

### Everyone's problem

UNL police, alone, can't improve lighting

One University of Nebraska-Lincoln assistant professor is trying to bring concerns about nighttime campus safety to light.

Christina Brantner, an assistant professor of modern languages and literature, said dark walks from her office to her car at night made her think some areas of campus were lighted inadequately.

As a new member of the Academic Senate's parking committee, Brantner is doing what she can to increase the amount of lights on campus.

She walked around campus at night with a map in hand, marking places she thought were too dark.

Ken Cauble, interim director of the UNL police department, received a copy of Brantner's map and said he thought lighting is dim in some areas but not needed in others.

Cauble maintained that all areas of campus are safe because police patrol dark areas more carefully.

He may be right on that count. He also is right on another.

"... (A)s long as there is the perception that there is a problem, there is a problem," Cauble said.

Until lights illuminate every late-night walk on campus, there is a problem, even if that problem only is perceived.

On her night walks, Brantner also found lights that weren't working. That problem should be corrected.

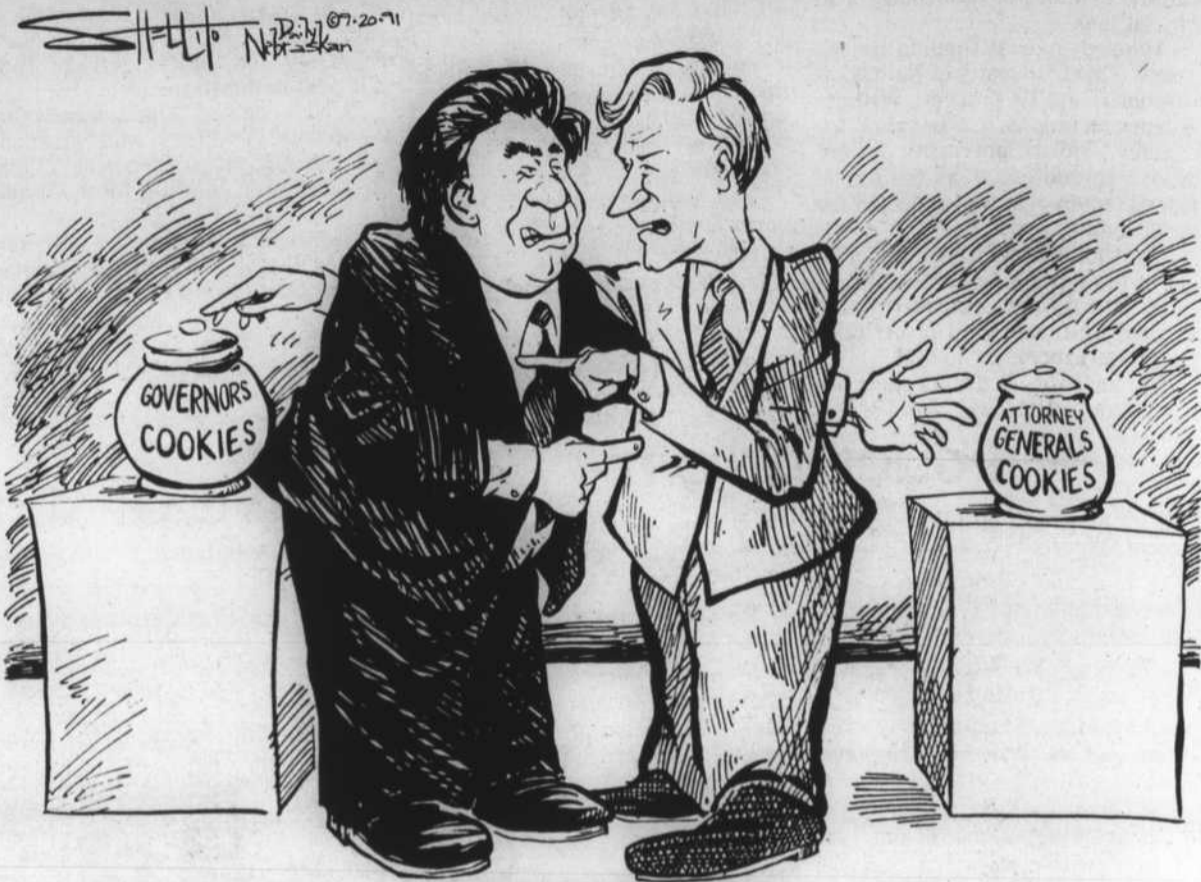
Cauble said he, too, planned to walk at night on campus to determine where more lighting was needed and to report to facilities management where lights weren't working.

His initiative should be commended. But the solution to safety in dark corners of campus shouldn't be left up to the police department or facilities management. Missing lights only can be fixed when they are reported.

"Everybody knows it's a problem, but nobody's really interested in doing anything about it," Brantner said.

If only more people at UNL were as concerned about nighttime safety as Brantner.

—J.P.



DAVID REITER

### North trial lacks clear end

Earlier this week, special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh gave up his attempt to reinstate three felony convictions against Lt. Col. Oliver North. A federal judge dismissed the case against North at Walsh's request. Walsh explained that "the government is not likely, in the unique circumstances here presented, to be able to sustain a successful outcome."

