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NU role defined

Firm's suggestions should be applied

UNL, as the comprehensive research institution of the University of Nebraska, should occupy a principal niche in the system.

But a consulting firm's report, released last week, says the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has taken that role and "tried to do too much for too many." The Widmayer and Associates study, authorized by the Legislature in 1989, contains specific recommendations for each of the three — soon to be four — NU campuses.

Nebraska needs a comprehensive research institution, and cannot support more than one such campus, the report says. That makes UNL unique. In the eyes of the consultants, though, it also means UNL, as "flagship," is carrying some excess baggage.

By cutting back its offerings and services UNL could better address what the report calls its primary mission — teaching.

At the same time, UNL should streamline its admissions policies as well, the report says. If the latest admissions statistics are any indication, that's a necessary change.

In Barron's Educational Series, which contains a listing of the selectivity of colleges and universities, UNL in 1990 ranked in the lowest category among the undergraduate branches of NU. While the University of Nebraska at Omaha received a "less-competitive" rating and Kearney State College — soon to join NU — received a "competitive" rating, UNL's rating fell to "noncompetitive."

In 1990, The Associated Press reported, UNL admitted every resident undergraduate who applied.

UNL does have a responsibility to keep Nebraska high school graduates in the state. And it could not survive long if it accepted only the top applicants.

But there's a big difference between a high level of selectivity and no selectivity. In order to maintain its credibility as a research institution, UNL needs to do some paring. Surely some of this year's applicants would have been served better if they would have attended state colleges or community colleges instead.

An open admissions policy increases UNL's size, but takes it into areas the state and community colleges are better equipped to handle.

The policy, in effect, makes some freshman-level courses the standards for admission. And it forces the university to adopt remedial programs.

Creation of a statewide policy on transferring credits, as the study advocates, would give students greater mobility. Even if they were denied admission to UNL at first, students still could reapply after completing remedial programs at the colleges.

The report reinforces the suspicion that UNL has been so protective of its turf that it has moved into those institutions' territory.

Both the state and its interdependent systems of higher education would benefit from a careful overhaul along the lines of the Widmayer recommendations.

— Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan

Search disgusts reader

The recent debacle concerning the NU presidential search bothered me (like it did many other students), and it only reinforces my beliefs about the pathetic state of Nebraska politics. After spending 15 months and \$65,000 of taxpayer money, all of the candidates chosen by an impartial committee dropped out, leaving only Massengale left. The entire affair disgusts me.

You know, on football Saturdays during home games, 80,000 people have to pay to park because all of the university's lots are closed. Except for one. The lot east of Andrews Hall, which has more than 100 stalls, is reserved and guarded for "friends of Massengale" who park there. It's about a block from the stadium and guarded by a UNL police officer and another person, who ward away all but the closest buddies of Martin Massengale. Now we read that Massengale is reported to have had friends do internal lobbying of the NU Board of Regents for him. If that isn't a "good ol' boy network," I don't know what is. Massengale has more than an "inside track" on the presidency. His network of cronies, who all owe him favors,

are helping pressure the regents into picking him.

So what am I complaining about? There is no competition in the process. Rather than bring in fresh ideas and new blood, our tax-supported university is being run by a bunch of inbreeds who support each other purely for personal gain. Some bunch of old coots who think they know best wrangle soft jobs for themselves, and spend their time once they get the job gathering dust. I hadn't even known that it was legal, much less ethical, to attempt to influence the selection process by lobbying (a nice word for favoritism).

The position of NU president is not meant for a politician. It is not on ballots and no voter has any control (other than the regents) over who holds the position, as far as I know. The position is supposedly for an unbiased university administrator. Martin Massengale, by all accounts, doesn't come close to that.

Mitchell Michaelson
senior
finance



Break causes feeling of déjà vu

Thoughts of marriage bring fear, confusion to old friends' faces

I went home to Columbus over break to see my folks for Thanksgiving and to watch a high school friend of mine walk down the aisle that I wouldn't touch with a branding iron.

