

Daily
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EDITORIAL

Dead end

ASUN efforts come too late for action

Students looking to right the wrongs done to them by professors who violate dead week policies may hit a dead end if they try to solve their problems now.

Association of Students of the University of Nebraska Sen. Leslie Strong has been appointed to handle complaints from students about dead week policy violations.

During dead week, which starts Monday, professors are prohibited from giving most exams and assigning papers.

Strong will look over students' complaints and contact professors who violate the rules of dead week. Strong said no complaints had been filed yet, but she expected to get some next week.

But there is one problem.

"Unfortunately, it's kind of after the fact," Strong said. "I can't fix it this semester, but I can contact the professors and tell them not to repeat the violation next semester."

Instead, students should have gone directly to the source before now. Professors will listen to complaints. If they don't, UNL's ombudsperson has the power and authority to find a solution to the problem.

Students need to be aware of dead week policies before the last two weeks of the semester. ASUN should be commended for placing classified ads in the student and faculty newspapers to inform people about the rules.

But UNL students should take the responsibility on themselves to know their rights and the proper channels to follow to make sure those rights are protected.

Child support

Bill would guarantee college opportunity

Not every idea about educational funding in the Legislature is bad. In fact, the bill Sen. Chris Beutler of Lincoln is thinking about resubmitting could be very beneficial to some students.

The bill, killed last year because of higher priority issues, would require non-custodial parents to keep making child-support payments until the child was 22, if the child was a full-time student. Now, non-custodial parents have no obligation to support or help fund a child's education once the child reaches 19.

This year's bill may not be identical though. Beutler is considering some good revisions to last year's version. One revision would have the money sent to the school rather than the custodial parent. That would be more appropriate and palatable for non-custodial parents. They can know exactly where their money is going.

The idea is not without its faults however.

Some parents choose not to pay for their children's education at all. If the state requires a non-custodial parent to help pay for their children's education, it should guarantee that amount is matched by the custodial parent.

And some non-custodial parents continue to dodge child-support payments. That problem must be controlled before the state can expect to force them to fund a child's education.

A number of custodial parents have approached Beutler, he said, saying they felt their ex-spouses were not making a fair contribution to their children's education.

But Beutler said many non-custodial parents don't object to helping pay for education and don't think the bill is necessary. If passed, however, the children of parents who don't plan on helping pay for school would have a better shot at an education. After all, the parents' relationship with their child is not a financial obligation that should end once the child reaches a certain age.

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.

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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Star Trek

Given a choice, I would much rather live in the world portrayed by "Star Trek: The Next Generation," a true meritocracy with an active, fair ethical framework, than the finger-pointing, politically correct dystopia advocated by Krejci ("Star Trek," DN, Nov. 30). "Star Trek" may be a visual portrayal for our society, but it certainly is not a portrayal of our society, any more than westerns are. Krejci's analysis of the show is fatally flawed in this respect.

The idea that a "white male conspiracy" is somehow in control of the Federation is ridiculous. Watch any of the shows where Picard is communicating with his superiors at Starfleet Command. A majority of the admirals in Starfleet are women, minorities or aliens and are portrayed as highly competent and loyal. A large number of societies the Enterprise has encountered are governed by women.

To denigrate the acting talents of the blacks on the show by accusing them of hiding behind masks is, at best, absurd. Geordi LaForge became chief engineer of the Enterprise by his superior technological skills compared with the white male who filled the role in the first season.

LaForge is not hidden behind his visor any more than a blind person is hidden behind a seeing-eye dog or a paralyzed person behind a wheelchair. He is portrayed as a shining example of the ability of people to overcome their disabilities, thus serving as a doubly effective role model. Michael Dorn, the black actor who plays Lt. Worf, may wear a lot of makeup, but not to hide him from the audience. Dorn plays a Klingon; he does not play a black man dressed up as a Klingon. His makeup is no more a mask than Spock's Vulcan ears.

