

Editorial

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Grist for the mill Colleges need recommitment

Apparently, Secretary of Education William Bennett wasn't so far off the mark last month when he criticized higher education for failing to produce the kind of students that academic leaders claim they do.

A new report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching blasts academic shortcomings of U.S. colleges and universities in much the same way Bennett did. The report, based on a three-year study of 2,000 four-year colleges, notes that "many of the nation's colleges and universities are more successful in credentialing (providing degrees) than in providing a quality education for their students." Faculty expectations of student performance, the report says, far outstrip the preparation incoming students have received to meet them.

Compare those statements with Bennett's Oct. 10 speech at Harvard, in which he said there was "an extraordinary gap between the rhetoric and reality of American higher education" and suggested colleges and universities should "make better men and women the way you say you do in your catalogs." When Bennett said that, he was roasted roundly by academic leaders. On the other hand, many of those same people applauded the Carnegie report.

Since Bennett, an appointee of the Reagan administration, also has accused higher education of revealing in liberal bias,

it seems the criticism of his Harvard speech had political overtones. Now that a group more highly regarded in academic leaders' eyes has said the same things, it's time to drop the politics and take a close look at the problems.

The Carnegie report cites several remedies for improving a school's educational product. It recommends scaling down the number of part-time faculty members; beefing up general-education requirements, requiring that students' major programs include study of the history and ethics of their field and rewarding good teaching.

Some of the report's other recommendations — reining in corrupt athletic programs and supervising residence-hall life more closely — aren't likely to escape severe controversy. But the four remedies listed above are solid measures on which everyone should be able to agree. UNL has been moving toward implementing many of those measures, Chancellor Martin Massengale says.

Obviously, something is wrong with higher education as a whole. Colleges and universities often are given the derisive title of "degree mills" — a charge which apparently has some substance. Academic leaders concerned about their schools' educational quality should take this report and make it the foundation for a renewed commitment to excellence.

Remember to vote

Apathetic citizens shouldn't complain

Every year at election time network television runs a commercial that's very familiar to the populace. It shows an "average Joe" sitting in an easy chair watching the returns and seeing his candidate lose by a narrow margin. The 30-second spot ends with him saying, "I should've voted, but I didn't think I needed to. I thought he would win."

Election day is here and along with TV, the print media is encouraging the masses to vote, and this editorial is no different. Nebraska has 849,762 registered voters and only weather or voter apathy will stop people from casting their ballots.

Let's hope not.

Voters may be turned away by the negative campaigning of the gubernatorial election in which each candidate seemed to spend more time stressing her opponent's weaknesses than exposing her own strengths. As for the weather, either good or bad weather could play a factor: bad weather keeping people inside and good weather keeping people in the fields. It is harvest time.

Both reason are relatively weak

excuses. Secretary of State Allen Beerman said in a news release that he expects a large voter turnout this year for a number of reasons. He said he believes the gubernatorial race has a "unique national flavor" because two women are running for the office, the first time ever in the United States.

Beerman also noted that the two referendums will draw voters' attention. Referendum 400 or LB662 concerns school consolidation and a sales tax increase. Referendum 401 focuses on the mandatory seatbelt law.

As for the university, only one member of the Board of Regents is being challenged. Regent Robert Simmons Jr. of Scottsbluff is trying to regain his seat but is facing stiff competition from McCook dentist Dr. Don Blank.

People have heard time and time again that it is their "right" to vote, and it is. So many times the people complaining about how state and federal government is run are the same people who did not vote.

Let your voice be heard. Cast your vote.

Goodwin's guide for voters

'88 made easy; who's who and what and why we should care

Today is Election Day, a fact which you're probably aware of if you haven't been living in a cave. After today the press will begin its laborious task of figuring out the winners and losers. Did Mario Cuomo win by enough percentage points? What do the election results mean for George Bush's candidacy? Blah, blah, blah.

Of course, that's the job of the press, figuring things out like that — speculating on what the '88 race will look like.

And it is fun to speculate. And since I'm supposed to write this column and couldn't think of anything else to grab my interest, here's a look at some of the candidates for president — who is, after all, the quarterback of the Free World.

