campaigning a matter of high finance.

One incumbent congressman, Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), is so heavily backed that no one from either party has ventured to oppose him. Rostenkowski is one of the most powerful men in Congress because he is chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, which is the origin of all revenue (meaning tax) bills. His position makes him the friend of a lot of rich folks and discourages his blue collar Chicago district from electing an opponent who wouldn't have seniority or its attendant power. Similarly, the oil companies have decided Hal Daub is the best congressman money can buy, which makes it tough for Democrats like Fellman to keep up.

None of this would matter much if people paid more attention to what is going on. The average citizen doesn't have the time, energy or intelligence to keep up to date and becomes the prey of the Madison Avenue candidates who do so well under our system. Small wonder that a man who was General Electric's corporate mascot is now the President of the United States.

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Unholy alliances part of politics

I have a dream. I dream that someday the United States will side with the peasants in some civil war. I dream that we will be the ones who will help the poor overthrow the rich, who will talk about land reform and education and health facilities for everyone and that when the Red Cross of Amnesty



Richard Cohen

International comes to count the bodies and take the testimony of women raped, that our side won't be the heavies.

For once, it would be nice if our side did not wear gaudy military uniforms and hide their eyes behind dark glasses. I would love it if our guys wore the suspenders and the wide hats and slept at night in the countryside, instead of behind guarded walls of some villa with a wife and a mistress and Mercedes Benz.

What I am saying, I suppose, is that I would like us once to be on the side of history. It would have been nice to have won in Vietnam and in China before that. It would

have been terrific to have been the Shah's enemy and the friend of the people of Iran. It would have been great not to have been the buddy of the Somoza family in Nicaragua and the pal of every dictator who sends his money to Switzerland and his children to American military schools. Maybe then things would have turned out differently. Maybe then we would not be looking into the faces of anti-American zealots like Khomeini.

It would have been wonderful if we were the country the Sandinistas turned to when they started their revolution in Nicaragua. Why not? We believe in democracy, in equality, in freedom. This is the country that was formed in a revolution and that to this day is so unremittingly democratic that, at the Republican National Convention, the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit was denounced as government oppression.

Even now you have to wonder why we have this argument with Nicaragua. Why do we have to bolt in panic from any country that calls itself Marxist or socialist? So what if it is? China is communist and it is our new buddy. Its chief enemies are other communist countries — the Soviet Union and Vietnam. The Vietnamese, in turn, fight the Cambodians and the Cambodians fight each other. Communist cohesiveness exists only in American myth.

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