

OPINION

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Daily Nebraskan

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Union yes

Student hangout needs student support

By 1998, the Nebraskan Union could look completely different. Union administrators have in the works a \$10 million dollar renovation and expansion plan that would not only bring the facility into the 1990s, but take it into the next millennium.

Some of the specific projects that are part of the plans, include updating wiring and sewer systems, increasing access for disabled persons, expanding the University Bookstore and Computer Resource Center lab and renovating Broyhill Fountain.

The Nebraska Union very desperately needs work.

The last time the union expanded, Lyndon Johnson was president. The complex probably was up with the times during the Great Society, but as America prepares for a new contract, the building has fallen in much disrepair.

We, as the students, faculty, staff and administrators of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, should make a contract with each other to do what it takes to keep UNL going at top level.

One of the best ways is to keep up its facilities. We have enough problem buildings like Richards and Burnett halls. We can't afford to let any others get worse.

But the finances of the renovation and expansion of the union are much more tangible than those of the other derelict buildings, whose potential funding is tied up in legislative committees and hearings.

The union work likely will be sponsored by a one-time increase in student fees at the completion of the project, so those who reap the benefits will also be the ones paying.

An improved Nebraska Union can only benefit UNL students. It's high time that they are a consideration in university decisions.

Closed minds

Multicultural program will benefit students

For about two hours Monday morning, the airwaves in Lincoln were filled with close-minded nonsense.

At issue: Should the University of Nebraska-Lincoln adopt a 30-hour multicultural curriculum?

"The Coffey Talk of Lincoln," a morning talk radio program on KLIN, opened its phone lines to concerned parents and citizens in their listening area.

It was obvious that the folks dialing in were not completely sure of their facts. It became apparent later in the day that the folks hosting the show also were uncertain of the real story.

Their source, they said, was a story in The Lincoln Star.

One misleading story led to another and another, and soon the story was being broadcast on television stations.

This is a prime example of the power that the Fourth Estate carries. People didn't stop to question if the information was right, but instead wondered why the university is forcing children to learn about other cultures.

Actually, at UNL, only one of the 10 classes will be geared toward a multicultural topic. Three credit hours during one's entire college education isn't too much — in fact, it probably isn't enough.

When people hear "multicultural" they immediately get scared. This comes from ignorance. Hopefully once the younger generation begins learning about different cultures, society will begin to open its mind.

Editorial policy

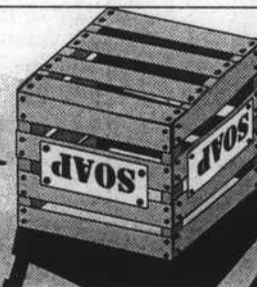
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General education

We are pleased to have this opportunity to summarize the key features of UNL's new general education program. Unfortunately, an article in The Lincoln Star (Jan. 23) provided an inadequate and potentially misleading summary of this exciting new program.

For the last 2 1/2 years, a faculty committee at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has been working to develop a new campus-wide general education program.

The goals of this effort have been to provide a cohesive learning experience for all UNL students, to respond to the challenges of an increasing knowledge-base in a changing world and to reaffirm UNL's commitment to excellence in undergraduate instruction. Toward these ends, next fall UNL will launch its new Comprehensive Education Program for incoming freshmen.

For the first time UNL will have a coordinated, campus-wide general education program, that is, a set of requirements common to all nine undergraduate degree-granting colleges. The program will facilitate transfer of general education requirements across UNL colleges and from other post-secondary institutions within the state to UNL.

The program has three major curricular components. The first, "Essential Studies," requires that students select nine foundational courses in basic areas of knowledge (communication; mathematics and statistics; human behavior, culture and social organization; science and technology; historical studies; the humanities; the arts; and race, ethnicity and gender).

The second major component is a requirement that, within a student's total program of study, 10 of the courses they take be classified as "Integrative Studies," courses which incorporate important intellectual activities such as critical thinking, written and oral expression and exploration of assumptions underlying beliefs and concepts.

A third component is an Information Discovery/Retrieval require-

ment, a one-credit half-semester course, in which students will learn to use the paper and electronic storage and retrieval systems of the university's libraries and explore databases and collections of other libraries.

Presently, UNL faculty across campus are engaged in the development and revision of courses associated with the new program, replacing some of the general education offerings that previously were in place.

The Comprehensive Education Program, while not technically a "common core," will constitute a cohesive grouping of courses and learning activities for all UNL students. It will promote interactions between students and faculty and is designed to help students develop the knowledge base as well as the scholarly skills necessary to function effectively in an increasingly complex and technologically driven society.

Robert Bergstrom
for the UNL General
Education Planning Committee



James Mehling/DN

Television

Praise the Lord, cable television is here to save us all. Cal Thomas' column "Congress should cut PBS life support" (Jan. 23) seems to be advocating the all-out commercial-

ization of the airwaves. Or even the termination of anything on the airwaves but radio! Cable TV for everyone!

I'm sure Mr. Thomas enjoys his daily dose of CNN, as a responsible columnist should be aware of the world around him.

PBS' programming has exposed me to great ideas, great places, great performances. I wouldn't have wanted to pursue my career choice if I had never watched PBS. Dance, opera, drama, old movies and the educational programming have all been important.

Who wanted to get home from school to watch the last of the soaps for the day when you could watch "The Bloodhound Gang" on "3-2-1 Contact," and who didn't pick up a little Spanish because of "Sesame Street"? I learned to explore my creativity, and my understanding of the world beyond my immediate sphere.

I love my MTV when I watch it at the laundromat, but PBS and National Public Radio have always given an alternative to the mainstream programming of the Big Three networks and cable. Mom and I get a great kick out of "Car Talk," and my dad actually changes from his outdated country to NPR to get global news and different programs.

Diversity is one of the greatest advantages of PBS and NPR. For those isolated by location or finances, it is an invaluable connection to the rest of the world.

By the way, if you go home tonight to your expanded cable with eight premium channels, like The Disney Channel, HBO, Cinemax, The Movie Channel, FX and ESPN2, and still say, "There's nothing on TV," then consider getting up off the couch, out of the house, and find a little culture with a concert, a night of theatre or a walk through and art gallery.

Otherwise, go to bed and turn out the light on your tiny little mind.

Marsha Mueller
senior
technical theater