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Board's vote selfish

Power concerns prove change needed

Predictably, the NU Board of Regents voted Friday to oppose two bills in the Legislature designed to improve the governance of higher education in Nebraska.

The regents voted to oppose both the higher education restructuring proposal and a resolution that would give one of the three student regents a vote on the board.

The regents, in their statement opposing the higher education proposal, said LR239CA and LB1141 would make the regents an advisory board because they could not control the budget. They also said there would be too many boards created and too many of the members would be appointed, not elected.

Concerning the student regent vote, the regents said they consistently have opposed a change in the Nebraska Constitution for a voting student regent. The statement said, "The board continues to believe that such a change is not in the best interests of the university and the state."

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Regent Bryan Hill chastised the board for their selfish fight against constructive change by saying the votes reflected the regents' "highly vested interest in maintaining the status quo."

Hill said the vote on the restructuring bill was "a reflection of their lack of desire or their inability to realize significant problems in the present governance structure."

On the student regent vote, Hill said the regents were focusing on a minor technicality to avoid addressing student concerns. The board has cited a 1986 attorney general's opinion that a proposal to divide the one student regent vote into thirds would cause constitutional problems. The current proposal does not divide student votes into thirds, Hill said, but rather gives only one of the three regents full voting powers.

Hill is right about the motive of the regents. With both of the board's votes, they have proven that the only "best interests" they are concerned about are their own.

It's sad that the regents are unable to consider anything more than the protection of their own power. Their reactionary attitude should be further proof of a need for change. Senators and voters must realize that the regents' rhetoric is pure self-interest and should respond by ignoring the board's statements.

-- Bob Nelson
for the Daily Nebraskan

opinion READER

Everyone entitled to education

I am writing concerning Mike McCoy's letter to the Daily Nebraskan on Jan. 31 concerning gay/lesbian scholarships.

Mike, you are entitled to your opinion, homophobic as it may be, but so am I. This is a free country (the last I heard), and if someone wants to set up a scholarship fund, whatever the criteria, good for them. Every scholarship has criteria, whether academic, athletic, financial, cultural or otherwise. If you want to set up a scholarship for "straight" people.

Mike, go ahead. I may even apply. Everyone deserves the right to get an education. As far as I am concerned, I hope the scholarship fund increases and Rodney Bell is able to award scholarships to gays and lesbians. If you don't like that, Mike, that's fine, but don't decide if other people's lifestyles are "immoral." You really don't sound like an impartial judge.