I have already discussed the large number of women in the command structure of Starfleet, but Krejci's attack on Crusher as an example of a stereotypical, caregiver role deserves refutation. Since when is a female medical a stereotype? Entry of women into the professional ranks of our society, whether as doctors, engineers, lawyers or business people is to be applauded, not attacked.

Crusher's staff also includes male nurses, a further example of the "ismless" society "Star Trek" tries to portray. Both Crusher and Deanna Troi, the ship's counselor, carry the rank of commander, outranking everyone on the ship except Picard and Riker.

Krejci also mentions Wesley Crusher as a further example of the so-called white-male conspiracy and claims there are no equivalent female, minority or alien counterparts. I direct Krejci to the episode where Wesley first applies for Starfleet Academy — and gets beaten out by an

alien. Or the show where an error in judgment on Wesley's part almost costs him his career. Or the recent show wherein Alexander, the Klingon son of Worf, helps save the ship from piracy. Crusher is neither perfect nor unique.

"Star Trek" is getting a lot less credit from recent writers than it deserves. In their zest to deconstruct yet another set of ideas, they are totally missing the goal of the show. We live in a flawed world, amidst racism, sexism and violent crime.

The point of "Star Trek" is not to directly address the woes of today as if it were a fairy tale or futuristic morality play — it shows us a society without such evils. The show's goal is to paint a picture of what is possible — to point us in the direction of what our lives and society could be like, if we could learn to let go of the division, the hate, the prejudice and the finger-pointing and get down to the task of living and working together to make life better for everyone.

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Sexual harassment

I agree with Sam Kepfield that without a practical understanding of the nature of sexual harassment and assault, society and the law can victimize men as a group. Of course, I also agree this is wrong.

However, Kepfield's column, as usual, lacked follow-through logic, as well as examples of his main point — proof. He did not cite any of the proofs a woman could provide in a situation where there are no witnesses and where often there is no physical contact between victim and perpetrator. It is this very nature of the situation that encourages sexual harassers and assailants.

Kepfield's column was written from the perspective of a potential victim of false accusation. He says sexual harassment should be stopped because it reflects badly on men. In no way does he indicate such crimes should be stopped because they injure the victims.

While Kepfield clearly delineates Paula Coughlin as a good accuser and

Anita Hill as a bad one, he offers only the timeliness of their accounts as the distinction between them.

I must leave it to persons experienced in counseling the victims of rape, incest and harassment to explain to Kepfield the gross ignorance of this criterion. Except for Coughlin, not one of the women Kepfield mentioned came forward on her own or ever made a formal accusation.

Each woman simply told what happened to her — or what she contends happened to her: an attack on her dignity and physical integrity by a public figure.

Kepfield obviously is not that open minded. His response to Rape/Sexual Assault Awareness Week was to write a misinformed and insensitive column where self-interest was once again his sole motivation. Meanwhile, the mistrust between men and women continues as so-called innocent persons like Kepfield insist upon maintaining an atmosphere where sexual harassment and assault can flourish.

Conservatives

Conservatives are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in the pages of the Daily Nebraskan, contrary to Jon Bruning's challenge ("Conservatives, come out of closet," DN, Nov. 16). We just don't take the DN seriously. There is no question in my mind that the editorial staff at the DN has an extremely liberal agenda and does not merely intend to publish an informative and entertaining newspaper. The gaudy excesses paraded in Diversions each Thursday are proof enough of that. I admire Sam Kepfield for submitting such thoughtful and powerful columns to people who appear to think of him simply as their token conservative viewpoint.

If we conservatives are to win the war of morality, it will not be through skillful rhetoric, loud demonstrations or political clout. It will be because we truly love our country and our fellow man and are totally devoted to the truth. It will be because we are willing to carry more of the burden on our own shoulders instead of blaming everyone else.

It will be through the sincerity of our concern and because others can find no contradictions in our lives. Moreover, this battle is a spiritual one and as such it will only be won on our knees. May the frayed fabric of our country's morality be healed before we reap the full consequences of our actions.

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