

# Careerism kills universities

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of the profound similarity of student journalists' world views. It's as if the vast majority of journalism students (and I generalize to practitioners) have been cut from the same cloth. I fear that the journalistic environs are so sympathetic to this given perspective that the integrity of the profession is at stake. (A situation in which I do not rejoice.)

While legally free, journalists express a distinctive zeitgeist, the bucking of which is punatively unfashionable.

Please believe me, I do not hold up journalism as a whipping boy for every grievance. My concern is that, of all professions, journalism is the one in which education through an insular, "professional" school is completely inappropriate. I fear the technique has been so exalted in such schools that it constitutes a detriment to the journalistic calling. (Even with required "outside" areas and minors; it's a question of the "core.")

Of all the professions, the paradigmatic journalist should be steeped in that form of education termed liberal education: The habits of thought fostered by the liberal arts are precisely those that allow individuals to be intellectually critical and to oppose the Will-O-the-Wisp trends of censorious fashion.

The current method of journalistic education, emphasizing as it does technique over critique, is sowing the seeds of a skepticism regarding the press so popular as to be incompatible with democratic living. A popular loss of trust in the integrity of the press leaves open a greatly heightened possibility of mass movements antithetical to republican society. The trend is already apparent.

History is not determined by the best or the worst, but by the average. Superior journalists unquestionably exist, but the awesome responsibility of the press cannot be discharged by these alone. I fear that the average journalist is not being educated with the wherewithal to discharge this responsibility competently.

I have emphasized journalism up to

this point only because of the utter and obvious deadliness of a fashion-dictated zeitgeist in this profession. For other students the same lesson applies, but the consequences of neglect will not be seen as quickly nor as obviously as in journalism.

During my first year of law school, I recall, my constitutional law professor commented that the quality of a school is determined as much, if not more, by the quality and commitment of the students.

Of course there was a strong murmur of disapproval among my colleagues at this subtle insult. But nothing was said openly, I dare say, because the statement was true and we realized that we only weakly (at best) discharged our duties toward the ideal of paideia.

Again it is a question of the average. Over my nine years here I've talked to dozens of professors who complain about students at Nebraska. They always grant that there are "a few" students with a zeal for learning, but complain that most are intellectually moribund.

It was this, the duty of the student, that was utterly neglected in the recent "Report of the Chancellor's Commission on General Liberal Education."

Sadly, students are satisfied with career training. But for all the "utility" of career training, that approach is deadly for education and the highest expression of true education, the university. Departments like construction management (and so many like it) do not have a rightful place in anything

termed a university. Period.

Of course students can develop a liberal program, if they're blessed enough to fall into one. But there is no coherent vision of the educated man, and one cannot be tailored to fit the departmental status quo. As a result, students are not aware of the liberal "alternative" because careerism and its offspring of career-oriented departments place blinders on the eyes. Students pursuing liberal education at UNL do so only by accident.

Universities were founded on a vision of what the educated man should be. This vision is eclipsed by the willingness of the school to cater to careerism. ("And what do you want to be when you grow up? A business man, a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer. . .") And to the extent that liberal education is in eclipse, this school does not deserve to be called a university.

I have a great deal of affection for this school and a great deal of respect for so many who teach in it, administer in it and learn in it. But a scent of death is in the air: not the death of a physical area called the University of Nebraska, but a death of a decades-old anemia, one that will cause a lingering and slow demise in the future. So slow it may not even be noticed.

The womb that gave birth to so much of what I call "me" persistently moves toward sterility. And I mourn.

Rogers is an economics graduate student, law student and Daily Nebraskan editorial page editor.

## Letter

### Reader says to save a tree, and keep Lieurance off pages

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incoherent, unintelligible article (if I can call it an article).

Although Rogers may at times be snobbish, I appreciate his sophistication and well-thought-out views. Lieurance, on the other hand, needs to

retake those journalism classes he flunked (that is if he has taken any at all). In the mean time, save the trees — keep Lieurance off the pages.

David Patterson  
senior  
mechanical engineering

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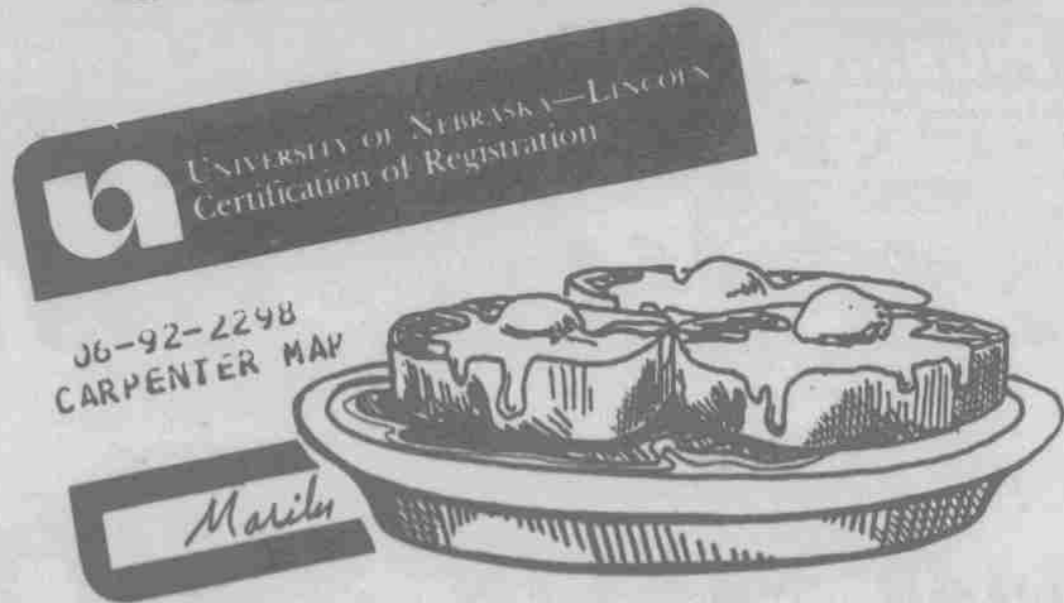
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