Tami Terryberry
sophomore
secondary education

Arguments demonstrate bigotry

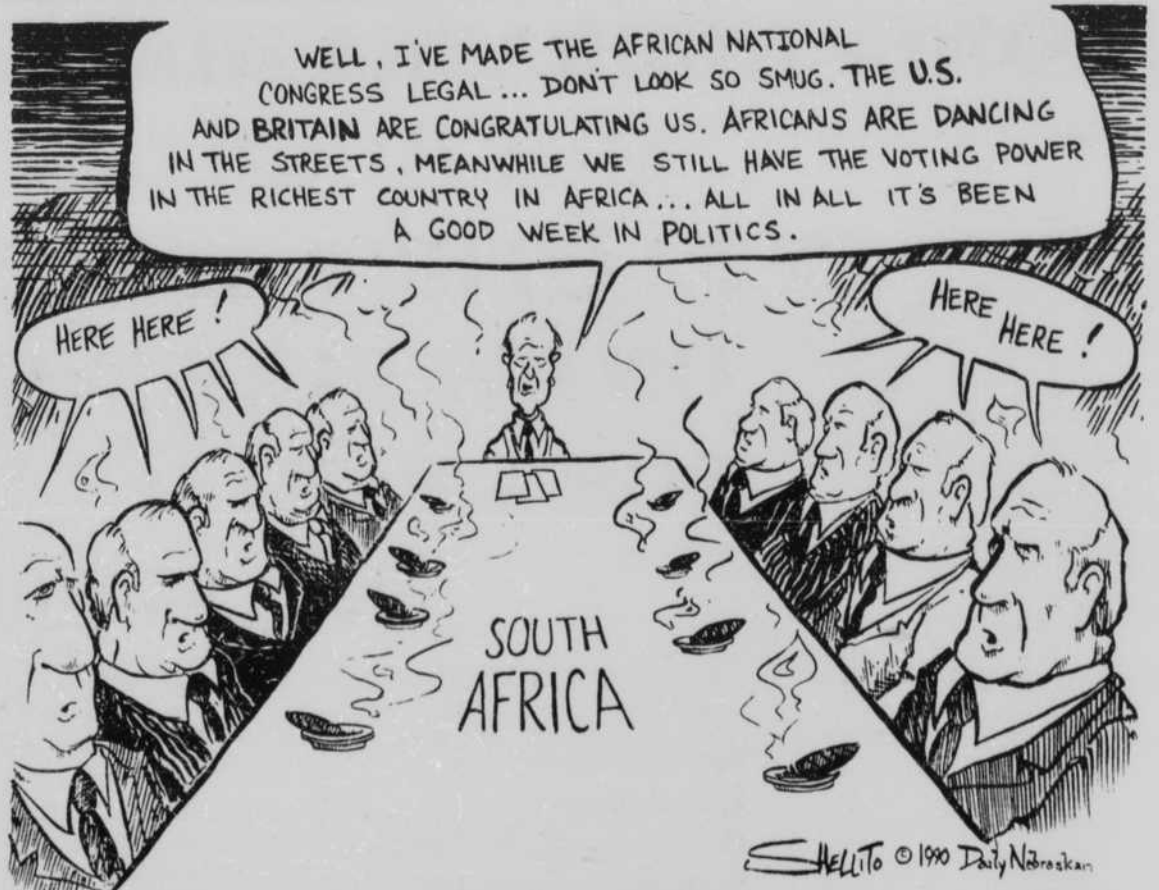
I am responding to the letter published Jan. 30 in the Daily Nebraskan from Mike McCoy stating that the new scholarship for gay/lesbian students would promote immorality.

McCoy's arguments are a frightening display of bigotry at its worst. Ill-informed and unsupported opinions about the worth and value of fellow human beings have no place in a center of higher learning. I saw with dismay that the writer's vitriolic blurb took no account of the idea that it is the "fear of the different" that creates an atmosphere of intolerance and

hatred. It is ludicrous to suppose that a person's sexual orientation determines his or her worth.

The problem with McCoy's remarks is that they reflect the ongoing and persistent bigotry that flourishes, even in places like the University of Nebraska-Lincoln -- dedicated to the expansion and enhancement of the human mind and spirit.

Daniel Kurek
Ann Van Allen
Pat Donovan
graduate students
music



Even flag burners, KKK have rights

When actions and words are stifled, ideas and beliefs are next

"The KKK took my baby away."
-- The Ramones

That's a quote from a super-cool, long-haired, classic punk band. When I was in high school, that line used to bounce around my head as I walked from speech and drama class to creative writing or geometry ("They took her away, away from me"). Sometimes it inhibited my ability to concentrate on geometry. Sometimes it helped me in creative writing. It was a catchy tune.

But why did the KKK take Joey's girl? Just because it rhymed? I don't think so. The Ramones easily could have sung about the PTA taking their babies away. It still would have reverberated in my skull, and it even might have made me laugh. But the PTA doesn't put the fear of God in young boys, at least not in those who aren't too deviant. Words and letters, depending on their usage, are powerful. The KKK is scary. The song conjured concrete images.

Last week in my communications law class, we talked about the First Amendment, as one might expect. Specifically, we were asked whether we would allow the KKK to hold a rally at Benson Park in Omaha. Benson Park is in a predominately black part of the city.

I agreed with many of my comrades that no matter what the subject of speech, organizations should be permitted to demonstrate so long as they do so on either their own or public property and do not personally harass individual bystanders.

Surprisingly, at least for me, some of my fellow journalists disagreed. They protested that such a rally was sure to incite a riot, and that the city would have a justified interest in protecting its citizens from such violence.

