

Daily
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Action is overdue

Regents' vague stand shows uncertainty

ASUN President Bryan Hill already has taken steps this semester to confront one of the worst problems facing the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus -- homophobia.

Hill has been working on ways to educate the UNL community about the meaning of the NU Board of Regents' new anti-discrimination policy. Many hoped the policy, initiated last spring, would state specifically that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation would not be tolerated.

However, thanks to Regent Margaret Robinson, the board enacted a vague policy forbidding discrimination on the basis of "individual characteristics."

Surely, sexual orientation is included in the policy, although the regents didn't want to come out and say it. "Individual characteristics" is a wimpy generalization, and does little to combat a serious problem.

The regents' policy cannot stand on its own.

Hill currently is working with Chancellor Martin Massengale to send a memo out to all staff and faculty to let them know that sexual orientation is included in the new policy.

He also is working with Affirmative Action Officer Brad Munn to design a poster that would help clarify the policy for students.

It's too bad for Hill that the regents failed to take a strong stand on the issue of homophobia when considering their new policy. If they had, Hill wouldn't have to waste his time letting everyone know what it means.

-- Lee Rood

for the Daily Nebraskan

Repression brings violent acts

The recent flurry of abusive and intolerant behavior toward gay people has resulted in the death of a fine young man who was educated at UNL and was holding a responsible position in the community. It is a terrible tragedy for his family, friends and this community. The blame for Lincoln becoming a fertile field for abuse and intolerance must be shared by all those who have engaged in it.

As a juvenile probation officer in Phoenix in the early 1960s, I worked with several cases of juvenile assaults on gay adult men. The victims were physically assaulted, their property was stolen and their residences were vandalized. The young men involved had not only ruined the lives of their victims but had also ruined their own lives.

These tragic events led to a series of training sessions for court personnel to sensitize them to the problem that was confronting the community. I will always recall the sessions with Dr. Sydney Smith, a clinical psychologist who eventually became

part of the staff at the Menninger Clinic. One of his major points was that young men who engage in violent and abusive behavior directed at gay people are probably having serious difficulty with their own sexual identity. So-called "gay bashing" is a means of fighting against one's own sexual confusion and doubt, according to Dr. Smith and other mental-health professionals. In other words, people who are secure in their own sexual identity don't have to prove it to others.

It would be much better if these young men could find legitimate ways of resolving their psychological and emotional conflicts instead of directing their confusion and anger at other people. I hope the community of Lincoln, including the university community, can muster the will and the resources to deal positively with this problem before further tragic episodes occur.

Fred Holbert
associate professor
criminal justice

'Flea-market art' tax angers reader

Normally, Sen. Jesse Helms is far too conservative even for me. However, I have to agree with him this time.

Why should my hard-earned tax dollars be used to support something I don't like? I don't consider a crucifix in a jar of urine to be art, I consider it sacrilegious and disgusting, and I'm not even a Christian! My money should not be used to keep in a museum a painting I wouldn't even glance toward at a flea market. Next thing you know, idiots like Def Leppard or Mötley Crüe will claim that their so-called "music" is really art (what a joke) and ask Congress for some of my money to produce their next album. If I were to spend my money to affect trash like that, it would be to keep it off the shelves.

I'm all in favor of an artist's

freedom of expression, but when my money is an issue, that's where I draw the line. If a person wants to see a painting, let him pay for it himself. Unless I'm taking someone out to be nice, I'm not going to spend my money on something I'm not going to see.

I'm just waiting for this left-wing, pabulum-puking (how I long for the days of Morton Downey Jr.) commie-pinko, liberal dogooder rag they call a newspaper to print an editorial condemning Jesse Helms' actions. Considering the massive amount of journalistic integrity I've seen in the Daily Half-asskin in the past, any of their editorials belong in another paper -- like the National Inquirer (sic).

Andrew Meyer
"The Silly Sophomore"
pre-med



Illegal-'a big, dangerous bleep'

Bleeping undesirables could hurt people or heighten rebellion

For a young boy, there may be nothing more fun than watching network television attempt to show an R-rated show.

I remember sitting in front of the TV wondering exactly what nasty word the censors had decided to keep from me with a sterilizing "bleep." I loved mysteries and my power of deduction was acute.

