

Editorial

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AIDS

UNL should adopt policy

Curious Nebraskans flooded phone lines of the Lancaster County Red Cross last week after NBC aired a TV documentary about AIDS, acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The evening of inquiries is evidence of the general public's ignorance of the disease, which attacks the body's immune systems that combat diseases.

Fortunately, this ignorance has prompted some university officials and the UNL Gay-Lesbian Student Association to begin exploring UNL's policies regarding the AIDS disease. The association recently met with Dr. Gerald Fleischli of the University Health Center, and if formation of an ad hoc committee is approved, eventually will make a report to NU administrators and the NU Board of Regents.

UNL needs a policy for AIDS and AIDS victims.

Although no AIDS cases have been reported on campus, policies need to be established now. If UNL had an AIDS problem, paranoia and hysteria would prevail. By setting a policy now, decisions will be made by rationalization instead of panic.

A question the ad hoc committee would need to address: Should AIDS victims be allowed to attend class?

The answer to that question should be "yes."

Contrary to popular belief, people cannot contract AIDS through tears or saliva. The U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services says that, although those body fluids have been found to contain the AIDS virus, they haven't been responsible for transmitting the disease.

AIDS can be transmitted by:

- Sexual contact with someone who has AIDS.
- Sharing a hypodermic needle with an AIDS victim. Usually this occurs through blood transfusions or sharing needles for drug injections.

True, researchers and scientists continually are finding new discoveries that shed more light on the AIDS problem. But it is mostly conjecture.

Based on information we now have, attending school with an AIDS victim would be a minute risk. But it's a risk no greater than jumping in your car and traveling two miles to school. It is impossible to create a risk-free environment.

Scientists are discovering more about the AIDS virus every week. Within a year or two, they might find that AIDS can be transmitted through means other than sexual contact or blood transfusions. When that happens, UNL will have to revise its policies.

Nebraska has been fortunate to avoid an AIDS epidemic. Whether it will have one in the future is unknown. But university officials need to take preventative measures now to prevent possible panic later.

ASUN elections

More poll sites may help turnout

A proposal to add a fourth ASUN voting site could provide a central voting location and increase voter turnout.

If a site was added in Neihardt Residence Center, students would have four convenient sites — including the Nebraska and East unions and Nebraska Hall.

Critics say the extra site at the residence hall would give an unfair advantage to residence hall candidates. That's doubtful. Neihardt is a central location, convenient for Cather, Pound and Neihardt students. But it's also convenient for students in nearby Greek houses lining 16th Street.

The extra site would cost about \$400. But if it increased voter turnout, it would be worthwhile.

Perhaps the site could be added this year temporarily. If the polling place does bring in more votes, ASUN officials should permanently add the Neihardt site and consider adding others. If not, the plan could be scrapped.

Since 1984, the number of voting sites has steadily decreased. In 1983, students cast votes at Neihardt/Cather-Pound, Selleck,

Abel-Sandoz and Harper-Schramm-Smith residence halls, Westbrook music building, the UNL College of Law, Hamilton and Burnett Halls, the College of Business Administration and the Nebraska and East unions.

Yet, when the number of voting sites was reduced from 11 to three, voter turnout changed only slightly — from 3,226 in 1983 to 2,350 in '84 and back up to 3,256 in '85.

The problem seems to be student apathy. But if ASUN officials show they are meeting students' needs and are willing to make voting convenient, turnout might improve.

If the cost is the main deterrent to a fourth site, perhaps residence hall officials and ASUN senators could seek volunteers to staff the Neihardt polling place.

Thanks to a new voting system that replaces the computer punch cards with single voting sheets, ASUN officials say they will save money on elections.

It's time to put some of that money back into the voting system to increase voter turnout.



Defense dollars are misplaced

U.S. military suffers because of high-tech weapons

Several weeks ago Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev invited the United States to engage in complete nuclear disarmament by the end of this century. Although President Reagan has always maintained that his goal vis-a-vis nuclear armaments is arms reduction rather than control of the growth of arms, his positive response was surprising.

However, if the United States joins the Soviet Union in pursuing this laudable goal, substantive problems in the U.S. military planning and procurement system need to be addressed. Unseemly political and economic tendencies have developed from the virtual carte blanche given the military decision-making system in the past few years.

Any discussion of the political economy of armaments must take note of President Eisenhower's brooding assessment of two policy systems that pose dangers to republican government.

