

Daily
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KSC deserves vote Presidential search needs KSC input

In less than a year, Kearney State College will be part of the University of Nebraska system. In less than that time, NU also should have a new president.

It would seem logical that KSC, as the newest member of NU, deserves a say in who will preside over the system. But the NU Board of Regents denied KSC that right at its June meeting by failing to pass a proposal to give KSC a voting member on the NU presidential search committee.

Regent Rosemary Skrupa of Omaha blamed poor timing for her vote against the proposal and said she intends to rectify that vote by introducing a similar proposal at the next meeting. Skrupa said a letter from state Sen. Doug Kristensen of Minden helped change her mind.

In Kristensen's letter, addressed to regent chairman Don Blank of McCook, he wrote, "It appears to me that Kearney State has been given the role of 'paying its dues' before it becomes part of the system. The University of Nebraska system is not a fraternity, and a period of pledgeship for a new campus is distasteful."

Kristensen is right. It's time the regents put personal feelings aside on the KSC merger and vote to support Skrupa's proposal.

Regent Robert Allen of Hastings, who voted against the original proposal, said even though KSC has no official vote, the search committee will be careful to look out for its interests and will make sure the campus is treated fairly.

"Their (KSC's) vote is not needed," he said.

Allen's attitude is exactly why KSC needs an official vote. Without that power, KSC's interests are only as important as the rest of the committee members want them to be.

There have been arguments both for and against adding KSC to the NU system, as there have been arguments both for and against eliminating NU's central administration. But those fights are in the past.

No sound arguments can be raised against allowing KSC a voting member on the presidential search committee. It's time to give the future Kearney campus of the NU system the recognition it deserves.

-- Jana Pedersen
for the Daily Nebraskan

What Others Think...

Special plates violate rights

The Iowa Legislature has approved a new law designed specifically to publicly humiliate you, should you break the law.

... The new law requires drunken drivers who are labeled "repeat offenders" to turn in the license plates of their cars and replace them with special plates that signify their crime.

The law allows authorities to stop and interrogate the drives or cars with the special plates for doing nothing but going out for a drive.

While we believe drunken driving is as deplorable as any violent crime,

a means to solve the problem is not by branding the perpetrator with a "scarlet letter."

Forcing the offenders to be labeled with the special plates is comparable to locking them into a stockade of a town square for public ridicule.

... The labeling violates basic civil rights. It is cruel and unusual to subject the offenders and their families to the humiliation of being labeled a "drunk." It also is not fair to empower the police to stop them at their convenience.

-- The Iowa State Daily



Situation prompts racism talk

Restaurant is setting for late-night debate between strangers

I met Dennis (The Menace) Arnold Somethingorother at an Omaha Perkins restaurant at 5 a.m. last Saturday. D.A., as I came to call him, is a 6-foot black man originally from Milwaukee who had worked all week for either a local packing house or the FBI. When he sat down next to me in my booth he was spilling Canadian Mist from a 7-Eleven cup onto my lap and saying, "There goes my iced tea, Tom."

The comic strip analogy was his, not mine, but it was clear that the restaurant employees favored it. Whenever a waiter walked by, D.A. shouted, "Hey, busboy, I need my keys and my check. They're on a little Florida key chain." He did the same for waitresses, substituting "lollipop" for "busboy." We smoked cigarettes and babbled nothingness at each other for nearly two hours, and whenever D.A. felt the ashtray was too full for his liking, he dumped it over turning our table into a slag heap of menthol ashes and Camel butts. The woman sitting at the end of the table, the third stranger in our group of six, pretended -- I think in the name of racial charity -- to be interested in what D.A. was saying, but each time he took a drag she interrupted him to request that he not ash in her tea, something I'm sure he would never do.

This woman was named after those gray things on the moon made of volcanic dust, and she was feminist enough to get a scornful fire in her eyes each time D.A. said "lollipop," but not enough to risk offending him with a rebuttal, even though nothing could possibly have offended him.

It was sort of a strange situation. A couple of my friends had earlier sat down with Moon Woman and one of her friends, and had become embroiled in a discussion of racism with a young,

sober black man who occupied D.A.'s seat before D.A. arrived. The discussion lured me away from some other friends and to the table, and my two friends and I sat quietly observing as the two white women and the black man went at it.

Moon Woman and her friend had reacted to the man's abusive treatment of the white waitress, and he was defending it on the grounds that he had suffered a lifetime of oppression. He had some impressive examples to offer, and I tended to side with him, especially since foul language could hardly have been any surprise to a night waitress at Perkins.



Brandon Loomis

Moon Woman said everyone, white or black, should treat each person as an individual. The man said that certainly sounded fair, but was neither possible nor desirable for a black man who could rarely expect such respect to be turned back on him.

Moon Woman said mutual respect was the only way for inter-racial progress, and asked us to recollect what Martin Luther King had "gotten." Both her adversary and my until-then silent self could not resist the setup, and simultaneously said that he had gotten killed. Our tone indicated that we both revered King and his methods, but felt that somehow the world still was not perfect, and that you can't very well expect people to like everyone they meet, hoping that one or two of them just might like

them back. It sounds nice, but it's not all that human.

Eventually, the young man got up and went home, and D.A. immediately took his seat. I had a truly great and carefree time rubbing shoulders with him, but the two women were visually affected by their debate, and they struggled not to evoke anything foolish from D.A.'s mouth. This, of course, was futile, but they seemed to think that laughing at a drunk black man would somehow be seen as racism.

D.A., on the other hand, felt it was his job to make people laugh at him. He did a good job, and he was happy when those of us who could laugh.

He may have called waiters busboys, and waitresses lollipops, and he may have told one waiter in particular that he looked exactly like Bart Simpson, but D.A. was kind to everyone. He used those derogatory terms with an endearing playfulness that most recognized and accepted. Moon Woman and her friend did not, and I'm sure if D.A. had been a bit more sober, they would have launched into him. They constantly apologized to an unaffected Bart Simpson for D.A.'s childish behavior.

D.A. had been lonely. I had been bored. We both were a bit drunk. We both were laughable. We both laughed at and with each other. Moon Woman and her friend were idealistic -- maybe so much so that they shunned their own ideals. Some of us had a good time, others wanted to. Some of us at least walked away thinking we made some proverbial progress in a sort of twisted Martin Luther King-like manner.

Loomis is a senior news-editorial major and the Summer Daily Nebraskan editorial columnist.