

Guest  
Opinion

# Molloy's 'successful' powerless social clones

As prospective entrants into the labor market, we students at UNL have good reason to be thankful to the faculty and staff of the College of Business Administration. During the past week, CBA sponsored its annual B-Week activities, during which John Molloy was guest speaker. Molloy, author of "Dress for Success," provided us with more factual data that is consistent with the already burgeoning evidence from the social sciences. This data clearly and consistently points to a rather unmistakable depressing conclusion.

Social scientists, like Thorestein Veblen, John Kenneth Galbraith and Rosabeth Moss Kanter have come to agree that our corporate leaders are selected through a process of "homosocial reproduction" or social cloning. In this process, educational institutions in general, and business colleges in particular, play an important social role. Educational institutions deliver certificates which serve as job tickets. In more technical language, educational institutions provide their students with "ports" to those entry-level corporate positions. This is consistent with sociological data which show that corporate leadership is based on age, sex, kinship orders, political affiliations, as well as voluntary and involuntary associations.

But educational institutions do more than provide "ports of entry" to those lucrative corporate positions. They also transmit the values and ethos of the business community to their members. The logical deduction is that students will win acceptance in corporate organizations to the extent that they follow and accept the ethos and values of the business community. In the quest to win approval, dress is an important component in the equation for corporate success.

About 50 years ago, economist John Maynard Keynes observed that businessmen were a somewhat fickle and nervous lot — understandably so, as their activities border on the margin of the immoral. Dress serves as a sort of filtering device whereby the unworthy are weeded out. Conservative dress represents a form of acceptance which tells the employer: Yes, I am willing

to subordinate my ethics for the benefit of the group; Yes, I am willing to wipe out my neighbor's job and then foreclose on his car and mortgage when he can't make the payments; Yes, I am willing to divide entire communities and then go to Taiwan where the relative wage and tax differential is cheaper; Yes, I am willing to do all of these things and more for the sake of winning acceptance in the corporate community.

Veblen was correct when he wrote toward the close of the 19th century that dress is an expression of the pecuniary culture. That is why Molloy opened his talk telling his audience "if you don't listen to me, you've had it . . . dressing for success is not a choice . . . it's do or die."

To tell us the importance associated with dress in the corporate world is one thing, but to then turn around and remark, "This is not based on personal opinion (because) I am a researcher" is another matter. Apparently Molloy would have us believe that he is neutral on the subject and that by expousing this he is immune from value judgments. Such efforts are futile because the term "success" is value laden. Success as defined by Molloy is a synonym for conformity; put somewhat differently, it means to blindly follow in the footsteps of those who seldom *think* about the social consequences of their activities.

When the time arises, I urge my colleagues at UNL to take consumer advocate Ralph Nader's advice and pose the following question to the corporate interviewers: Is this the kind of organization I can feel good about being a part of? To this ends-in-view Molloy is incorrect. One does not acquire power by playing "their game." Submitting to the rules of "their game" is, from the individual's perspective, the absence of power.

In the meantime, as a form of symbolic protest against an attitude which I feel is subversively undermining what is good in contemporary American society, I plan to wear bowties whenever the situation presents itself.

Jerold Laval Davis  
graduate student, economics

## Letters ...

### Greek-led ASUN represents select few

Mike Frost, thank you for making, on the behalf of the student body, a realistic comparison among the Greek-led parties: Reach, Action and Real. Your sweet-sounding Valentine's verse had in it a deep meaning for students. Students should beware of the same campaign promises which have the single purpose of gaining votes.

toward the potential of student government.

Richard King  
junior, political science

The leadership offered by the Greek-led parties is tainted with attitudes that stem from a certain few. This order of leadership is not in the initial interests of the student body. What we need is a student government that represents a fraternity of all UNL students. One should not have in mind that a difference in organization is intrinsically good, but that the existing establishment has continued to prove itself ineffective, and has done so over a long period of time.

This is not an attack on the Greek system, but the fact that Greek houses are organized and always have a corral of candidates does not make them better organizers, especially organizers of the government of the entire student body. Let all students go into the ASUN election with a brighter, more positive outlook

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## myths about Sexual Harassment

### Myth:

If people really want to discourage unwanted sexual attention, they can do so. If they are sexually harassed they must have asked for it.

### Myth:

Most charges of sexual harassment are false. People use these charges as a way of "getting back" at someone else with whom they are angry. Thus, sexual harassment has received more attention than the problem merits.

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### Fact:

Often a sexual harasser will assume that "no" means "yes" and not believe a refusal. Even when a negative response is clearly understood, some teachers and supervisors are ready to use their power to coerce their students and employees. The unwillingness of an authority figure to "take no for an answer" separates sexual harassment from acceptable sexual behavior.

### Fact:

Men and women who openly charge sexual harassment are often not believed, may be ridiculed, may lose their jobs, be given a bad grade or be mistreated in some other way. They have little to gain from false charges. On the contrary, confidential surveys indicate that the majority of sexual harassment cases are not officially reported.



Adapted from *Sexual Harassment: A Hidden Issue*, June, 1976, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R Street, Washington, D.C.

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