What is political correctness?

f you are in your first year in college — notice that I did not use the word "freshman" — you may need a crash course on the definition of political correctness.

I didn't know about it either until

two years ago. I told one of my professors that I was going to visit my family in "Chi-town." I got this expression from my friend Lane — a Cleveland Indians fan — and I just thought it was a neat way of referring

Anyway, the professor warned me. saying, "I'm not sure that's politi-cally correct." That left me with two unanswered questions: First, what is political correctness? And second, why is the term "Chi-town" politically incorrect? Fortunately, this particular case turned out to be a false alarm. To the best of my knowledge, the term

"Chi-town" is politically correct.

My own effort to learn about political correctness was advanced considerably by a recent "Firing Line" debate on the subject at the University of South Carolina and aired on public television.

Political correctness involves at least three issues: a concern for civility, a concern for sensitivity and a concern for a more diverse educational curriculum.

Proponents of political correctness want to uphold a certain level of civility on university campuses. One condition of civility is that people refrain from beating up on each other, but this is presumably taken care of by our civil laws.

Another condition is that people refrain from "hate speech" against each other.

Some universities, such as the University of Michigan, have enacted policies mandating punishments for people engaging in hate speech. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln presently does not have such a policy.

I think almost everyone will agree that hate speech is undesirable, but there are two problems with attempt-



People should be free to base universities on the mission of teaching sensitivity. But people must also remain free to base universities on the mission of pursuing objective truth.

ing to prohibit it.

The first is a legal question. Since we have a Constitution providing freedom of speech and hate speech is a kind of speech, it is unclear that hate speech can be prohibited from a legal standpoint.

A second difficulty is that any definition of "hate speech" probably

The political correctness movement also strives for sensitivity. Advocates are concerned that people not speak in ways that offend the sensitivities of others.

difference between insensitive speech and hate speech. I may describe someone or something in a way that is considered insensitive although not

A third issue that advocates of political correctness favor is a new diversity of intellectual viewpoints in university curriculums. Some univer- and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

sities are offering new courses designed to familiarize students with minority cultures, as opposed to the culture of "dead white males."

Part of the motivation for this is just the idea that entertaining a diversity of views is a basic academic

But it also is motivated partly by a kind of intellectual affirmative action. The thought is that we should install the viewpoints of certain groups, precisely because university curricu-lums should reflect the diversity found in society at large.

Some conservatives see this as a "trashing" of Western culture. But it is not clear whether they are upset with the very fact that new perspectives are being introduced, or whether they think the new viewpoints are simply replacing the Western intellectual tradition.

At any rate, I think the main complaint of conservatives is not against this proposed new diversity. Their main complaint is that political correctness advocates do not believe in the pursuit of objective truth. The way in which some advocates of po-litical correctness talk about truth tends to confirm this complaint.

Rejecting the pursuit of objective truth, it was said at the debate, reduces the university to nothing more than a smorgasbord of inoffensive ideologies. Thus, the university's traditional purpose of providing ob-jective truth is replaced with the new purpose of teaching intellectual sen-

People should be free to base uni-It is important to understand the versities on the mission of teaching sensitivity. But people must also remain free to base universities on the mission of pursuing objective truth. That way, when my kids are old enough for college, they'll still have someplace

Reiter is a graduate student in philosophy

never even take the time to find out where they come from, and hence are quite comfortable with "white."

If other cultures are given the

country or continent of origin, there

Americans to be defined in terms of

'simple and somewhat factual." I say that the only thing simple about

skin color is the simplicity by which

one can stereotype, and there is nothing factual about it at all — the

defining a person in terms of his

next time you really look at a

"black" person, you will see that they are not as black as an eight-

ball, but instead are beautiful and

varied shades of brown — just as

snow, but some shade of peach or

you are not white as the driven

You say that changing the

people's hearts. I disagree. It will

change the hearts of many black

people from disdain of their skin

color to pride and dignity in their

roots and heritage. Why are you so

Jacquie Gines

chairperson

terminology will not change

afraid of that?