My thoughts usually went something like this:

"OK, the girl said 'I'm so "bleep"' "bleeped" I could kill the "bleep."

Now, the first bleep has to be either the f-word or the big damning God word. The second one must refer to p--ed and the third, since it refers to a her husband, has to refer to him by his lack of a father or by one of the many names for his sex organ.

The only time all this wasn't fun was when I'd ask my mom to confirm my interpretation of the dialogue.

She'd say my first and middle names, gasp, say something like "Don't you ever..." and then try to tell my father what I had done without saying the nasty words that caused the problem in the first place.

The joke in all this is that each time I was protected from vulgarity, I had to rehash each vulgarity I already knew to figure out which one the television censors had bleeped. So, for each bleep that saved my virgin ears, I thought of ten more. People complain that the boob tube destroys the imagination. Not true. Bleeps allow the imagination to soar.

Some time during my junior high years, HBO and Cinemax came to my hometown. My parents dealt intelligently with the sex and vulgarity, and television lost a lot of its luster. Nonetheless, the damage had been done.

Without the taboos of bad language and sex, my male bonding would have been much more difficult. What would my friends and I have talked about? Dirty words and human sexuality without the adult world bleeping them lose their novelty very quickly. Dirty words become flat rhetoric, human sexuality

becomes human. That's no way to bond.

So I must thank the Incredibly Righteous in the mold of Jesse Helms or Newt Gingrich for trying to protect my morality. If my environment hadn't been sterile, the wild perversities that spawn friendship and imagination might have been lost. Granted, my friends and I are a little maladjusted in terms of women and language, but we have a good time.

Those who didn't drink on campus because it was illegal drove off campus where it was legal. Then they drove back to campus legally drunk. Obviously, by denying the existence of drinking on campus, the administration is endangering students' lives. It's safer to walk drunk than drive drunk. If students can't walk drunk, they will drive drunk. The danger of driving drunk is apparent, so the danger of dry campuses should be apparent.

And by making drinking taboo on campus, drinking becomes rebellious, like saying the f-word. The rebellion of drinking becomes an end in itself.

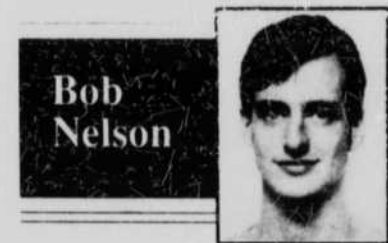
But all these things have been said before. The argument against dry campuses is that they are dangerous and promote alcohol abuse. So what are the arguments for our dry campus?

It's a way for the university to pass liability on to the individual. If a drunk student got injured on a wet campus, the university could be responsible. If a student dies driving back to a dry campus, the university could not be responsible. It's simply a matter of university officials washing their hands of a problem. A nice big dangerous bleep.

So it seems the only way the administration will ever be more concerned with students and reality, is if a student dies and his or her parents realize the university was responsible for their child's death. The parents probably never would win such a suit, but the parents of UNL students might begin to realize that bleeping an issue, whether they think it vulgar or not, is no way to solve a problem.

But like usual, even with a tragedy, you can be pretty sure that change for the better will take a bleeping long time. Until then, think safety and responsibility first. After that you can worry about campus rules.

Bob Nelson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



Bob
Nelson

So it seems the only real damage of hiding undesirables is a few more filthy-mouths and sexual hang-ups. And unless you're Ted Bundy, that's not terribly dangerous.

But when governments of any size attempt to hide or bleep anything other than obscenity, somebody gets hurt.

The national drug problem is a prime example. No matter how much the federal government tries to censor the influx of drugs, people still will be exposed to them, and if they want to use them, they will use them. You don't stop people from wanting something by making it harder to get. Scarcity drives Americans. The only remedy is curbing the desire for drugs. When you make vulgarity taboo, it becomes a sweet forbidden fruit. The same is true with drugs.

And on a dry campus like the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the same is true with alcohol.

The premise of the dry-campus idea is that by making it illegal to drink on campus, students won't drink.

I have met few students who didn't drink on campus because it was ille-

letter

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters

should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

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