Three convictions against North that resulted from his 1989 trial were either overturned or set aside on the grounds that evidence leading to those convictions was influenced by North's 1987 congressional testimony under immunity from prosecution about the Iran-contra affair. For Walsh to get the convictions reinstated, he had to prove that none of the evidence used in North's 1989 trial was influenced by the congressional testimony.

Last week that task became virtually impossible when former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane stated that his own testimony at North's 1989 trial was influenced by North's 1987 testimony on the Iran-contra affair.

The upshot is that the case against North was not dropped because of insufficient evidence or because the evidence was unreliable. Instead, the case was dropped because it depended crucially on North's congressional testimony under immunity.

Even though the effort was cut short, trying North has been very expensive and time-consuming. The 1989 trial lasted four months and involved 67 witnesses. The group headed by Walsh included seven lawyers and 31 support staff members.

Some have questioned whether Walsh should have pursued the case in the first place, knowing that success would be hard to achieve given the immunity of North's testimony.

But in an article about the trial, Georgetown Law School Professor



***It is also unclear that the case shows whether reform in the government is needed. We didn't need the North trial to know that government officials should not break the law.***

Paul Rothstein said the process was valuable: "This was very informative to the public in making decisions on how to vote and whether there should be reform in the government."

"All of this will make it less likely for this sort of thing to happen again," he said.

Rothstein's assertions are questionable.

The trial against North did not show the public how to vote. The Iran-contra affair is a blot on the Republican party. North is a Republican and a political conservative, and he is responsible for the covert operation that generated the Iran-contra affair. But there is no logical connection between conservative political views and the Iran-contra affair. Although conservatism is committed to the value of democracy, it is not committed to the value of promoting democracy through illegal means.

It is also unclear that the case

shows whether reform in the government is needed. We didn't need the North trial to know that government officials should not break the law. Finally, it is questionable whether the failed case against North actually lessens the probability that something like this will happen again.

The North trial didn't show us the way to an improved government. Of course, that wasn't its main purpose. The main defect of the trial is that it failed to bring the whole story to a clear and decisive end.

After the case was dismissed, North declared that he had been "totally exonerated." This is true if interpreted to mean simply that the case was "totally" dropped. But it is not true if interpreted to mean that he was somehow declared innocent.

The situation is confusing. Clarity would demand that either North is somehow shown innocent by removing the suspicion of wrongdoing or that he is found guilty and punished.

At this point it seems that such a solution is out of reach. It may be that the only way this story will receive something like a clear ending is if North is guilty. If he is innocent, he probably will write a book saying so, and the book will be discounted by those convinced of his guilt.

If, however, North is guilty, he can confess. Of course, for the most part, confession of wrongdoing is non-existent in politics. Sometimes a politician will admit to a "mistake." But a mistake doesn't have moral significance. A mistake is what one sometimes makes when trying to add a column of numbers.

If North has done wrong, he should confess and repent. This would not mean necessarily that justice had been satisfied. But then, perhaps, at least for some, the story could be brought to an end through grace.

Reiter is a graduate student in philosophy and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

### Administration must consider itself part of the whole picture

I am dismayed that the UNL administration is proposing to cut primarily teaching positions including the elimination of the Classics and Speech Communications departments to meet its quota of required budget cuts. Since teaching is the primary function of a university, the teaching positions must be the last to go in case of financial exigency. Has any thought been given to eliminate some administrative positions? Eliminating one administrative position may save enough money to support the whole classics department.

In time of financial difficulties, the university community (students, faculty and administrators) must take a careful look at the whole picture starting with the administrative structure. Can the university faculty fulfill its missions of teaching, research and

community service with fewer administrators? The university has colleges ranging in size from many departments to just one department. Could

one save on the expensive administrative overhead of a small college by merging its departments with another college? Could the university manage with fewer vice chancellors and their assistants?

Since Dean Peters of Arts and Sciences did not recommend the eliminations of the Classics and Speech Communications departments, I would like to see his recommendations, as well as those of the other deans, made public. Since the faculty senate supported vertical cuts, I would like to

see that organization come up with its own recommendations. As the budget-cut discussions proceed this fall, I hope the questions raised above and many more raised by others are thoroughly discussed and answered before the final decisions are made.

S. S. Jaswal  
professor of physics  
and astronomy

### Speech majors respected, need to suggest options

I feel for the speech majors who are trying to save their department and I respect them for rallying and not going down without a fight.

However, that respect only goes so far. Until the speech majors stop whining and suggest an alternative solution to the budget cuts, they don't have my support.

The old cliché that if you are not part of the solution you are part of the problem applies here. The budget cuts have been mandated, they are critically needed, and if the speech majors want to save their butts, they had better suggest alternatives to cutting their program. The vice chancellors have carefully studied which depart-

ments were the least important and they made their decision. Until the speech communication majors can suggest other, lesser programs that affect fewer students, they will have to accept the termination of their department.

Everyone is begging for money and no one wants to lose their free handouts. However, people must realize that the source is not unlimited and cuts must be made where they least affect the university.

Gene Paulsen  
sophomore  
mechanical engineering

### EDITORIAL POLICY

Signed staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1991 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Jana Pedersen, editor; Eric Pfanner, editorial page editor; Diane Brayton, managing editor; Walter Gholson, columnist; Paul Domeier, copy desk chief; Brian Shellito, cartoonist; Michael Stock, columnist.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the

NU Board of Regents.

Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author.

The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.

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