

# Editorial

Daily  
**Nebraskan**  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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## Budget hope for NU Nit-pickers must be avoided

Gov. Kay Orr's first budget proposal is certainly a big step in the right direction. Of course, whether the unicameral takes heed to her admonition to "just say no" to special-interest nit-picking remains to be seen.

Orr began her "State of the State" address by noting the dire need for stability in the budgeting process. Her sentiments are right on target. Few other events have so sapped the morale of the university community than the repeated special sessions of the Legislature in recent years. Each of these sessions seemed to be frantic financial slashing orgies with the cuts having little rhyme or reason except to make up for the projected deficits.

Many parts of the NU system will experience gain if Orr's proposals are implemented.

In line with her campaign pledge to better integrate the university into Nebraska's drive for economic development, she proposed \$1,150,000 over the next two years for "university research and technical assistance." This is the beginning of a plan to provide for research opportunities which will fuel entrepreneurial fires in Nebraska. We hope Orr understands that such a proposal takes time and consistent, stable support to reap benefits the long haul.

Additionally, Orr's budget proposals would allow the NU sys-

tem to increase salaries of the staff upwards of 3 percent. While any increase in salaries at all is to be appreciated at this point, we hope Orr's commitment to financial stability will see relatively constant, incremental increases in NU pay over the coming years. After all, the pay schedule here still lags behind those of the ostensibly comparable "peer institutions."

On the cost side of Orr's proposals, students likely will have to pay more tuition in the years to come. Responding to Orr's speech, NU President Ronald Roskens indicated he will probably recommend tuition increases of 3 percent for undergraduates, 5 percent for graduate students and 7 percent for students in professional schools. This year's paper has consistently maintained that tuition increases are justified and necessary given the financial straits of the school. If the state cannot (or will not) provide for the needs of the institution, students must provide for themselves.

A tuition increase along with selective program cuts and Orr's progressive (but modest) budget proposals may finally allow for NU to turn the corner on recent financial woes. While the years of financial darkness the school has just gone through may not be completely dispelled, with Orr's proposals at least there's a glimmer of a new dawn coming.

## President illuminates GLSA's perspective

Recent events have led to misinformation and a general lack of understanding about gays and lesbians in the UNL community. We are writing to clear up the facts.

First, the Gay Lesbian Student Association does not support the survey on lesbian/gay programming. Individuals may support the survey, but GLSA does not. Second, the gay/lesbian community prefers the use of the words lesbian or gay, not homosexual. Homosexual is

illogical, since the programming decisions will be made before the election. The survey asks, "Are you a homosexual?" According to a local Lincoln study, gays and lesbians prefer to answer to "Are you gay or lesbian?" rather than the aforementioned.

The numbers of gays and lesbians are 10 percent nationwide, but this campus is still debating over numbers. Who cares about numbers, when it is widely recognized throughout America on other more "developed, sophisticated and more astute" campuses that gay and lesbian concerns are a programming item that will benefit the entire university by adding diversity.

The letter in Monday's DN stated that the university doesn't need to fund gay and lesbian concerns. There are several benefits to funding lesbian and gay programming:

- Facts about minorities are an important feature of any campus, not censorship as many would like.

- Tolerance of diversity is an important quality that all human beings should exhibit (studies show that a person who is homophobic is generally also racist and sexist).

- The programming serves a void for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and straights who share a common interest in these concerns.

Rodney Allen Bell II  
president  
UNL GLSA

**Editor's note:** According to The Associated Press Stylebook, a widely used newspaper handbook, the word "gay" may be used as an adjective meaning homosexual, but not as a noun.



## Identity crisis hits ASUN

*When the pond is this small, it's OK if you're not a big fish*

Identity crisis is a frightening thing. Few traumas that a human being can be asked to experience compare to that inevitable period when one asks just why he exists, just what purpose she is serving, to just whom or what it belongs. Yes, friendship and loyalty can be taxed to the limit when asked to test its mettle against the unyielding depression and irrevocable gloom that permeates the one who has awakened in the wee hours, face to face with those penetrating and unanswerable questions, "Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? What will I do when they cancel 'Facts of Life'?"

Identity crisis is even uglier when it is not an individual but an institution that faces the tribunal of self-justification. As we speak, that once noble, proud and monolithic structure, ASUN, weathers the throes of just such a crisis. Members are resigning left and right, effectiveness and purpose are being questioned by those within and without, and that once stalwart symbol of student life is now not even sure what to call itself.

