

Daily
Nebraskan

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Put up or shut up

Speak on real issues ASUN, or not at all

For years, ASUN senators have pleaded with University of Nebraska-Lincoln students to become more active in their student government. They've formed committees, they've gone door to door, they've tried just about anything to get students to take an interest in the "prestigious" Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

Similarly, those same ASUN senators often go home at the end of the school year puzzled and disappointed. Why do only a handful of students show up at their Wednesday night meetings? And why, when they finally manage to turn campaign promises into reality, do students fail to support their great ideas? Why can't they shake this burdensome reputation of being a greek-dominated organization?

Maybe ASUN senators would better understand their failures if they took a seat in the audience at a meeting one evening (there's plenty of room) and witness the ASUN experience through the eyes of an average student.

Those who venture into student government meetings year after year know that, while the faces may change, ASUN remains the same -- a virtually powerless, ill-focused, cumbersome, underrepresentative voice of the student population.

Unfortunately, it continues.

Wednesday night, 24 ASUN senators gathered to discuss such important issues as supporting alcohol in the Reunion and the ever-controversial student regent vote. (There are supposed to be 35 senators, but, par for the course, some senators have either quit or did not attend the meeting.)

Senators found time to quit talking amongst themselves long enough to pass a resolution in support of a beer license for the Reunion after an appeal from David Hunter, president of the Hardy Building Corp. In the aftermath of their hasty decision, however, senators decided to send the resolution back to committee.

Later, before unanimously passing a bill asking the Government Liaison Committee to lobby in support of a student regent vote on the NU Board of Regents, Sen. Jeff Hubka offered an interesting amendment.

Hubka said that if ASUN "is not truly able to represent the students through a student vote, ASUN will consider dissolution until students are given direct influence in their government."

The amendment failed, of course, but with a little work, Hubka's idea may not have been such a bad one.

Maybe a better amendment would have been: "until students are given direct influence in their government, ASUN should dissolve."

Since August, ASUN has considered 12 senate bills. Five of those bills were rubber-stamp endorsements of student organizations. Very few of the remaining bills demand serious action to address student concerns.

In addition, senators have failed to find time to represent their constituents at important events such as Project Excel's Oct. 14 March Against Drugs. Initially, an ASUN bill asked for five senators to attend the march. One ASUN executive attended.

However, at last night's meeting several ASUN senators volunteered their time to sit in a booth and monitor Homecoming royalty votes.

ASUN senators should quit wasting their time and students' money mulling over moot legislation. If they truly want to be a voice for the students then they should speak strongly on issues that matter. If not, why speak at all?

-- Lee Rood

for the Daily Nebraskan



Homecoming reeks of greeks

Independents should 'vote with a vengeance' for representation

Homecoming. A week of culture filled with plays, music and talent shows. A weekend of festivities chock-full of pep rallies, parades and floats. A Saturday football game attended, it seems, by a larger-than-usual number of little old men in red polyester blazers and Big Red alpine caps.

Like most people, I'm no Scrooge. I enjoy the atmosphere of Homecoming -- the talent shows, the floats and the music. I can even tolerate the little old men. But there is one thing even I cannot handle.

The royalty.

As even the smallest child knows, in the fall almost every college and university in America crowns a Homecoming king and queen.

It has become a college tradition to elect and crown a well-scrubbed, attractive man and woman for no apparent reason, except that they are supposed to best represent the values and diversity of their school.

But at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Homecoming is tradition run amok. The king and queen are inevitably well-scrubbed and attractive, but they fail to represent the values and diversity of their university.

Unlike the vast majority of their fellow students, the king and queen almost always are members of fraternities and sororities.

This year is no exception. Hell, the greek system even has a lock on the contests. Out of 18 nominees for Homecoming royalty this year, all of them belong to a fraternity or sorority.

And the story gets even better. Of the six members of this year's Homecoming royalty committee (the one that selected the 18 greek candidates), five of them were members of fraternities and sororities.

And four greek houses field multiple candidates for the Homecoming prize. Chi Omega Sorority leads the pack with three.

Now I'm not one to buy into conspiracy theories. Unlike others, I always believed Lee Harvey Oswald

acted alone. When I was a little kid during Watergate, I thought Nixon was innocent for almost a year. And I thought the Trilateral Commission was something in a geometry book.

But as one who actually would like to see his "king" and "queen" represent the values and diversity of his campus, the Homecoming elections really push it for me.

Despite all the bands, pep rallies and Big Red alpine caps, each year I ask myself the same, nagging question when I see the fraternity king and sorority queen crowned during halftime at the Homecoming game: Why am I paying for all this?

Brian Svoboda



Yes, we do pay for it. Last year, the Committee for Fees Allocation gave Homecoming \$3,214 in Fund A student fees, more than \$1,000 more than the committee had given Homecoming the year before, and almost \$900 more than what the University Program Council (who sponsors Homecoming) asked for.

All this happened while CFA, always mindful of students' cultural needs, would not meet the budget requests made by UPC for Foreign Films, Talks and Topics and other programming committees.

So why should I pay to crown a king and queen who bear little resemblance to me, my friends and most of my classmates?

Many have complained that student fee money should not be used to finance UPC's Committee Offering Lesbian and Gay Events, on the grounds that COLAGE serves practically no one except gays and lesbians. If this argument holds water, then why should my student fees be used to pay for Homecoming, which seems to serve practically no one except fraternity and sorority mem-

bers?

I can think of many things I'd rather do with the dime or so I cough up each year to pay homage to the greek elite. I could plug my parking meter, for instance.

So what can we do? Faced with elections that would make Panama proud, and being forced to pay for them, how is the average non-greek supposed to respond?

Two things would warm the cockles of my heart this Homecoming season.

First, call your representatives of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska and tell them to cut Homecoming's funding next year. It's obvious that the people who benefit most from the Homecoming coronation are the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic. They have their own budgets. So let them pay for it.

Second, vote with a vengeance. The Homecoming royalty elections will be next Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Nebraska Union and East Campus union. Anyone can vote -- all you need is a student ID.

Of course, the ballot doesn't give you a hell of a lot of choice. So create your own. I personally plan to write in Elvis for homecoming king. Imagine the looks on the faces of all the fraternity boy candidates for Homecoming king as the real King leaves them behind in the dust on election day.

Now, I like the bands, pep rallies and talent shows. The people who put them on obviously work hard. How would you like to have to sit through auditions and listen to 100 would-be Bette Midlers warbling "The Wind Beneath My Wings?"

But the royalty elections are bogus.

So independents of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! Keep those phone calls coming -- ASUN will appreciate it. I'm sure. And remember, on Wednesday, vote with a vengeance.

Svoboda is a senior political science and Russian major, and is a Daily Nebraskan editorial columnist.

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 let-

ter 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.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

editorial

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Nelson, columnist; Jerry Guenther, senior reporter; Brian Svoboda, columnist.

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