

Daily
Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

Who cares?

ASUN wastes time with pointless bills

The new Association of University of Nebraska-Lincoln senate demonstrated Wednesday night that it is prepared to follow in the footsteps of past senates.

It ended its meeting with a pointless bill, submitted in part by ASUN President Andrew Loudon, supporting Nebraska native Ted Sorensen for a job as White House legal counsel.

Whether or not Sorensen deserves the job is not at issue.

With the many issues facing students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, surely Loudon could find better ways to spend his time serving student needs.

Surely he could be authoring bills that actually relate to UNL rather than trying his hand at advising the White House.

ASUN's already limited responsibilities do not include hiring advice for President Clinton.

It is hard enough for ASUN to make a difference here at UNL. They shouldn't waste students' time writing bills that will inevitably end up in a White House recyclable paper container.

Why would President Clinton even care what ASUN thinks about who he should hire as the White House lawyer? Why would most UNL students care who Clinton hires as the White House lawyer?

At the same meeting, ASUN officially caved in on the Academic Success Center and made a half-hearted attempt to reduce the blow of basketball ticket price increases.

ASUN should not make this a habit. The organization already lacks legitimacy in the minds of most students. Writing silly bills won't help matters.

Do something

Slaughter in Gorazde must be stopped

"This is hell, horror and terror. This is not war anymore. This is slaughter, massacre."

With those words, Dr. Alija Begic defined the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Begic is the director of the main hospital in the town of Gorazde. The Associated Press reported that a rocket had slammed into the hospital, killing at least 10 people and wounding 15.

Transmitting his plea by ham radio, Begic begged for help. "Please do something that we stay alive," he said. "We cannot stand this anymore."

A U.N. spokesman said aid workers reported that 44 people had been killed in Gorazde since midnight Tuesday. That raises the count to 389 dead and 1,324 wounded since the Serb assault on the city began three weeks ago.

The Daily Nebraskan has published countless editorials on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. But we continue to address the issue because it still matters. People are still being slaughtered like livestock in cities like Gorazde. The killing must be stopped.

To understand what life is like in Gorazde, imagine if tanks circled Lincoln and began constantly shelling the city. Imagine if troops were firing rockets into Lincoln General Hospital.

The United States does not spend billions each year on weapons for nothing. President Clinton should take stronger steps to stop the genocide in the former Yugoslavia.

What can we do? Give a damn. Care. Write our Congressmen. Do something — anything.

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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Spanier

In response to Jeffrey Robb's article (DN, April 20, 1994) about Regent Robert Allen's views about Chancellor Graham Spanier, I am afraid that I agree with Regent Allen.

While Allen no doubt adheres to a much more conservative agenda than I (I do not, for example, see the hiring of an athletic director as a particularly successful or significant accomplishment at an institution that is intended solely for the pursuit of knowledge, and I cannot appreciate the undertones of back-forty bigotry that I interpret, perhaps unfairly, from his comments), I still find myself agreeing with the general criticisms directed at Spanier.

I am in complete agreement with the concept of an open-minded, free-thinking and liberal academic environment: If an individual cannot pursue his or her own particular course of happiness in that environment, then where else can he or she?

I maintain, however, that Spanier appears to enjoy non-issues or issues of currently marginal significance primarily for the purposes of self-aggrandizement.

Open recognition of gay rights and acknowledging diversity, for example, are noble and unquestionably necessary acts in a modern and civilized society (granted, one may argue whether those terms are applicable to our own).

Nonetheless, they are accomplished with relative ease under the guise of "political correctness" and within the relatively safe (and self-reinforcing) confines of academic administration.

Moreover — most important of all — I argue that these and like issues are rendered nearly moot when the integrity of the institution at large is at stake, as it is so clearly at UNL. There is currently a grave crisis at all levels of academia, not only at UNL, but nationwide. Universities lack direction, vision, faculty positions, enrollment, educational effectiveness and funding in various proportions.

Feeble, self-centered, misguided and often conspicuously overpaid administrators, combined with the corporate-entrepreneurial mind-set and the progressive "dumbification" of our society and all its institutions may lead to the eventual extinction of the American intellect (or what now passes for it).

I have returned (temporarily) to this university after an absence of several years. I see pleasing cosmetic changes, but I also sense that little has been done to stem the flood tide of mediocrity that sweeps the system clean of improvements. The quality of education continues to decrease, as does faculty morale.

Fees and tuition (as well as football tickets) command a higher price than ever, while outstate yokels and slack-jawed urbanites alike, otherwise ignorant of the university, clamor yet louder for the deification of Tom Osborne.

It is the same comedy of errors that it was when I left (to attend better state universities) in 1988, and probably worse.

Why does it seem impossible for the university administration to effect significant and meaningful changes? Probably because it is just too difficult to do so while simultaneously self-aggrandizing and deftly grandstanding in hopes of garnering a higher-paying position at (dare I say again) a better institution.

Perhaps I should not single out Spanier for abuse — indeed he is no less effective than his predecessor.

However, I strongly disagree with what I see as the insidious concealment of the real issues. Perhaps universities in general would be better off hiring administrators from the swelling ranks of bitter, but conscientious, underemployed Ph.D.s the system has turned out.

I, for one, would work for half the salary.

R.M. Joeckel
instructor
geology



Melissa Dunne/DN

Vegetarian

There are many reasons why a vegetarian diet is preferable to a meat-centered one. Besides being healthier and much more economical, vegetarianism is also better for the environment.

Raising cattle and other livestock to be slaughtered and consumed is a very energy-intensive, inefficient, costly and polluting process. Forests

are continuously being razed for conversion to grazing and croplands in order to feed farm animals — devastating wild habitats here in the United States and destroying rainforest ecosystems abroad.

Much of the topsoil erosion, which is now occurring at an increasingly rapid pace, is directly related to livestock production, primarily from overgrazing.

Almost half of the water used in the United States each year goes to grow feed and provide drinking water for cattle and other livestock. It can take up to 2,500 gallons of water in order to produce just a single pound of meat. (Whereas only 25 gallons of water is needed to produce one pound of wheat.)

The meat industry is by far the single biggest polluter, producing much more harmful organic water pollution than all the other industries in the United States combined. Organic waste from livestock and the pesticides and fertilizers used to grow the feed for livestock are the No. 1 non-point sources of water pollution in the United States.

At a time when nearly a billion people suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition, 70 percent of the U.S. grain harvest — and one-third of all the grain grown in the world — is fed to cattle and other livestock.

If many of these crops were instead grown for human consumption rather than for livestock, there would be enough grain to give every man, woman and child at least one more meal a day.

Food choices have a far-reaching effect, rippling out to touch many areas of life. Eating low on the food chain — a vegetarian diet — brings greater health benefits, is a much more economical and efficient way to feed people and also helps to protect the environment.

A varied diet of vegetables, fruits, grains, beans and other legumes, nuts and seeds provides ample amounts of all the necessary nutrients a body needs, according to the American Dietetic Association.

Vegetarianism is a nutritionally sound alternative to the over-production of beef and all the problems and harm that it causes.

It is time for a fundamental shift in our agricultural practices and food policies — toward a more enlightened understanding of what we eat and how this affects us and the world we live in.

Jim Anderson
Nebraska Vegetarian Society