You say that the term "black" is

dignity of defining themselves by

is really no rationale for African

our skin color.

Twisters, 61st & O PRESENTS:

Guns NV Roses Midmight Meditouse Listening Party

Monday, Sept. 16

Doors open at 11:30 P.M.

·Guns N' Roses new releases, "Use Your Illusion", I and II, on sale at midnight!

•Twisters 61st & O location only

See ya there!



We are working on weekly specials, for you!



Herm (left), Pony (right), Mrs. Pony (Not pitcured because she was shopping at 6 Feet Under)

It appears I'm working Pony to Skin and Bones. Now it's hard to see his tatoo. Could it be I told Pony to go to Weird Wally's for lunch?

-Herm

Herm Pony As Erank & Do say, "Thanks for your support." This of includes, Mitch, Lucky, Bart, Chris, Jim & Eric. (Mrs. Pony & Mrs. Mitch)

MINORS BEWARE: We caught seven minors trying to purchase alcohol last week and we prosecute. It's not that we don't like you, just buy pop.



Herm's Liquor 1644 "P" St. 474-6592

"The Student Survival Store" "Except for Minors"

tree to choose own titles

I am writing in response to Andy Frederick's column ("Problems will follow new term," DN, Sept. 9, 1991). As an African American student, I was both perplexed and annoyed at why you chose to write a column on something about which you neither know anything nor can

Why do you even care? Why is it so important to you what we choose to call ourselves? It, in my opinion, is really none of your business what we as Americans of African descent choose as our terminology to define our heritage.

Second, you as a non-African American have no right to dictate to us anything about how we want to define our culture and heritage in this country. Ever since the first Africans were brought to this land, the white man has chosen for us what our term would be. We went in the white man's eyes, I might add — from being niggers and Negroes to colored to Afro-American to black. These titles were not by our choosing. For the first time, we as African-Americans have chosen our own term - and you as a white person want to get

upset? I question your logic Third, you are in error about ack African Negro colored Ano-A African American Negro African American ored Afro-A egro colored merican Neg frican Amer

the only ones left who aren't called Something-or-other-Americans.' You are perfectly free to term yourself from your country of origin Italian American, Dutch American, French American, or whatever. That is, if you even know where your roots are. That is exactly the problem. You are so quick to judge us for knowing and being proud of our origins, but many white people

African American n black African Am rican black Afric fro-American black African American

your contention that "whites will be nerican' appropriate label

I feel that this name-calling issue is totally ridiculous. I would like to tell Kori Miller ("'Blacks' not slaves anymore," DN, Sept. 11, 1991), that there is no white person, or anyone else for that matter, who needs permission to voice his or her opinion. Apparently she has not heard of the First Amendment. Also, this has nothing to do with slavery, so why even bring it up?

To get to the subject, I really don't understand why you expect to be called "African-American" or why it is that big of a deal to you.

am of European descent and I also have Indian background in my family. But you don't see me asking to be called a European-Indian

American. Also, you were most likely born in America, as I was, so you are an American. Plain and simple. You really have no ties to Africa, just as I have none to Europe. I'm an American, in the best country in the world, and I'm damn proud of it, just as you should

One question I have is, What is the difference whether what a person is called is based on cultural heritage or on race? Either way you look at it, all of us are classified in some way.

> Bill Weddington sophomore criminal justice

Black Poets Club

13th & Calvert (2.8 miles straight south on 13th St.)

Back To School Special: 20% off any one green plant with this coupon

* Lincoln's Preferred Full Service Florist New spacious showroom We do wedding and party planning

Rentals for all occassions * Four Modern Greenhouses

Our 9000 sq. foot facility has the state's finest selection of common, tropical and rare plants and cacti

*Large selection of easy-to-care for dorm and apartment plants at low prices

Open 7 days with citywide delivery 421-2999 (This coupon is good once anytime during the school year)