To an outsider, this barrage of attack, innuendo, charge and countercharge, and generally unseemly publicity that has been the lot of our student leaders comes as something of a surprise. It follows on the heels of one of the most lively semesters in recent memory of ASUN. What with bossing around student organizations, threatening public media and dreaming up "hair of the dog" remedies for campus alcohol problems, those of us outside the hallowed halls had gotten the impression that things

had never been better for the Association of Students.

But apparently even our little campus is not immune to the tawdriness and scandal that is big-time politics. The signs and testimonies of disillusionment, disloyalty, disappointment and general disarray that have spilled out of the assembly must give one pause in surmising the role, effectiveness and even necessity of the current structure of student government.

**James Sennett**



Oh, excuse me. I forgot. Perhaps the most startling revelation coming out of this whole affair — to student and student leader alike — is that ASUN is not, and apparently never has been, a student government. ASUN members apparently thought they were. They even voted themselves a new name that contained those forbidden words. And I must admit that I was not aware that their role was so innocuous as it now appears it must be. The above-mentioned activities and others like them just did not strike me as the normal kinds of activities of a "service organization."

The present woes of these student leaders are multifaceted, and I am sure their sources are likewise complex, confused and generally convoluted. I

do not mean to make light of what is obviously very serious business for many people. But I do wish to propose that perhaps it is not as doggone serious as they want us to believe. After all, just how stinkin' crucial is a facade of student self-governance (self-service?) on this campus anyway?

I have never been a fan of disproportionate student input into long-range school policies. In the first place, a student's tenure is just not that long, and the lion's share of time during it is spent in the books (or should be). There just is not the vested interest and lifelong dependence upon decisions made for students as there is for faculty, staff and administration, not to mention generations of future students. A group of disgruntled students can force a change in university policy that affects them for a few short months, then go on and leave others to cope with the consequences of their rashness for years to come.

So, ASUN, relax. In two or four or 10 years, you'll be out of here, and the last thing on your mind will be how lackluster or unscrupulous or whatever this system of student leadership is. There is room and need for a well-run organization to oversee and govern student life on campus, and we do need you on that level. But it just is not a crisis of constitutional proportions to find out that you're not as big a fish as you want to be or even need to be.

Sennett is campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship and a graduate student in philosophy.

## Guest Opinion

a psychiatric term that was once used to label us as sick, deviant and less than people. Homosexual is used to describe sexual behavior, whereas gay or lesbian describes a culture, a sexual orientation or a state of being. Third, the headlines and stories run by the Daily Nebraskan are sleek, sensational and distorted. The Committee for Fees Allocation did not gun down the gay grant.

It is imperative to point out some clear realities surrounding the UPC Lesbian/Gay Programming Committee:

- GLSA and the UPC Lesbian/Gay Programming Committee are *not* synonymous.

- Student leaders are making decisions for gays, lesbians and fellow students without learning about our culture.

- AIDS is not a gay disease. AIDS is a disease that all people can acquire if not protected. This has been an assumption at every meeting concerning the programming committee.

- The survey on ASUN's ballot is

## Letters

### Rec center a progressive move Student-fee increase reasonable

Many Nebraskans are asking why UNL needs a student recreational center, especially in this time of a depressed economy. Our state needs to begin taking progressive action, and this is just one of the areas it is needed. UNL currently ranks last in the Big Eight in the availability of indoor recreational facilities per student. No state funding is being used to build the facility, thus eliminating the argument that UNL cannot afford it because of budget cuts.

Student fees will not be used to finance building the center; this cost will be paid completely through private donations. However, student fees will go towards the upkeep and the use of the facilities. The increase in student fees will be no more than \$20 a semester or \$1 per week of the term.

As a university student, I support this progressive move and feel that not only will it benefit current students, but the rec center will also benefit future students at the university.

Jill L. Durbin  
sophomore  
secondary education/history

### RHA statistics on food service distort true cost to students

I recognize that the Residence Hall Association is continually striving to improve the quality and condition of life in the UNL residence halls, and I commend them on their efforts. However, it seems blatantly obvious to one that the RHA committee investigating Vali-Dine meal plans has not done adequate research on this subject. I have researched this issue and have found information contradictory to the RHA committee's finds.

According to the Feb. 2 DN editorial, "The old system required students to pay for 20 meals whether they ate 20 or not."

Douglas Rix, director of Residence Hall Food Service, said "Students currently pay approximately 60 percent of the total meals offered to them."

I have been greatly offended by the RHA's incompetence in researching this subject. As a loyal reader of the DN, I am disappointed in the DN's disservice to its patrons for printing mere speculation, not factual material.

Rhonda Christensen  
junior  
mathematics