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Too little, too late

Former UNL professor deserves apology

The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee's decision was too little to satisfy former UNL professor Joyce Joyce, and it came too late for the university to hold on to a quality instructor.

The Academic Senate committee ruled Sept. 16 that Joyce's rights were violated in circumstances stemming from a grade dispute last spring.

Joyce, who is now associate director of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center at Chicago State University, wants — and deserves — more: an apology.

"I have asked for an apology, which I have not gotten," Joyce said. "I have asked for an apology from the English department and from the dean, and I'm not satisfied yet."

Five students appealed grades they received in Joyce's 1991 summer pre-session class on Afro-American Literature. Two of the students were awarded higher grades in the course after going through an appeals process.

But somewhere along the line, the English department's appeals committee forgot to inform Joyce about one of the appeals.

Helen Moore, who was acting chairwoman of the Academic Senate committee when Joyce filed her grievance, said that when English department officials were asked about the incident, they replied that the student's appeal was "so hateful that they decided not to show it to her."

That was not reason enough.

Joyce came to UNL as a full professor. She had 17 years of experience teaching college-level courses under her belt. And she was a grown woman.

She could have handled a little hostility.

Joyce's rights clearly were violated. NU Board of Regents policy states that Joyce should have been given at least a summary of the letter so she would have a chance to testify before a grade appeals committee.

Instead, her input was neglected. And, after that and a string of events on campus, she left.

It's a shame UNL has to lose a quality professor who actually challenged her students intellectually instead of spoon-feeding them.

Joyce was well-known on campus for her teaching style, which had a tendency to make some students squirm in their seats. Nearly half of Joyce's summer class complained to the ombudsman about her style and methodology.

But a professor's right to teach a class as he or she sees fit is something that needs to be protected. Some facts are a bitter pill to swallow, and some students would rather argue with a professor than accept a different viewpoint.

Joyce admits the atmosphere in the pre-session class was hostile.

"When students challenge your knowledge in a classroom, I don't respond by turning the other cheek," she said. "I don't see anything wrong with telling that student they don't know what they're talking about, particularly when they're being hostile."

Joyce shouldn't be penalized for how she teaches. And she shouldn't have had to worry about the university violating her rights as a professor.

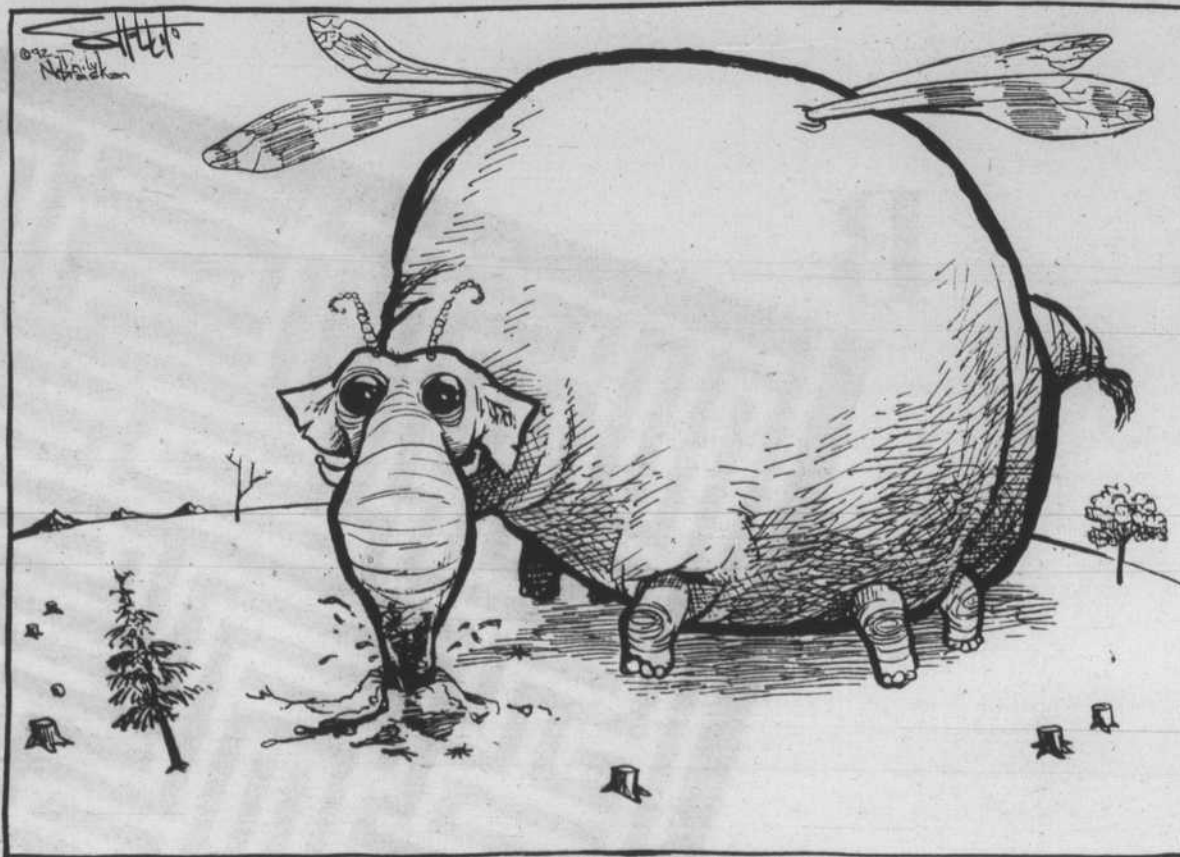
Academic freedom is the right of a faculty member to pursue teaching and scholarship without fear of arbitrary interference. All professors should be guaranteed that right, and they should all be upset until Joyce gets the apology she deserves.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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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 available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. 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.