First, the Republicans.

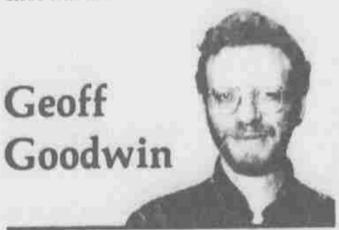
Jack Kemp, congressman from New York. His biggest drawback is that he's a Republican. He's also a former jock, having once been a quarterback for the Buffalo Bills. Ordinarily, this probably would be an asset, but if you think that you never saw Jack Kemp play. The Republicans' biggest worry if Kemp gets the nomination is that the Democrats will trot out Jack's old game films. On the plus side, Kemp is a good speaker. He could sell snow to an Eskimo. And he does wear a nice big ring, no doubt his AFL championship ring. If elected, he would be the first Buffalo Bill ever elected to the White House.

Robert Dole, senator from Kansas. Dole's biggest asset is his wife, Elizabeth, who's the Secretary of Transportation. She's also his biggest liability in that she makes him the second-best candidate in his own household. That must be a bit demoralizing for Bob.

Actually, of all the Republican candidates, I like Dole the best. I saw him at a breakfast (a political breakfast, it wasn't Denny's) a couple of years ago, and he made a very good speech. The Republicans could do a lot worse, and I'm sure they will. If he's elected he'd be the first native of Russell, Kansas, ever to have his finger on the button.

Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Transportation. Her biggest asset

is being married to Bob Dole. She can meet all his political pals and, if his campaign falters, she can step in and pick up the pieces. If she wins she would be the first Secretary of Transportation elected president. Also, the first woman.



Howard Baker, former senator from Tennessee. His biggest drawback is that the Watergate hearings ended 12 years ago, 14 by the time the election rolls around. Baker's campaign will have to release a video of the Watergate hearings. If he should win he would be the first man named Baker ever elected to the White House.

George Bush, vice president of the United States. George's big problem is that he can't hold a job. In the last 12 years or so he's been head of the CIA, ambassador to China, candidate for president, candidate for vice president and vice president. Who's to say he won't be elected president and then decide he doesn't like the job and quit to sell burial plots? If George wins he'd be the only first baseman to ever sit in the Oval Office.

Paul Laxalt, senator from Nevada. His biggest asset is that he's a big pal of Ronald Reagan. His biggest liability is that he's from Nevada. If elected he'd be the first Basque ever elected president.

Pat Robertson, evangelist. His biggest asset is that he's a religious fanatic. That's also his biggest liability. He'd be the first religious fanatic ever elected president.

Now the Democrats.

Mario Cuomo, governor of New York. His biggest asset is that he projects an image of a leader, something the Democrats need desperately. On the minus side he's a liberal in a party that is moving towards the center. If

elected he'd be the first guy named Mario ever to be president.

Bill Bradley, senator from New Jersey. He's smart and smooth, just like he was on the basketball court. If Bradley faces Kemp the election could be decided by a decathlon. Bradley would be favored. If elected he'd be the first Rhodes Scholar/New York Knick to become president.

Joseph Biden, senator from Delaware. His greatest liability is that he doesn't have much hair. His biggest asset is that, unlike Alan Cranston, he won't be stupid enough to dye it orange. He'd be the first Joe ever elected to the White House.

Gary Hart, former senator from Colorado. Hart chose not to run for re-election, thus putting himself out of a job. Perhaps this will put him closer in touch with the unemployed. If Hart wins he'd be the first spy novelist ever elected president.

Jesse Jackson, minister. I know I'm going to get in trouble for calling Robertson a "religious fanatic" and Jackson a "minister." But trust me, folks, there is a difference. Robertson has (or had) a television show. That's the difference between a minister and a fanatic. Jackson's biggest problem is that he likes to tell Jewish jokes to reporters. He's sort of a Democratic Earl Butz. Jackson would be the first black ever elected president.