Eisenhower termed the first policy system the "military-industrial complex." This, he observed, is a "conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry" with great influence and a "potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power . . ."

The continued existence of the complex is beyond doubt. For example, Department of Defense information indicates that only 50 contractors receive almost 50 percent of military contracts. Most major weapon systems are produced by only a few firms, according to economist Tom Riddel. As a result of the defense sector structure, Riddel concludes, "there is a presumption that its performance will involve high prices, poor product quality and possibly collusion."

Besides the development of a military-industrial complex, Eisenhower also warned "that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite." His fear was

that policy-makers would become trapped by a scientific elite who saw only increasingly sophisticated technology as the solution to the nation's woes.

What Eisenhower did not foretell — perhaps the thought was too frightful — was that these two policy systems would converge into one, to the detriment of U.S. domestic and military policy.

The conjunction of these systems has led to an unhealthy, yet popular notion that U.S. security is increased only via more technologically advanced weapon systems.



**Jim
Rogers**

The problems with such an emphasis is that technological sophistication is always quite costly. Even with the recent large increases in military spending, less technologically enticing defense systems have suffered — to the detriment of legitimate U.S. security interests.

Columnist Jim Fain recently reported that the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies estimates a future reduction of at least 25 percent in conventional capability because of the cost of new weapon systems.

The problem is greatly magnified in light of Gorbachev's most recent proposal: NATO's conventional forces are already sadly outmanned and outgunned in Western Europe. Yet it is exactly these forces that will be called upon to pick up the slack were Reagan to agree to Gorbachev's offer.

After six years of large military budget increases, it would be ironic if

the United States felt too militarily weak to accept the Soviet arms proposal.

Increases in defense spending have been wrongly channelled into high-tech arms systems rather than necessary conventional force build-up. Blame for this can be placed squarely upon the distorted symbiotic relationship between the military and the armaments industry. Technologically simple defense systems — hiring more soldiers or constructing more gas masks — are hardly as exciting, or as profitable, as high-tech weapon systems.

Also, technologically simple defense purchases can come from many firms rather than the handful of corporations that have an inside track on high-powered military research and development. The few corporations that would lose their profitable, privileged position in high-cost, high-tech weapons development have a vested interest in avoiding conventional force build-up.

But surprisingly and unintentionally, a ray of hope may have been offered to the U.S. public in the guise of the much-maligned Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law.

The law requires automatic and proportional reductions in military and social programs. As a result, the law can't help but focus public attention on efficiency and cost-effective use of the defense dollar. When priorities are set by public opinion, common sense has a better chance of success than technological narrowness.

Efficient use of defense funds is no longer a luxury that Americans can afford: It is a requirement that, if ignored, threatens the success of substantial portions of U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

Rogers is a UNL graduate economics student, a law student and Daily Nebraskan editorial associate.

Time to rethink truths about ghetto

In 1968, Walter Cronkite returned from Vietnam with a reporter's conviction: "It seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate." Others had reached the same conclusion earlier, but it took TV and Cronkite — a powerful combination — to really make the difference. In the video age, only an anchorman can sound retreat.

Now the same network — CBS — may have done the something similar. Bill Moyers, just back from Newark, has reported on what he found there. In a documentary called "The Vanishing Family — Crisis in Black America," he says that the inner-city black family is almost no more. Children beget children and they, in turn, have others. Kids are raised only by their mothers, and

fathers take no responsibility for their children. One man Moyers talked to had six children with four women. He recited his accomplishment with a grin you wanted to smash a fist into.



**Richard
Cohen**

The disintegration of the poor black family has been reported before. It is not news that almost 60 percent of all black children are born out of wedlock, nor is it news, in Moyers' words, that "in the black inner city practically no teen-age mother gets married."

The news is that the one-time press secretary to Lyndon Johnson is saying

this. If Cronkite was the spokesman for the cautious center, then Moyers is — at least by repute — the voice of Great Society liberalism. He suggests it has gone off the track.

The first finger Moyers points is at the welfare system. In his interviews, he asks single mothers and vagabond fathers if their lifestyles would be possible without welfare. They all say no. The women live for the monthly checks and their men, fathering babies on commission, come around for their take.

The second finger Moyers points is at contemporary values or, more precisely, the lack of them. Men proclaim their masculinity through irresponsibility. Illegitimacy is commonplace and without shame.

See COHEN on 5