REPUBLICANUS ENERGEUS PARASITAS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Rusty horn'

The "conservatives" continue to toot their rusty horn in the "Daily Inkwaste." UNL a liberal campus? Whoa! This is a most curious statement. Perhaps if Jeff Hankins ("Conservative on a liberal campus," DN, Sept. 17) would visit campuses at Berkeley, Madison or Ann Arbor, he might have a different opinion.

Hankins' unconvincing argument in favor of "conservatism," however, is the larger problem. Hankins belittles his readers by purporting to "understand" all there is to know about "liberalism" and "conservatism," while his readers know nothing. Hankins' condescending viewpoint betrays the weakness of his argument.

I contend that conservative and liberal are meaningless labels. Social Security, civil rights acts, Head Start, minimum wage and many other programs are part of the so-called "liberal policy." Few conservatives would discard these. On the other hand, few liberals would argue with the desire for economic growth.

As for the conservative agenda, while the welfare system servicing the poor of this country needs reform, the wealthy receive the largest share of welfare in the form of tax loopholes, the Reagan tax cut of the 1980s and various government contracts.

Hankins would have us believe that any job opportunity available to the poor is a viable alternative to welfare. Often poor welfare recipients are undereducated single women with children for whom many jobs, especially the service sector jobs created under Reagan, would hardly provide a living wage. Child care alone drains most of that income.

Under conservative leadership, welfare rolls have increased. The industrial sector has continued to decline as jobs have gone to Mexico and elsewhere. Though conservatives constantly rail against big government, under Reagan and Bush the federal government has grown faster than at any other time in our nation's history, and the national debt has tripled.

It appears to me that the only agenda the conservatives have is the exploited fear of "monolithic communism." Now they have turned to welfare mothers, homosexuals, lawyers and anyone considered anti-family.

Thank goodness a history of free-thinking, pragmatic, liberal readers have acted to promote social justice and the nation's general welfare.

Brian S. Butler
graduate student
history

Veil of Christianity

I didn't know Jed Smock was thrown in the fountain, but I'd like to put my bit in.

If Smock's personal life was so great, he would be at home having one instead of trying to impress a bunch of college students. I believe his actual goal is to anger enough people to get thrown into the fountain. "Oh poor little preacher, poor little persecuted Christian, don't you have a right to speak?"

Of course he has the right to speak — he may even have the right to tenaciously antagonize a large group of people, and for that the consequences are self-evident.

Is Smock preaching? Christianity is not a persecuted religion in the

— 66 —
If Smock's personal life was so great, he would be at home having one instead of trying to impress a bunch of college students.
— 99 —

United States. Fascism, under a thin veil of "Christianity" is unacceptable, and for good reason.

This Christian's rhetoric is similar to the mind-set that led to the death of 6 million Jews in World War II, and of 100,000 Muslims in Bosnia presently. Should we have tolerated Hitler? Is ethnic cleansing a point of view?

Where is this law that tolerance is always good? This is a rigid point of view, un-Saul Alinsky. It is time to wake up from the conditions of the '60s and see the world right now: threatened by fascism and scapegoating.

I am a Christian and a proud American. I am losing sympathy for people who abuse and insult these concepts. If someone wants to insult the public and slap a woman to boot, he must have a lot of faith in other people's tolerance.

Nicole Montagne
sophomore
pre-forestry

Lincoln Christian

I am a respected business woman and member of the Lincoln Christian Church. I wanted to personally respond to the recent articles and advertisement about my church because I was once in the same shoes as the students of this campus, and I made the wrong choice.

Many times over a period of seven years I was invited to a related church, but I listened to scare rumors and would not go near it. During those years I compromised the morals my parents instilled in me, and my life degenerated into empty partying. Oh, I had good grades, an office in my

sorority, a good job at graduation and later graduate school — everything most students would define as success. By my friends' standards I even looked extraordinarily moral. Still, I attended churches the whole time, and none ever confronted my drinking problem or helped fill the emptiness I felt.

After seven years, full of suspicion, I went to a Bible Talk. I was deeply moved by what I heard, understanding for the first time what Jesus did for me on the cross. It took a long time for me to set aside my suspicions and join the church, but I did. I can't tell you how often I've wished I had joined when I first was invited. There was a lot of pain and shame in those years. Worst of all, I found that the rumors that kept me out for so long were lies.

I urge everyone concerned — students, parents, reporters, administrators and friends — to look more closely at what you have been told. I believe well-meaning people are accepting and passing on rumors today, as I once did, because they haven't really looked into the facts. Students are being urged to be careful consumers of religion; I would urge everyone to be careful consumers of information. Serious attention has been given to wild and irresponsible rumors.

Parents, I understand your concerns. Of course the charges, both printed and spoken, are going to scare you. Take the time to check out both sides of the story before you form an opinion; it is easy to assume the worst is true, just in case.

Reporters and administrators, do your job. Be sure what you say is true. There are numerous false statements in the articles and administration pronouncements I've seen that you could discover if you checked them out thoroughly. Too much is at stake here. People I care about are being slandered and harassed because of this carelessness, and others who would join us are staying away as I once did.

Students, this is part of your university education. You should already be learning that good people can be mistaken, newspapers are fallible, and the majority is often wrong. Now is the time to develop your own convictions based on fact — and stand on them. That's what a university is all about.

Since I joined the church eight years ago, I completed my MBA with a 3.8 grade point average — better than my undergraduate average. I have won two highly prestigious awards for my work. The church has spurred me on to greater, not lesser accomplishments.

Katie Neuschaefer
Lincoln