Aside from that great dinner my mother served, and the annual cutting-down-and-decorating-of-the-Christmas-tree ceremony, the weekend was a break from tradition that was kind of unsettling.

Usually, holiday vacations are spent with my family, except for a perfunctory beer at the local pub with the few high school friends who are still living in town and the one or two who've come home instead of working or going to Grandma's.

I don't see my folks much, so going home means spending time with them — going up to see the geese on the lake, reading the paper with my dad and having my mom kick my butt in Scrabble.

This weekend was different. I still got my butt kicked, but I also did some things that I had relegated to the summer after my freshman year in college, when my only job was life-guarding and my weekends were spent playing volleyball at Ross' cabin with my classmates from high school. I hadn't seen some of those classmates since graduation, and walking into Glurs Tavern (the oldest pub west of the Missouri River) to see them sitting around a table with the same expressions they wore on their faces four years ago gave me this terribly surreal feeling of déjà vu.

I was waiting for someone to ask me what I had scored on the ACT, or where everyone was going to college. Luckily, the conversation had changed, and the closest we came to those questions was asking Kelly how she'd done on the Optometry Admissions Test, and where she planned to go to study optometry.

Otherwise, the conversation was one we would never have dreamed of starting just out of high school. Craig

was getting married, and confusion and fear were written all over everyone's faces.

Don't get me wrong. Craig married a wonderful person and I'm sure they'll live happily ever after in Tulsa, Okla., but the implication that others of us would be going soon left a cloud of impending doom over the table, and made us sound pretty old.

We talked about where people were getting jobs and what they were doing with their lives. That, at least, was good news. Two of my classmates are in medical school, one's a law stu-



Amy
Edwards

dent, three are in actuarial science fields, and at least three others are in accounting. We have a soon-to-be pharmacist, an elementary school teacher and a part-time model.

And that's pretty cool, if you think about it, because 10 years from now when I make my first million as a reporter for The Daily Planet, I'll have a good doctor, a lawyer, an accountant and an eye doctor, and I'll know where to go to get really cheap drugs.

But our conversation moved closer and closer to the fact that others of us would be including marriage in our futures. We talked about who had the most serious beaus, who would be the most likely to marry next and what they would do after getting married.

Adam was more concerned about finding someone worth dating. Going to law school in St. Louis made him think Nebraska was the best bet for finding women who were looking for a good guy more than a man with a Mercedes and who didn't care that he ended his sentences with prepositions.

What surprised me was that most of my classmates echoed that in some form or another. I've always figured on leaving the state after graduation, but most of the others planned on coming back at some point — like when their children reach an impressionable age. At least now I don't have to feel guilty when people talk about the brain drain. It's not coming from 1986 graduating class of Columbus High School.

The consensus was that nobody was eager to plan the next wedding. Even the one engaged classmate turned green when Craig said his vows.

And that seemed a little odd to me. I was expecting more of my friends to look forward with starry eyes to the day when they too walked down the aisle. At one time, that would have been expected. Our parents' friends moved logically from asking about school to asking about new boys and girls in our lives, to asking about wedding plans and when our parents were going to be made grandparents. Eeek.

Now my friends talk about graduate school and professions and how tough it would be to find someone willing to move when they got a job offer halfway across the country.

That I can live with. That, to me, seems more natural than nesting. Our parents will just have to live with the fact that the women held their hands behind their backs when Craig's bride tossed her bouquet and the guys kept their hands in their pockets when Craig flipped the garter belt at them.

But that may change. We'll all be home again in a month — probably for the last time for another four years — and we'll see if anyone is sporting an engagement ring or handing out invitations.

I'll be glad to attend the ceremony, as long as I don't have to walk down the aisle.

Edward's is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan Diversions co-editor and a columnist.

letter

POLICY

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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 sub-

mit 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.

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