

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

No Show

Speak now, or forever hold your peace

We saw the posters, the advertisements, the newspaper stories. They invited us — come one, come all — to East Campus Tuesday to tell Chancellor Graham Spanier how we felt about his vision for UNL.

Spanier's Strategic Agenda states that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will build a better future through cooperation between faculty, staff and students.

So he held a forum to seek input from these groups and from the community. Faculty showed up. Staff showed up. A handful of reporters showed up.

Everyone came, but the students.

This is a university, and a university's first responsibility is always to its students — past, present and future. We help fund this institution through our tuition and tax dollars.

We are the first to complain when we feel we're not getting our money's worth — when we're forced to wait in lines, when our programs or our parking places are threatened.

But if we expect UNL to meet our needs, we need to become a part of the decision-making process instead of getting angry after decisions are already made.

When administrators request our input, we should give it willingly. We should give it even when they don't.

Spanier asked for our opinions. He hung signs and set up chairs. And we didn't care enough to show up.

In the future, UNL's vision will again be reworked. More decisions will be made. Let's hope that next time, Spanier still cares enough to ask.

At a standstill

Fiji sanctions must be enforced quickly

At the end of last semester, the judicial board levied sanctions to ensure that Phi Gamma Delta would never be the same again.

Some of the sanctions were tough; Fiji was put on social probation and ordered to reduce its membership. The fraternity would have a university-employed resident assistant. All members would complete hours of community service and alcohol-education programs.

The sanctions were ordered to show this fraternity and the rest of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that hazing and alcohol are not allowed on this campus. And they were ordered to prevent a tragedy similar to the one that occurred on Nov. 3 when Fiji pledge Jeffrey Knoll fell from a third-story window.

The sanctions were to begin this semester.

So far, the fraternity is under social probation and that's about it. A resident assistant has not been chosen. Community service and alcohol-education programming has not begun. Current members have not been interviewed.

The Fiji house was allowed to stay on campus because its members agreed to and even suggested some of these sanctions.

The semester is new and some of the sanctions may take some time to implement. Other sanctions are being unnecessarily held up while Fiji nationals bicker with university officials about wording.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen said many of the sanctions would be applied in the coming weeks. Firm and quick enforcement of every sanction is needed to protect the strength of the judicial board's decision.

Although a new semester has begun, with new problems and challenges, the Fiji house cannot ignore or forget these sanctions. We will not soon forget what happened to Jeffrey Knoll.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1994 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.



KIMBERLY SPURLOCK

No getting used to guns, death

In the past six years I have lost many of my friends and relatives to gangs, guns and violence.

For many years, I have heard community leaders in my North Omaha neighborhood cry out for help. But their cries have fallen upon deaf ears.

Although the ignoring of urban America is a great problem, this column is not going to be about what mainstream white society is doing to blacks, but what we are doing to ourselves.

In a nation where we once came together to fight against the injustices brought upon us, why are we now doing to each other what the Ku Klux Klan did to our forefathers?

It used to be that we knew who our enemy was. We knew we were safe among one another. Today, however, statistics show that more than 95 percent of blacks murdered by gunshots were killed by other blacks. We're our own enemy.

Many brothers and sisters think carrying a gun, selling drugs or committing acts of violence will give them a sense of love, power, wealth or respect — something they may not have received at home or at school.

"The American Dream" has tricked them into believing they can obtain these status symbols only the quick and easy way.

We rarely hear of the famous actor or billionaire who toiled through back-breaking labor before making it to the top. We never hear about how hard the star athlete practiced day after day, trying to perfect just one move or shot. And we never hear about the obstacles that he or she went through in order to make it to the collegiate level, much less the pros.

All we hear about are the quick success stories. The media leads us to believe that famous actors and rappers such as Ice Cube moved straight from the womb to instant stardom, like magic.

By perpetuating these non-truths, the media encourages youths to reach for their own "instant stardom."



Holding my breath, my heart beating like a drum, I prayed that the victim of yet another drive-by was a stranger and not a friend or relative.

Brothers and sisters must stop glorifying human nature's negative sides and begin celebrating the positive aspects of our African heritage.

I can remember back in high school, coming home and heading straight for the television set to watch the news. Holding my breath, my heart beating like a drum, I prayed that the victim of yet another drive-by was a stranger and not a friend or relative.

Last summer I visited with a friend, Dennis Evans.

I saw him at a grocery store for the first time in more than a year. We were happy to see each other, but talked only a few moments. I was in a hurry and figured I'd see him before I went back to school. Well, I did see him one last time — at his funeral.

In passing, I heard words probably not out of the ordinary from some gang members at Dennis' funeral.

They spoke of taking revenge on whoever killed their "homeboy." But revenge only complicates an already difficult problem.

Others at his funeral acknowledged that the fighting was getting out of hand. We need people who want to stop the fighting to come together and find solutions to end the violence.

Soon the summer was over, and I was on my way back to Lincoln. I was finally able to stop mourning Dennis' death and start searching for ways to help fight against guns and violence. But in October, I received another phone call.

My roommate called me at my boyfriend's place and told me to call my mother.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"It's Tevon," she answered. I knew from the tone of her voice that Tevon was dead, but I, asked anyway. She replied with a slow, "Yes."

I couldn't control my tears. I had known Tevon Graves for more than 15 years. Tevon was a student at Grambling University in Louisiana. He was studying physical therapy so he could provide for his longtime girlfriend and their 2-month-old daughter, Ali Simone.

Tevon was shot several times in various places on his body, including his chest — all because of an argument over a car.

Because of a car, Ali has to grow up without a daddy.

I found myself back in Omaha again to pay my last respects to another friend.

I have spent my life wondering if another one of my brothers or sisters will be killed by another black person — or maybe, will I be next?

Over the years, I got used to the gunshots in my neighborhood. They were so prevalent that I no longer even looked down the street to see what was going on.

I have now realized that it is destructive to "get used to" anything negative and deadly. We should not get used to death, to murder, to violence among our own people.

I know I never will.

Spurlock is a senior broadcasting, news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

P.S. Write Back

The Daily Nebraskan wants to hear from you. If you want to voice your opinion about an article that appears in the newspaper, let us know. Just write a brief letter to the editor and sign it (don't forget your student ID number) and mail it to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 'R' Street, Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, or stop by the office in the basement of the Nebraska Union and visit with us. We're all ears.