Sam Nunn, senator from Georgia. Nunn's main strength is that he knows defense, not like Bill Bradley, but rather defense issues. In an era when most Democrats are looked upon as wimps this gives him a big advantage. His biggest drawback is that he's from Georgia. The last president elected from there was Jimmy Carter. It may be a long time before people forget that. He'd be the first Nunn ever elected president.

And on the fringe.

Lyndon LaRouche. His biggest liability is that he's a nut. His biggest advantage is that not everyone knows that.

Goodwin is an undeclared graduate student and a Daily Nebraskan night news editor.

European attitudes towards summit show shocking anti-Americanism

A friend (unnamed) working in a federal agency (unnamed) does not, in my judgement, jeopardize the national interest by writing to me as he has done and enclosing the classified matter he did. The covering letter reads, "If you think it was galling in the days when you were here, have a look at this."

"This" is a survey of three European countries, a survey conducted right after the collapse of the mini-summit at Reykjavik. The idea was to inquire into what typical Europeans thought of what had happened in Iceland, whose "fault" was it, if "fault" is the right word to describe what happened. A technician would call the operation an "opinion-canvass" of what Europeans think of the way Ronald Reagan is handling questions of war and peace. Brace yourself.

"How much do you think this meeting accomplished in helping to resolve the various issues between the United States and the Soviet Union — a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or nothing at all?" Well, that is a pretty harmless question, but it is worth quoting because it probes the political acuity of the persons questioned. The British, French and Germans questioned agreed that nothing much was accomplished. It being obvious that this is the case, we are dealing with informed people — informed at one level, as we will now see.

"Who do you think is mainly to blame for not accomplishing more at the Reykjavik meeting — Mr. Reagan or Mr. Gorbachev? Or do you think they are both equally to blame?"

Reagan is to blame: Britain (35 per-

cent), France (12 percent), Germany (43 percent). There were lots of Don't knows and Who knows?, and there were those who thought Gorbachev principally to blame, to wit Britain (9 percent), France (15 percent), Germany (6 percent). In short, 3 1/2 times as many

William F. Buckley Jr.



Brits thought the breakdown was Reagan's fault, and 7 times as many Germans did.

Next question: "Which country do you believe is making a greater effort to bring about a nuclear arms control agreement — the United States or the Soviet Union?"

Answer: Britain — United States, 20 percent; Soviet Union, 46 percent. France: United States, 35 percent; Soviet Union, 20 percent. Germany: United States, 18 percent; Soviet Union, 42 percent. The figures speak for themselves. Only in France is it supposed that we are making a greater effort than the Soviet Union toward arms control.

Two more. Begin with the shocker. "Is trustworthy. does this statement best describe President Reagan or Soviet leader Gorbachev?"

Answer: Britain: Reagan, 29 percent; Gorbachev, 21 percent. France: Reagan, 47 percent; Gorbachev, 10 percent. Germany: Reagan, 26 percent; Gorbachev, 33 percent. More Germans trust

Gorbachev than Reagan.

And finally, in a perverse way the most interesting: "Promotes human rights. Does this statement best describe President Reagan or Soviet leader Gorbachev?"

Answer: Britain: Reagan, 75 percent; Gorbachev, 6 percent. France: Reagan, 67 percent; Gorbachev, 5 percent. Germany: Reagan, 67 percent; Gorbachev, 3 percent.

These are data worth very hard reflection. They would certainly appear to tell us that whatever a summit conference means in American public opinion, we do not profit from these social blasts in European opinion. They tell us, moreover, that although Europe is profoundly aware that Gorbachev and human rights cannot coexist where he has authority, for some reason they are prepared to believe that he is anxious to surrender the principal leverage Russia exerts over the civilized world. They tell us that they believe the United States, which gladly walked out of a couple of dozen countries we occupied in the course of two world wars, suddenly has become interested in aggressing against the whole world.

And it tells us more — namely, that deeply though we need Europe, and deeply though Europe needs us, there is probably ahead of us a bifurcation, that grave historical fork in which we find ourselves forced to go in one direction, leaving Europe to go in another. Let us pray that there is a massive reversal of sentiment in Europe. But it will need to be nothing less than that.

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Buckley is the founder of the National Review Magazine.