They had a good argument. The government is there to protect its citizens, and I like safety as much as anyone else. The dissenters pointed to the vagueness of the First Amendment and gave good reasons why it should be applied differently in different cases. Given the quality of their arguments, it's hard for me to say that I'm absolutely right and they're wrong. I will anyway.

In the 1960s, blacks were struggling for basic human rights. Martin Luther King, Jr., among others, organized many rallies, marches and assorted protests. The purposes were many, but one big one was to prod whites into violence against them. Not only would the televised violence evoke sympathy from Northerners, but it would force the federal government into action against the

white supremacists.

Knowing these things, King assembled demonstrators and had them march and protest in downtown Birmingham, Ala. -- a place where violent reaction was virtually assured. It came, and King accomplished his objectives. The city was forced to negotiate segregation and employment.

Who among us would have told King that he did not have the right to



Brandon
Loomis

demonstrate in downtown Birmingham simply because there was a danger of violence? Not I.

Some of you might argue that King's cause justified the action. I agree, but it is not my responsibility -- or anyone else's -- to decide whose cause is right and whose is not. Klansmen are evil in my book. Klansmen are not evil in their book, and I don't have to read their book. If they rally in Benson Park, I will call them stupid, but not outlaws.

For a long time, many judges, intellectuals and University of Nebraska-Lincoln journalism professors have espoused the doctrine of a free marketplace of ideas. The idea is that the remedy for bad speech is good speech, not suppression of speech. This is a freedom which is much more important to me than the freedom I enjoy in the marketplace of goods. Capitalism, schmcapitalism. As long as I can think and speak for myself I'll stay in this country.

My religious beliefs are considerably different from those of what I perceive to be the majority in this country. When I was a young boy attending Sunday school at a baptist church, my brother and I were told that blacks descended from Cain -- who I guess is this really shady character. My best friend at the time was black. Since then, I've had little use for religion and have gravitated toward agnosticism.

Even though the majority of people in this country think agnostics are nuts, I have the right to voice my minority opinion in the Daily Nebraskan. I even have the right to say that everyone else should be like me. Although I would never use that right, I like having it. It makes me feel like a full citizen.

Klansmen may be of a minority opinion, but so long as those indi-

viduals do not promote their views with violence, I will treat them as full, civil citizens. I don't want anybody stepping on my toes, so I won't step on theirs. I think everybody probably has a toe or two waiting to be stomped.

Last week, UNL was treated to a First Amendment debate between two experts from opposite sides of the universe. Nat Hentoff, a writer for the liberal newspaper The Village Voice, argued that the amendment protects the expression rights of all individuals. William Rusher, publisher of the National Review, agreed, but said that expression, which is deliberately and unnecessarily offensive to others' beliefs, may be restricted.

Everything Hentoff said was cool. Some of what Rusher said was garbage. If I were to burn an American flag, I clearly would be deliberately offending the values of others. But would it be unnecessary? If I feel strongly enough to express my dislike for some policy or other, would it be enough for me to say, "I feel strongly enough to burn this flag, but I guess I won't because it will offend your values?" Maybe the policy unnecessarily offends my values. I believe it would not be out of line for me to offend the values of those who offend mine.

Furthermore, flag burners, Klansmen and general jerks probably do more to bring out the best in us than to seriously threaten our values. When the flag-burning thing erupted, most Americans rallied around the flag with a renewed sense of nationalism. Whether that is good or not, we seem to think it is, and we have only the flag burners to thank for it.

When the KKK acquired a timeslot on a public-access television station in Kansas City, Mo., the community was outraged and the city council put an end to the show. The courts to this point, however, have rightly upheld the Klan's right to broadcast. If the KKK couldn't have a show, if it couldn't rally in Benson Park, if it were told that it had to succumb to its speech to the will of the majority, we would cease to worry. We would cease to care. We would erroneously believe that society is perfect.

The power of words and expressions scares people. It shouldn't. Words and expressions are what make us human. If people who disagreed with me were forced to keep their mouths shut, I would have no reason to think. I hope the KKK keeps throwing material at me.

Loomis is a senior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan wire editor and an editorial columnist.