

Editorial

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Academic probation Advisers must help, before it's too late

Twelve percent of the undergraduate student population was placed on academic probation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln last spring — a figure that UNL advisers should take note of.

This figure is up 2 percent from the previous year, while enrollment has decreased 3 percent, showing a need for more discipline in the advising ranks.

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, cited financial difficulties, emotional problems and lack of discipline as causes.

But that's not all. Part of the problem lies with the advising — or lack of it — that UNL students receive.

Many students drift through their college careers without ever seeing their advisers. Even when they have problems, students are notified by mail with the suggestion to go see their adviser.

This "suggestion" is ridiculous. Students having problems need help immediately. Most students probably don't take

advantage of this suggestion, but they would if it were a requirement.

Once students meet with advisers, their top priority shouldn't be just to raise their grade point average, but to get to the root of those problems Griesen mentioned earlier. By the time a student is on probation, it's a little late to worry just about raising grades. Usually, grade problems are a by-product of other problems.

These suggestions will require much extra work. Advisers can complain about being overburdened, but lack of personal communication only contributes to more problems. If students aren't guided through this maze of bureaucracy we call the university, they can get lost.

And by the way, career advising also needs work. Students who want to major in a certain area may not have what it takes to keep them there, hence, poor grades. If they were advised in the beginning, they would have saved time and money.

Endless summer ends; LA tries new plan

Lazy days of summer vacation are over for grade-school and high-school students in Los Angeles, the nation's second-largest school district. The district's board of education voted Monday to put all of its 600,000 students on year-round schedules beginning in July 1989.

Although opponents have lashed out against the system, proponents point to some notable reasons why three-month vacations may be on the way out in coming decades.

Overcrowding prompted the Los Angeles board to adopt the new schedule. Students there will attend classes for two months, take 20 days off and return to school. In some schools, four groups of students will be put on rotating schedules so that one group is on vacation while the other three attend school. Officials say this will allow them to accommodate about one-third more students.

Although overcrowding may not be as big a problem in most Nebraska school districts, there are other reasons why Nebraskans should consider the year-round system.

Charles Ballinger of the National Association for Year-Round Education said the traditional school calendar was designed for the more agricultural

society of the 19th century, so students could help harvest crops and put food on farm families' tables.

"There is no education value in the calendar at all," Ballinger said. Students with a long break in the summer are more apt to forget material and get out of a studious frame of mind, essentially taking two steps forward and a step back. Students on year-round plans have a more evenly paced education.

Critics say putting students from the same family on different schedules will disrupt family life and complicate child care. Students who need to make money also may have a harder time finding jobs for just a few weeks at a time, instead of for three months.

But the 67 schools nationwide that are already on year-round schedules are faring well, Ballinger said. And officials from these schools predict jobs will be easier to find when all of the working students aren't looking for them at the same time.

As we near the 21st century, an educational model that draws away from the 19th-century requirements of a more rural society and emphasizes well-paced, consistent learning is worth a close look from Nebraska educators.

Science vs. creation:

Issues one in same; evidence of both must be fairly debated

Few debates in the pages of this Readable and Adept Gazette have been as interesting to me as the recent flurry of letters in response to a column by Chris McCubbin a couple of weeks ago on creation science. Defenders of what Albert Einstein called "The Religion of Science" have come out of the Bunsen burners to defend the autonomy of their sacred cow against the recent invasion from the ranks of learned colleagues who dare to believe in the divinity of anything but matter and energy. It has been, to borrow a phrase from Soren Kirkegaard, a most unscientific postscript.

I have found that very few who decry the creation science movement have any idea what the movement is about. This is evident from the aforementioned letters. To couch the creation science issue in terms of science vs. religion is simply to reveal one's ignorance and unwillingness to investigate what is a fascinating issue in the theory of origins.

Creation science is just that — a science. I will admit that it is in essence a "guerrilla warfare" analogue to normal science, and this often shrouds the intensity and importance of the data it discusses. Most creation scientists understand themselves to be apologists — soldiers in a war for the minds of the world. The evidence they present, the questions they ask and the theories they propound are often ad hoc and piecemeal, and this contributes to the suspicion that theirs is not as honorable a discipline as the sterile ivory-tower pontifications of the evolutionary scientists. They are the rebels — the revolutionary forces wearing moth-eaten uniforms and mounting offenses with inferior weapons and non-existent funds. But that does not make their questions any less important, their evidence any less empirical or their methodology any less scientific.

I have found that most science purists have no idea what the evidence of the creation scientist even looks like. There is an unscientific dedication to the postulation that no evidence could call the evolutionary

hypothesis into question, so the creationist could have no such evidence.

Consequently, on rare occasions, evolutionists agree to debate the issues, as occurred in Omaha recently. They go in unprepared and unjustifiably cocky, only to find themselves at the mercy of a top-grade scientist who can ask unanswerable questions and present insurmountable evidence against the supposed truth of Darwinism. 'Tis a strange way indeed to do "unbiased science."

James
Sennett



One must ask why the antiseptic veneer of contemporary science is so uncharacteristically appalled at the creation science movement. There are many reasons, none of them scientific. Perhaps the most telling, however, is that if the creation scientists are right — or even if their evidence is worthy of consideration — serious questions about the supposed autonomy of science are raised.

