

Daily Nebraskan

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EDITORIAL

Do unto others

UNL needs to cure, not ignore, racism

Racism is one of those things you can't always prove. It is a gray area in a world of colors. It is felt, but not always seen or understood. At times, it is unintentional, but it is always painful.

And it is here on campus. It exists — whether it's as subtle as a cold stare or as blatant as a prejudiced remark in or out of the classroom.

Try as they might, the university's students, faculty and administrators cannot deny the fact that racism exists at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

About 100 students participated in a rally against racism yesterday at Broyhill Fountain. Students encouraged their peers to come together, unite and look past racial boundaries. They shared their feelings on instances of racism at UNL.



Brian Shellito/DN

Their words should not be ignored.

Just because race riots haven't broken out on campus doesn't mean racism is non-existent. This semester alone has brought forth evidence of it at UNL — most recently, in the investigation of Candice Harms.

After being told that Harms was seen talking to an African-American man in class on the day of her disappearance, police officers singled out the five African-American men in the class for question-

ing because of their race.

Earlier in the semester, results of the UNL Racial Climate Survey offered documented proof of students' negative feelings about the atmosphere for minority students campuswide.

Many other incidents of racism have undoubtedly gone undocumented but not unnoticed by minority students.

But skin color is not the only basis for prejudices at UNL. Students with disabilities and homosexuals are discriminated against also.

Richards Hall, despite improvements, remains inaccessible to students who use wheelchairs; ROTC, despite university policies against discrimination, remains off limits to homosexual students.

Women, minorities, people with disabilities and homosexuals are all significantly underrepresented at upper levels of administration at UNL. The university is overwhelmingly governed by middle-aged, middle-class white males.

This lack of diversity extends beyond the bounds of the administration and faculty. Minority students find themselves alone in classrooms, student groups and social situations.

It is a feeling non-minority students may never experience. But it is something they must understand.

All students need to take advantage of every opportunity to understand one another. Attend rallies, speeches and programs that focus on minority affairs. But most importantly, take time to listen.

Ending racism isn't a complicated matter. It goes back to the most simple rule even a child could understand: Do unto others.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. 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 regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish 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.

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PST. GET PICTURES.



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KIMBERLY SPURLOCK

First-timer lives voter's nightmare

Election day is over. But for me, Election '92 will remind me of one thing: If I'm ever out of town for another election, I'll have to get an absentee ballot.

I forgot to get one in time this election year. I felt obligated to drive to my hometown, Omaha, and vote, because this was my first election. I didn't want you-know-who to win.

Driving down Interstate 80, I saw a car with a "Bush '92" bumper sticker.

"What is going through her mind?" I asked myself chuckling, as I drove past the happy-looking woman. She must be on her way to vote, I thought.

A few minutes later I drove past a car with a "Ross Perot '92" poster on the back door window.

"He has got to be crazy," I said out loud as I stared at the driver with glaring eyes.

Perot didn't really want to be president.

If he were elected, Perot would think of his presidency as a hobby. He spent millions of dollars on advertisements — more than he would have made as president for two terms.

Perot enjoyed messing with President Bush and Bill Clinton, though. Perot needed a vacation from work anyway. I mean, if he could run a big business, then he should be able to run a government that's making less money than he is, right?

If Perot had won, I would have ostracized myself from this country — or died — whichever came first.

Well, upon entering Omaha, I decided to go straight to the school that served as my polling place.

I walked into the school and straight to the tables to receive my ballot.

A woman handed me the ballot and directed me toward the voting booths.

I went inside and filled in the oval dots. At that moment, I felt as if my vote really counted. But at that moment, it didn't.

When I finished voting, I returned the ballot to the woman who then thanked me for taking time to vote.

That's it? They just trust that everybody will say who they are, and that's it?

"Do I need to show you some kind of identification or something?" I asked.

The woman looked a little embarrassed and directed me over to another woman who had the list of the registered voters in that district.

"Your name?" she asked.

"Kimberly Spurlock," I answered. As the woman glanced through the names and past S-P-U, she asked me if I was a registered voter.

"Well, yes," I said looking confused. I mean, I wouldn't have come to vote if I wasn't registered, I thought to myself.

She couldn't find me on her list.

Great. I drive all the way to Omaha from Lincoln on bad tires in an effort to not be considered a contributor to the failing of the United States; I attempt to cast my vote and this is what happens.

"Where do you live?" the woman asked me. I gave her my permanent address, and waited for a reply.

"Well, we don't go past 30th Street," she said.

I lived on 31st Street.

The woman gave me a number to call to see where my district's voting places were. But after hearing continuous busy signals, I decided to go by my aunt's house to chat for awhile.

When I explained to her my rea-

sons of being in Omaha, she asked who I voted for.

"She probably voted for Perot," her husband said laughing. Yeah, right.

We talked for awhile, and I told her my problem. She then told me where my grandfather voted . . . and I was soon on my way to King Science Center.

As I arrived at the center and walked inside, I saw neither polling booths nor voters.

This better be the right place. I was filled with frustration.

"No, I'm sorry, you don't vote here," a woman said.

I explained to the woman that my aunt said my grandfather voted here. "No, he must have voted at Martin Luther King Elementary," she said.

Again I was off to another school. That night my luck had just about run out.

"You're not listed here," yet another woman said.

By this time I had felt like giving up. But I couldn't. I had some strange feeling that my vote was the most important vote of them all. If I didn't vote, Bush would win.

I called my other grandfather and asked him if I received a registration card in the mail. He said no and asked me when I registered to vote.

I told him in high school.

He then told me that I was supposed to vote where he voted because I was living with him at the time.

Relieved, I drove to my fourth and final destination and received my ballot.

I guess by then Clinton had already won. But I still felt my vote counted.

Spurlock is a junior news editorial and broadcasting major, a Daily Nebraskan night news editor and a columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Racism

I am writing in response to Sen. Ernie Chambers' allegations against the police department. This is a really good example of how Chambers blows things out of proportion. Racism is a big problem, but calling this event racism — please!

Candice Harms has been missing for more than a month and the police are following any and all leads they have. Candice was seen talking to an African-American male in her class before she disappeared so the police are contacting the African-American males in her class in hopes of maybe getting some information to help solve the case.

Yes, the police are singling out

these men because they are black. However, Harms was seen talking to a black male. If you want to call that racism, then the United Negro College Fund is also a racist group because it only gives scholarships to African-Americans. This group singles out blacks.

If Harms was seen talking to a blond white male, and the police contacted all people in that group, which I'm sure they would, would Chambers still act this narrow-mindedly? Probably not. You probably would not have even heard about it.

The police have a hard enough job as it is without idiotic allegations such as these. Also, Chambers wants Jim Griesen, UNL vice chancellor for stu-

dent affairs, to resign because of his response to this issue. Please!

I'm sure many voters and students are very impressed with Chambers' professional approach to his job, such as making things hard for budget requests for UNL, for example, if Chambers doesn't get answers. What a grown-up way to handle a job, especially when you are a leader in the state! I quit acting like that around age 7.

To the parents of Harms: Our hopes are with you. Chambers, I think it would be best for you to resign and concentrate on easier things like your wardrobe.

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