

They're watching

Proposed bill brings back Big Brother

Last semester's squabbles should have been a warning: Big Brother is watching UNL.

A bill introduced this week by Sen. Ron Withem of Papillion shows that Nebraska legislators were more serious than curious when questioning university procedures in the fall.

After one professor's travel expenses were called into question, senators embarked on a study of faculty workloads to determine how professors spend their time and, among other items, their travel reimbursement money.

At issue is the role and mission of the university. Because UNL is a land-grant institution, its research and service roles must be balanced with its teaching role.

Evidently, that's not apparent to some senators.

When Withem spoke about the workload study in December, he seemed to agree.

"Frankly, some senators have a 'punch-the-time-clock' sort of mentality," he said.

Now, LB1044, which Withem introduced this week, proposes to make the time-clock mentality state law. The bill would require professors at all Nebraska colleges and universities to teach six credit hours a week.

While that may not seem a particularly heavy load, it could place exceptional demands on faculty members whose work is focused on research or service.

It also seems a bit premature.

The faculty workload study won't be finished until March. If the study shows unjustifiable amounts of faculty time spent on research, the problem should be addressed at the university, not state, level. Only if such efforts are ineffectual should legislation even be considered.

Another tidbit in the Withem bill hints at deeper motivations behind the workload study: One provision states, "All students are entitled to access to instruction offered by faculty . . . who are fluent in the English language."

While the bill's provision carries no means of enforcement, it does carry an eerie specter of last year's unsuccessful fluency bill, which would have required the state to develop an English fluency test for all college instructors, including graduate teaching assistants.

Last year's fluency bill drew an emotional response from foreign graduate teaching assistants and other UNL faculty members who were outraged by the apparent lack of concern for cultural diversity.

But when English fluency showed up last fall as an item to be examined in the workload study, UNL should have been forewarned.

Old squabbles die hard.

—J.L.P.

Shared ignorance of majority fatally flawed rationalization

Well, it was déjà vu all over again for me as I read painfully through Brian Allen's sincere defense of banning homosexuals from military service ("ROTC homosexual ban justified," DN, Jan. 14).

You just don't get it, do you, Brian? What would you think if the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's administration decided tomorrow to expel an entire group of students on an academically irrelevant basis (let's say People Named Brian, for argument's sake)? Let's say further that all these PNB's are good students, mind their own business and just want to get their degree and move on. But the 90 percent of us who are not named Brian, the non-Brian majority, don't like your type around here. For as you know, PNBs tend to stare at others in the restroom, and they can't be trusted around small children. So, I'm sorry Brian, but you'll have to pack up all your mechanical engineering texts and catch the next bus back to Hooterville. You understand, don't you? After all, I wouldn't exactly call the right to a college education "inalienable."

That was quick, wasn't it, Brian?

One paragraph and you're history. Sure, maybe you've dreamed about being a mechanical engineer ever since you got that first slide rule in grade school. And now you'll end up plowing quarter-sections like your dad instead. But it's all for the best, don't you see? You PNBs are kind of like those people in wheelchairs with twisted, atrophied limbs — we non-Brians feel uncomfortable when you're in the room and therefore we'll just make this room off-limits to all of your kind.

I hope you understand someday, Brian, how much pain your ignorance and hate and the ignorance and hate of all the other Brians in your Army National Guard company and in your straight-white-male world cause to lesbians, gays, women and other oppressed persons. You argue that the shared ignorance of the majority justifies its repression of the minority, and then you wonder if you'll be called a Nazi because of your beliefs. Well, if the shoe fits. . .

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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; Alan Phelps, opinion page editor; Kara Wells, managing editor; Roger Price, wire editor; Wendy Navratil, copy desk chief; Brian Shellito, cartoonist; Jeremy Fitzpatrick, senior

reporter.

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.



PAUL SOUDERS

Psychic predicts a zany 1992

The Bouncing Baby New Year has arrived, and before we're forced to change the diapers, I think now would be an excellent time to look to the year ahead. Hence, I present one of the true staples of lazy journalism: Predictions for the Year Ahead.

