

UNL has diverse possibilities

ERIC PFANNER

What you are about to read was intended to be private. It is the last evaluation I wrote as a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student.

It's true that I've gotten a few things off my chest as a Daily Nebraskan reporter, editor and columnist for three years.

But, really, it's all been a big schmooze. I merely have been trying to impress my bosses, professors, Association of Students of the University of Nebraska leaders and UNL administrators.

Later this week, however, I am supposed to graduate. I finally am able to be entirely candid about my soon-to-be alma mater.

What follow are my fond hopes and recommendations for a UNL of the future. I want to have tears of pride in my eyes when, 20 years from today, I write those checks for another indoor practice field or for the Husker turf drive.

I hope there's a violent snowball fight on campus next year. I hope CNN does a story on it, as it did a few years back. That way football wouldn't be the only thing I'd hear or read about UNL after I graduate.

Speaking of football, it's time we quit using euphemisms such as "scholar-athlete" and "Academic All-American."

These folks are not really the Renaissance men they are made out to be. Many of them probably don't know what the Renaissance is.

But we feel guilty saying we are paying large boys money to come here and hit each other and run away from each other so that they can learn how to be large men who hit each other and run away from each other.

What's wrong with just enjoying watching them hit each other and run away from each other? I think UNL students — as scholar-journalists, scholar-teachers, scholar-engineers, scholar-accountants and scholar-librarians — deserve a little Saturday afternoon study break.

That's not to imply that I have no beef with what goes on at Memorial Stadium. I am, in fact, quite offended, mostly from an aesthetic standpoint.

UNL graduates and other people



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who go to home football games apparently have no taste in clothes. They show up decked out in garish red polyester. The worst part of the tacky display is its uniformity.

Fortunately, UNL administrators seem to be taking steps to remedy this problem.

The new chancellor, Graham Spanier, has announced that he will create a new administrative position that is to include the title of director of diversity.

How one directs diversity remains a mystery. I wonder what the qualifications for diversity are. I wonder whether rules and standards of diversity will be created.

I can imagine a professor discussing a grade with a student:

"I'm sorry, Mr. Pfanner, you were just not diverse enough in class to receive the A. I'm forced to give you a B+."

"But, but, b... I don't think Ms. So-and-So is even as diverse as I am, and she's getting an A."

"Well, Mr. Pfanner, all students are diverse. But some are more diverse than others."

As I said, however, it is with respect to football games that the posi-

tion could come in handy. I can imagine the diversity director standing on Saturday afternoons like an evangelical preacher at Broyhill Fountain, screaming at passersby:

"You there, yeah, you in the red polyester. You are not being diverse enough. Wear the horizontally striped pants, not the vertically striped ones."

The diversity director could organize a protest of the Defense Department's discriminatory policy that bars gays and lesbians from membership in ROTC programs.

Again, football games could come in handy here. The director of diversity could issue a decree that all those opposed to the military's discrimination wear jeans to a certain game, much like gay and lesbian groups' National Coming Out Day, when everyone in favor of coming out — and a whole lot of others — wears jeans. The catch would be that all the jeans would have to be different. Bonus points to anyone wearing Toughskins.

On non-football days, the diversity director could preach on a diverse variety of other topics. He or she could tell students to stop being racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, "ableist" and "lookist."

If only the diversity director could do something about budget cuts, UNL would be a perfect place. Perhaps, after 4 1/2 years, I am leaving too soon.

Of course, where I am headed, into what is non-euphemistically called the real world, there is no need for a diversity director.

In the real world, the "scholar-" prefix has been dropped from all titles, and people are called simply athletes, journalists, teachers and librarians. If they haven't gone to college, they are called janitors, cooks and thugs.

Of course, even in the real world, there are a few nasty euphemisms: Job cuts are called "hiring freezes." Slashing a budget is called "rightsizing."

That leads to my last recommendation:

I hope UNL liberalizes its graduate school admissions policy.

Pfanner is a senior news-editorial journalism and history major and a former Daily Nebraskan editor in chief.

STAFF OPINION

BET would help curb racism

By Kim Spurlock

There are probably many whites who wonder what the public reaction would be if there were a "White Entertainment Television" or an "Ivory" magazine. For one, many whites fail to realize that probably over 95 percent of television is "White Entertainment Television" and most of the magazines on most store racks are "Ivory"-type magazines. Therefore, the public reaction is very positive — well, the white public reaction, that is.

If I as a black person saw black magazines such as Ebony, Jet, Essence, Right On!, Black Beat, etc., on most store racks outside the black community and three or four black television shows on each network station every day, you wouldn't hear anything coming from my mouth but positiveness either.

Many whites may say that the primary audience of a so-called "pure white culture" network television would be white. Although that more than likely would be true, I believe some of these young minds need a little more maturing and education on cultural diversity, racism and discrimination. For one thing, Black Entertainment Television is not "pure" black television, and for another, more than half of BET viewers are of the white culture. So many whites should be asking their friends — if for a fact those that they know have ever seen BET — why they watch it.

That question is easy to answer. Some whites not only watch BET because it is entertaining, but also because it is a learning experience. The fact is, whites watch BET be-

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cause they want to watch it. Blacks watch BET not only because we want to, but also because we have to in order to learn more about our heritage and culture, because we simply can't get it anywhere else.

It's a shame that any whites, let alone white males, believe that Lincoln doesn't need BET. Whites have the "privilege" to learn about my African culture in school, if they choose. But as African-Americans, we cannot choose to not learn about the white culture in school; either we learn what the white people did and what the white people accomplished (to the white man's satisfaction), or we simply don't graduate or are deemed "uneducated" because we preferred to learn about African history rather than the white Eurocentric history we're taught.

Now that BET has come into effect and is helping to bring back the

pride of a people's culture and heritage, many white people want to obliterate it and deny blacks the privilege to choose to watch something that instills black pride.

The statement in the Daily Nebraskan by a white male saying, "The Cosby Show' demonstrates that a cross-ethnic show was found and the demand filled," ("Black television doesn't curb racism, DN, Dec. 6) was such an ignorant statement. That's just like saying, "Look, we did this for you blacks, what else do you want?" Damn, blacks always complain, don't they? One, two, or even three black television shows? ... We don't think so.

Many whites think BET won't curb racism. Maybe if BET were in Lincoln before many whites came here, they wouldn't have the ignorant attitudes that they now have. If Lincoln were to have BET, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Lincoln may not be the racist place that it now is.

Lincoln will eventually go down the drain simply because it doesn't believe the hype that cultural diversity is needed to end racism here. Until this community stops being ignorant to what Lincoln needs — until Lincoln parents teach their children the ignorance of racism — and until many white students demand and want to help diminish some of their ignorance by becoming culturally aware of what is needed here, Lincoln and this society as a whole will be worse than the hell hole it already is.

Spurlock is a sophomore broadcasting and news/editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan reporter.

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