Creation science is a sub-species of a general theory known as catastrophism. Catastrophism proposes that much of the accounting of the present condition of the earth and the universe is explainable through the postulation of great catastrophes in natural history. Another sub-species of catastrophism that has received a lot of press lately is the meteorite theory to explain the extinction of dinosaurs.

All of these theories have one thing in common: They deny the doctrine of uniformitarianism — the thesis that all natural processes have continued throughout the history of the world exactly as we observe them today. Catastrophism suggests that sudden or unpredicted interruptions of those processes may account better for the condition of the world we find today than the postulation of their uninterrupted continuation.

Creation scientists, for example,

have offered a great deal of mathematical and experimental evidence that a worldwide flood, such as the one described in Genesis, was possible and could account for much of the data normally attributed to uniformitarian processes over billions of years. In addition, the theory also accounts for many troubling issues in uniformitarian cosmology, such as the ice ages and the formation of mountains and continents. The arguments, if not air-tight, are at least worthy of response from the general scientific community. But all that has been forthcoming is derision, innuendo and character assassination.

Human beings always react most violently when their most treasured beliefs and dogmas are threatened. In the 1950s and 1960s, Christians screamed as decision after decision ate away at the society they had come to love. Some are fighting back — and using the arena of the scientist to do it — and it is now the naturalist and the secularist who cry "foul." The facade of unified testimony against traditional theories of origins is cracking, and a lot of people don't like it.

In a groundswell of what a friend of mine has labeled "theophobia," those who would rather protect the orthodoxy than study the issues have taken pen in hand and lawyer to court in an effort to protect what once was certain and now is at best debatable.

If we are truly dedicated to the impartiality of scientific research and the admission of any defensible data and theory into the arena of discourse, we will cease this childish name-calling and sit down to discuss the issues like adults. If the evidence does not allow us to close the universe off from the hand of God — as the religion of science would demand that we do — then let that be the consequence with which we must live. The universe was here long before we decided that it was self-sufficient. I don't think it will be interested in changing its structure just to suit our prejudices.

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

Letters

Bikers must obey laws of the road

Laura Hansen seems to have a chip on her shoulder — one that is at least a Cadillac wide.

If she really believes (as stated in a letter to the editor, Daily Nebraskan, Oct. 12) that bicyclists are law-abiding, civic-minded citizens, then most of her spokes are loose.

True, bicyclist don't pollute the air with fumes, don't need more roads, more downtown parking or oil from the Persian Gulf. Some don't even shoot other riders in fits of frustration over traffic jams. And, for the most part, they hurt only themselves when they drive drunk.

But if I wanted to go somewhere in Lincoln and arrive there safely, I would never trust a bicyclist to get me there without a scratch. Why? Lincoln's bicyclists, at least most of them, are negligent drivers who believe in anarchy of the roadways. Cyclists often weave between cars at intersections at their own convenience. The result is often a near-collision with an automobile and the bicyclist is sent flying onto someone's lawn because he or she has run through a stop sign or violated any of the other traffic laws.

Perhaps, Hansen, you don't realize that traffic laws are not applied only to operators of automobiles and other motorized vehicles. They also apply to pedestrians and bicyclists. In your view, it only seems that bicyclists are being harassed by the police.

You may see it that way because your racing helmet has been pulled over your eyes.

If there has been an increase in citations to bicyclists, then the Lincoln Police Department is finally enforcing the laws as they were meant to be enforced — applying them to all vehicles and pedestrians on the road.

And another thing, Hansen, you and the rest of the two-wheeled road warriors aren't being persecuted. You don't even come close. The Romans persecuted the early Christians. Hitler persecuted the Jews. The Lincoln Police Department does not persecute bicyclists. As soon as a bicyclist is thrown to the lions for weaving through traffic or sent to a death camp for running a red light, then I will agree with you. Until then, you've got no right to whine. In comparison, you've got it easy.

If you wish to ride on the same streets as the rest of us, I suggest you and the other anarchist crybabies learn and obey the traffic laws, and stop whining when you get a well-deserved ticket.

Karl Vogel
senior
news-editorial
motorist

Some not served by DN want ads

Students should be able to express their preferences for the type of roommates they want in their student newspaper, yet not all students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are al-

lowed to do this.

Members of the Gay-Lesbian Student Association have filed a lawsuit against the Daily Nebraskan (Daily Nebraskan, Sept. 28) for not allowing them this service. Other students can state that they want a male, female, smoker or non-smoker for a roommate; so what is the difference? The difference is that homosexual people are not yet accepted in our community as others are. This is like printing that only white or black people can eat in or go to certain places. The only difference is that racial discrimination has been outlawed. Maybe somewhere there is a person looking for other homosexuals to live with. Most people would not want to call around to houses asking people if they would accept them in spite of their sexual preferences. The want ads are for providing a service to UNL students, but obviously the Daily Nebraskan is not willing to do that for all the students.

Kim Larson
freshman
undeclared

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Letters will be selected for publica-

tion on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.