In true supermarket tabloid style, I have contacted my personal psychic, Madame Swami Huxtra, and below you'll find her month-by-month 1992 predictions for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska, President George Bush — especially George Bush — and the world at large.

● January: In a sensational and highly publicized end-of-the-month trial featuring gratuitously graphic descriptions of mutilation and dismemberment, confessed Milwaukee killer Jeffrey Dahmer is found guilty of 15 counts of murder, claiming insanity. A simple, two-word statement is issued with the verdict: "Well, DUH."

● February: Presidential hopeful Sen. Bob Kerrey foils all his election chances when at a gala luncheon he tells an off-color joke about an elderly disabled Hispanic Texan, thus alienating four enormous potential voting blocks.

No one quite knows what the joke itself is, but the punchline is reputed to be: "I do that too. Does that make me an elderly disabled Hispanic Texan?"

● March: A second trade delegation to the Far East attempts a new ploy to win Japanese consumer concessions, alternately dropping to its knees to beg, "Please, Mighty Asian Industrial Giants, buy our big, ugly cars," and pointing accusing fingers at the Japanese, saying, "Yeah, well, if you DON'T buy our cars, we won't buy your stupid rice."

The stalled talks end as Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca storms out, shouting, "I'm going home, and I'm taking my ball with me!"

● April: UNL becomes the center of world attention as contact with extraterrestrial beings takes place in the Willa Cather Native Grasses Garden. The mysterious aliens, apparently coming from a planet dominated by non-Euclidian geometry, reveal themselves as the secret archi-



After only four hours of heated debate, the Mideast delegates agree that spaghetti is being served far too often at the talks, and the group decides to deliberate in six months on more suitable entrees.

ects of Love Library. Amid an uproar of student complaints, the aliens insist that in the fifth dimension the building really DOES make sense.

● May: UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier, after months of sweeping structural changes to student and faculty organizations, unveils his bold new plan for the university. He proposes to annex Poland, the Sudetenland, the Rhineland and Cass County. Critics warn of the dangers of becoming bogged down in a land war in Central Europe, but the chancellor insists that "the Sudetenland is already part of UNL, historically."

● June: Mideast peace talks resume promisingly after months of procedural deadlock. The highly divisive Seating Arrangement issue is settled as the Palestinian delegation agrees to trade places with the Syrian delegation every alternate meeting, with the condition that Yitzhak Shamir promises to quit throwing spitballs.

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more suitable entrees.

Secretary of State James Baker hails the compromise as a "break-through into a new era of people here maybe behaving more sensibly."

● July: Gov. Ben Nelson wants Nebraska declared a Federal Disaster Area after crops and property are devastated by hailstones "the size of big dogs."

● August: The Daily Nebraskan offices are gutted by fire in what turns out to be a failed attempt to generate news. In the paper's defense, the editor of the DN says, "August is a pretty slow news month. Nothing ever happens in August."

● September: Fall semester drop/add flows smoothly and quickly, with the majority of students getting most of their requested classes. Then you wake up.

● October: Owing to inclement weather, Halloween is not only postponed this year, but actually called off. In a public press release, Mom is quoted as saying, "You're too old for trick-or-treating, anyway."

● November: Scant hours before polls open on the third, President Bush declares war on a tiny and unpopular third-world dictatorship. Critics broadly denounce the action, pointing to Bush's poor track record on domestic and economic issues.

Bush issues a formal statement, saying, "Economy? hell! Who needs an economy when we can whoop ass like this?!"

The war ends 93 minutes after it begins — just enough time to spawn commemorative collector's plates — and Bush defeats Democratic nominee Whatshisface in 49 states.

● December: Two words throw the nation into a bad, year-end panic: "President Quayle."

Of course, Madame Swami Huxtra has been known to be wrong from time-to-time. In '84 she declared firmly, "This Mondale guy's a shoe-in for the Oval Office." But I still have — as do the majority of Americans — complete faith in the exaggerated claims of self-important hustlers of the paranormal, and Madame Swami Huxtra is one of the finest.

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LETTER POLICY

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

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space avail-

able. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's

name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

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