

Daily
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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No 'interims'

Permanence needed for administration

"Interim" is quickly becoming one of the most popular prefixes to University of Nebraska-Lincoln administrators' titles, joining "assistant" and "associate."

The NU Board of Regents eliminated one of the "interims" last week by offering Martin Massengale the University of Nebraska presidency.

But if Massengale, currently UNL chancellor, accepts the presidency, it will create another interim position and skim yet another layer off an already thin administrative roster at the Lincoln campus.

UNL will be without a permanent chancellor until another search is completed. Joe Rowson, NU director of public affairs, said that process could take as long as the search for a president.

Normally, that wouldn't pose any problems. But UNL's situation is not normal. Massengale will be the fourth top Lincoln administrator to leave his post within a year.

Robert Furgason, vice chancellor for academic affairs, leaves Friday for Corpus Christi State University in Texas.

Bill Splinter is filling in as interim vice chancellor for research while a permanent replacement for John Yost is sought.

And Neale Copple is serving as interim director of university relations, replacing Tom Krepel.

Compounding the void, interim administrators may be unwilling to hire permanent replacements for other posts if they fear leaving too much of a legacy.

The regents' choice had caused an uproar across the state. Members of the other NU branches — the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the Medical Center, as well as Kearney State College, soon to join the system — thought he would favor UNL because of his current role as its chancellor.

But while those at UNO, UNMC and KSC moaned about the effect of Massengale's selection on the university system, they may have exaggerated the impact. After all, Massengale already has been acting as system president for more than a year.

The wounds within the system appear to have been healed. UNO and UNMC officials said meetings Tuesday with Massengale to discuss problems they may have had with his presidency ended on a positive note.

Still, Massengale's move to the president's office will have repercussions; but they may be felt more on the one campus he leaves behind than on the three he adds to his direction.

— Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan



Important stories often are lost

Victim's background shouldn't dictate story's media coverage

I have nothing in common with Kimberly Rae Harbour. She lived in Boston; I've never been to Boston. When she was my age, she was poor and the mother of a 4-year-old girl. I'm finishing my last year of college — no commitments. I just want to be a newspaper reporter.

Sometimes I wonder, as I'm sure Harbour did, about what I'm doing in this world. I pick up any newspaper, the Daily Nebraskan, The New York Times, and wonder if it's all worth it.

Newspaper. A publication with a veritable bevy of information just waiting to be fed into the brain. I said a veritable bevy, which is quite a lot, but I didn't say that I could read all the news that was going on around the globe. I wouldn't have the time and the paper wouldn't have that kind of space.

So instead, I read what some editor — renamed God by the staff at the local newspaper — decided was most important.

And that was not necessarily all the news that was going on, but "all the news that's fit to print," as The New York Times motto goes.

Well, that's fine and dandy. The news has to be narrowed down somehow. And sometimes those things and people we should know about, like Kimberly Rae Harbour, are forgotten.

A month ago in Boston, the body of a slain woman was found in a park. While the event bears some resemblance to the 1989 Central Park jogger incident, the Boston police and, more importantly, the press didn't jump all over the latest incident.

The Boston victim had been stabbed 132 times, raped and beaten — an echo of what happened in 1989 to the young corporate executive who was

raped and beaten in New York's Central Park. Both cases involved youths who were spending the evening on a violent "wilding" spree.

There were differences, though.



Lisa
Donovan

New York's anonymous rape victim lived, and 26-year-old Kimberly Rae Harbour of Boston died. The settings were different, too. In the New York incident, the woman was taking a leisurely 10 p.m. jog when she was attacked. Harbour was walking with a friend in a low-income housing development in Boston when the two were attacked. And one of the biggest differences was the press coverage. The brutal crime against the corporate executive of Manhattan was a high-priority press matter; the Boston case was downplayed.

Many Bostonians are outraged. Why are they angry? Boston authorities are treating the case as routine.

While Harbour is the 128th murder victim this year, it is highly unlikely that Harbour suffered a common murder. Stabbed 132 times, raped and beaten to death is hardly routine.

Bostonians also are angry because the police's downplaying of the brutal murder potentially put the community in danger. Citizens have the right to know when crimes are committed, especially if the criminals are on the loose.

But many are angry because of the biggest difference between the New

York and Boston cases: Harbour was a poor black woman who police say was a prostitute supporting a crack habit, while the Central Park jogger was a young, urban, upwardly mobile corporate executive.

Boston authorities contend that they kept the crime hushed up so that they could conduct a thorough investigation without public attention.

And a spokesman for the District Attorney's office told the New York Times that the authorities had been wary of prematurely disclosing information to news organizations since the 1989 murder of Carol DiMaiti Stuart.

If you recall the Stuart case, the victim's husband, Charles Stuart, told Boston authorities that his wife was shot to death by a black man.

As it turned out, Mr. Stuart turned out to be the prime suspect in the case. But we'll never know for sure, because he apparently jumped to his death from a bridge.

We'll never know the dramatic story of Kimberly Harbour either — her life struggles, her dreams.

That makes me angry, angry at my profession and angry at society. It is one thing for the media to set the agenda, but it is quite another for them to place different priorities on the value of life.

Unfortunately, the members of the press are just doing their job as trained observers to print what the reader wants. And given the choice, I would put money on the fact that people wanted to know more about the Central Park jogger than about Kimberly Harbour.

Donovan is a senior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan editorial page editor and a columnist.

opinion READER

AIDS affects all of UNL; be sensitive of feelings

Recently I attended the funeral of a friend. I met my friend several years ago in one of the classes I was teaching here at UNL. He was one of my brightest and most imaginative students.

I can't help remembering now what happened one day that semester when my students were presenting in class short skits they had written. One of the groups gave a skit in which a "patient" went to see a "doctor" and complained of symptoms. We have come to associate with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The "doctor" in the skit advised the "patient" that, in order to be cured, he should stop dating men and start going out with women. At that time none of us knew that one student's companion of three years was dying, and that this student himself would also die, of AIDS. I did tell the class that I did not think the skit was funny, but I wish now that I had been more outspoken in condemning such cruelty and in-

sensitivity. Would those students have been more careful had they realized how their words might have affected one of their classmates? I hate to think that it would not have made any difference to them.

There are many students at UNL who think that it is amusing to make fun of homosexuality and of AIDS. When they do so, are they considering how their words may affect those who hear them? The odds are that every one of us has classmates who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. And sadly, chances are every one of us will be affected someday by AIDS. Whenever we assume otherwise, we risk hurting our classmates and, in some instances, the people we love most.

Colleen Baade
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editorial POLICY

Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents,

letter POLICY

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 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.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Letters should be typewritten.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

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.