

No fair

UNL parking endorses caste

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln parking department has finally gone too far.

Parking officials have decided that UNL is a capitalist enterprise to justify changing 500-600 prime parking spots into faculty-only reserved spaces, charging up to \$265 per spot.

"The question is are we going to operate on capitalist principles or are the rich going to subsidize the poor?" Business Manager Ray Coffey said.

Who the rich subsidizers are in this situation he doesn't say. Maybe the university?

The parking department's move sends the wrong message to students and faculty members — that they don't deserve equal treatment.

Perhaps we should charge more for prime classroom seats? Or we could have students bid to take the classes most in demand. Such a move surely would bring in more money for the beleaguered university, which is facing increasing costs on all fronts.

Why don't we? Because it simply wouldn't be right. The university treats all students the same after they have paid certain required fees.

The same should be true of the \$50 parking fee. After faculty members and students have paid it, they should be free to fend for a prime parking space with everyone else.

To put parking to a different standard, the university merely endorses special treatment for wealthier faculty members and students.

Such a caste system, in which poorer students and faculty members have to waste an hour each day walking to their classes (leaving less precious time for studying), merely propagates the inequality the university is trying to destroy.

— Victoria Ayotte
for the Daily Nebraskan

Peer pressure

Regents react properly to reexamination question

The NU regents took a positive step in healing old wounds with the Legislature when they decided to reexamine the peer group of institutions to which UNL compares itself for faculty salary purposes.

The regents' relationship with the Legislature was soured after the calamitous presidential search last year. State senators denounced the search and introduced what seemed revenge legislation, such as a bill calling for the recall of regents.

One seeming response was made by the Appropriations Committee, which hired outside consultants to come up with a new peer group for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Senators charged that UNL had used an invalid peer group to justify high faculty salary raises.

The regents made the right move by responding to peer pressure and admitting that some adjustments may be needed.

Such a step builds faith that the regents are not just power-hungry officials working in their own interests.

— Victoria Ayotte
for the Daily Nebraskan



CHRIS POTTER

Multiculturalism empty if positives forgotten

Most readers are probably aware by now of the epithet "politically correct," directed toward advocates of pluralism, tolerance, and multiculturalism. Naturally, these advocates reject the derogatory title. Most of them are reflective reformers who want to give equal representation to all cultures and eliminate intolerance based on race, sex, religion and sexual orientation. Their cause is just.

But a few of these advocates deserve the epithet. They would foster a rigid orthodoxy, and paradoxically, in striving for multiculturalism, reject all of Western culture as fundamentally corrupt. These liberal fanatics have learned nothing from conservative McCarthy era repression, or worse, have adopted its methods.

Consider the slogan chanted at a recent student demonstration at Stanford: "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western culture's got to go." Or consider the words of a converted white male Ivy League practitioner of PC, published in a letter to Mother Jones magazine: "... white, male-dominated, Western European culture is the most destructive phenomenon in the known history of the planet. . . . It is deeply hateful of life and committed to death; therefore, it is moving rapidly toward the destruction of itself and most other life forms on Earth. And truly, it deserves to die . . ."

Is this serious criticism or a call for a savage cultural holocaust?

Granted, much of the history of the West comprises brutal subjugation and racist repression. The effects of Western imperialism still reverberate in violent revolutions across the world. Much of Chinese insularity and authoritarianism may be attributed to the greedy 19th century Western powers that plundered one of the oldest



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and richest civilizations in history. American Indians lost their land to what can only be called an invasion (it was certainly not "colonization" or "discovery") by Europeans. In South Africa, European settlers imposed a racist government on the native population.

But the PC critics of Western culture seem to be speaking of all aspects of the West, not just its more heinous manifestations. Surely the Western philosopher Spinoza's meditative reflection on a pantheist universe is not "the most destructive phenomenon" in known history. Surely the intellectual discourse depicted in Raphael's painting "The School of Athens," Newton's laws of motion, James Joyce's novel "Ulysses" and the construction of the Apollo spacecraft have not so mutilated our world that only the total eradication of Western culture will heal it.

In many cases, though, the PC practitioner propounds just such absurdities. In social sciences such as

sociology or political science, there is admittedly the possibility that subtle remnants of the negative ideological components of the West remain. But even the supposed bastions of objectivity, mathematics and the physical sciences, are held to propagate a racist and heterosexist bias. Simply because most of the fundamental principles of these sciences were discovered by white heterosexual European men, PC zealots infer that the principles themselves must be inherently intolerant and oppressive. Such an inference does an injustice to the seminal contributions of, for example, Marie Curie in physics, Subramanyan Chandrasekhar in astrophysics and Alan Turing in computer science.

The idea that Western culture is monolithic, to be taken whole or not at all, is false. Negative elements of the West's heritage can and should be discarded, but the positive elements must not be. Similarly, the negative elements of other cultural legacies must be discarded in favor of a true multicultural, tolerant, non-racist, non-sexist, unprejudiced outlook. Surely people's minds are large enough to accommodate Plato, Joan of Arc, Newton and Washington alongside Lao Tzu, Khayyam, Ghandi and Mandela. If not, multiculturalism is an empty slogan.

At worst, criticism of PC degenerates into conservative rhetorical polemic devoid of substance. At best, it condemns a very real zealotry that threatens serious scholarship. The challenge to faculty members, administrators, and students across the United States is to achieve a fair representation of all cultural legacies without the extremist dogmatism of PC orthodoxy.

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