

## Visions of change

Spanier lists specifics in opening speech

Clearly, Graham Spanier sees education as an empowering force for societal change. "Education is society's mechanism for turning despair into hope, for raising the social consciousness of the community, for altering the course of families, for turning poverty into wealth, and for improving the quality of life," he said Friday in an address at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Spanier said he intends to carry out that vision as the new chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He said he would implement administrative reforms, make affirmative action a priority and be responsive to student needs and services. He said the university would strive toward greater sensitivity and awareness of cultural diversity under his leadership.

It's not clear how Spanier intends to enact all of his ideas. UNL administrators have spoken for years of trying to increase understanding of other ethnic and racial groups. Recently, they also have spoken of trying to improve the climate for women faculty members.

Perhaps the real difficulty in achieving a more positive environment for diverse groups in Nebraska is not lack of concern but simply the fact that the state is predominantly white.

Spanier comes to Nebraska touting his success in dealing with these issues in Oregon, another state that has a small non-white population. If as provost at Oregon State University he discovered a formula that works, UNL could benefit from his leadership.

Part of the Spanier plan apparently is a stepped-up affirmative action program. University officials must guard against the potential abuses of such a policy, which could result in tacit acceptance of a quota system.

On other issues of student interest, Spanier spoke in alternately broad and specific terms.

He was critical of the budget-cutting process, saying, "I did not want to be here even one day without saying that I have been disturbed by the divisive, adversarial nature of the budget discussions of the last few weeks. This is no way to govern a university."

He stressed the need for a long-term view in making budget decisions. But he did not say how such an outlook would apply to the cuts that must be made. He did, however, promise to address the budget situation specifically soon.

As most underclass students register for next semester's classes, they should be heartened by Spanier's interest in improving UNL's student information system.

University administrators have tried to get funding approved for a new system, which could include conveniences such as class registration by touch-tone telephone. The proposal has not been financed yet, however. Spanier's support could change that.

Students should be less pleased by some of Spanier's proposed changes in UNL's administrative structure.

One of his plans is to hire a dean of graduate studies separate of the vice chancellor for research, who currently fills both posts. The last thing the university needs during a time of budget cuts is another highly paid administrator.

On the other hand, Spanier said he would bring the presidents of the Academic Senate and the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska into his cabinet. That move promises to bring needed student and faculty input into the decision-making process.

In some ways, Spanier has come in as the academic version of Bob Kerrey: bold, outgoing and with a few ideas that could leave Nebraskans scratching their heads.

On the whole, however, he represents needed change. As UNL struggles to do more with less, Spanier's vision and ideas will be put to the test.

-E.F.P.

## Mascot ills not exclusive

American Indians are not the only ethnic group to suffer from the negative stereotypes that athletic teams' mascots encourage.

Look at the NFL's Minnesota Vikings. That is a pro football team named after Northern European barbarians from the dark ages. I automatically assume that all people from Minnesota are wild savages who for fun invade Iowa and Canada to plunder and pillage.

Even closer to home, I resent our own mascot, Herbie Husker. When I

was in the Army, and when I attended law school in another state, everyone there assumed that all Nebraskans were big, dumb, long-haired rednecks who wore only bib overalls.

It is time that the news organizations devote as much time explaining the plight of Minnesotans and Nebraskans as they have so far to American Indians regarding such a serious problem as sports mascots.

Stanford Sipple  
Lincoln



JAMES ZANK

## Latest discrimination intolerable

How long is discrimination allowed to go on? People at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have responded quickly in the past when flagrant incidents of discrimination occur.

Hundreds of people filled Broyhill Plaza two years ago when flyers for a white-supremacist student group appeared on campus.

Sales of a fraternity T-shirt were stopped several years ago because the subject matter was deemed offensive to people of color.

Committees of students and faculty members are gathered to deal with the problems facing minority students.

But people of different sexual orientation are still discriminated against by the ROTC program.

Last week, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska senate passed a resolution that supports keeping ROTC on campus, despite a Department of Defense policy that bans gays, lesbians and bisexuals from becoming commissioned officers.

The measure asks the Academic Senate to repeal part of a resolution it passed last spring that urges the chancellor to renegotiate ROTC contracts if the discriminatory policy is not changed.

Steve Thomlison, speaker of the senate, supported the bill on the basis that canceling contracts with ROTC would discriminate against students trying to earn degrees though the ROTC program.

Certainly many students would be hurt if ROTC was removed from the campus. Too bad.

I strongly doubt that Thomlison would be as apt to argue this point if ROTC discriminated against blacks or women. Both these groups have gained far too much political acceptance to have to put up with such obvious discrimination in this day and age.

It's odd that the Department of Defense has discriminated against both these groups in the past. This has only changed because people challenged the discriminatory policies.

The sponsor of the bill, Sen. Pat Jilek, indicated that he was concerned that by using the contracts with ROTC as leverage, students would be forced



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into a very difficult position. They would be denied the benefits of a program whose policies students don't control.

What better motivation for these students to force a policy change from within the Department of Defense, than to know their education may depend on it.

ROTC isn't the only military-based option for education.

Going into regular military service can provide some education opportunities. Students could find options other than ROTC to help pay for school.

The policies of this university regarding discrimination are clear on the point of sexual orientation.

ASUN's approval of the bill is a slap in the face to the university. It mocks the ideals that guide this institution. Jilek and Thomlison appear far more interested with the condemnation of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals than protecting their rights.

Jilek suggested that ASUN should consider starting a letter-writing campaign and lobbying the legislature to deal with discrimination on a national level.

It ought to be more than a consideration. ASUN must make a letter-writing campaign to change this policy a priority. The ROTC policy should be the biggest item ASUN lobbies in the Nebraska Legislature next session.

### LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Readers also are welcome to submit 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.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Let-

ters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

Personally I don't believe either will happen. This form of discrimination is a touchy subject that few are willing to confront.

Because of the predominance of Christian doctrine in the Midwest, the issue becomes morally charged. People of different sexual orientations are looked down upon, shunned as sinners.

I've seen this phenomenon many times in my college career. It frightens me.

I observed an incident in a class during the debate over the financing of the Committee Offering Lesbian and Gay Events several years ago. One day before class began, a woman was telling a few members of the class about the weekend of activities that she had helped organize for the Christian student group she belonged to.

Moments later, the issue of COLAGE funding was brought up. The woman became livid with rage.

"I think all the gays in the world should be lined up against a wall and shot," she said.

Such a good Christian attitude. I hope that the woman was an extreme case, but listening to some people, I often wonder.

This needn't be such a problem for Christians. Believing in the Christian God also entails believing that God is just and that God will determine the final judgment of all people's souls. It is not the prerogative of Christians to judge the moral character of other people.

Looking at this issue of discrimination, people should consider the Golden Rule. If people are being treated unjustly, regardless of their moral condition, Christians have an obligation to oppose the injustice.

Whereas the Academic Senate's resolution has teeth, ASUN's vote Wednesday seeks to gum the ROTC program into submission.

If there are going to be rules protecting the rights of people at this university, if efforts are going to be made to keep the university environment conducive to education, then the blatant prejudice of the Department of Defense must be challenged through every means available.

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