

# OPINION

Friday, April 28, 1995

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## Daily Nebraskan

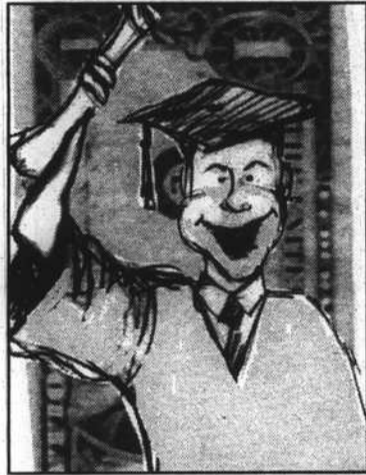
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## Dreams deferred

### Costs of education a frightening reality

For the past five days, the Daily Nebraskan has investigated the skyrocketing costs of higher education. The numbers speak for themselves.



Amy Schmidt/DN

According to John Beacon, UNL director of scholarships and financial aid:

- The total average increase in higher education costs was 90 percent from 1980 to 1990.
- The cost of attending a private four-year university rose 118 percent, while a private four-year college increased 106 percent.
- The cost of attending a public, four-year university rose 82 percent, while a public four-year college increased 77 percent.

What do the numbers mean?

In 1980, annual tuition for Nebraska residents was \$2,495. Now, it is \$5,560.

In 10 years, tuition for non-Nebraska residents increased from \$3,860 to \$9,100.

Is higher education going to become too exclusive? What are the solutions?

Maybe it's President Clinton's direct-loan program. Maybe it's scholarships.

We need to be mindful of solutions. The cost is too great.

## Quotes of the week

**"Smart means ineffectual. Smart means weak. Smart means not quite good enough."**

— Professor Sander Gilman of the University of Chicago, on media stereotypes of Jews.

**"Nope. This is America and I'll only write it in English."**

— Fred Craig, manager of an ice cream store in Connecticut, after asked to write "Happy Birthday" in Spanish on an ice cream cake.

**"Other women are covering up pimples on their butts, and a lot of them have fake breasts and are trying to cover up scars."**

— UNL senior broadcasting major Cindy Roubal, who works as a topless dancer at The Night Before Lounge, about other dancers.

**"Owners and Players: To hell with all of you."**

— Banner at Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium during Wednesday's opening day game.

**"We're not talking about crazies here. We're not talking about people who are no longer human. We're talking about people like you and me who feel they've been pushed too far."**

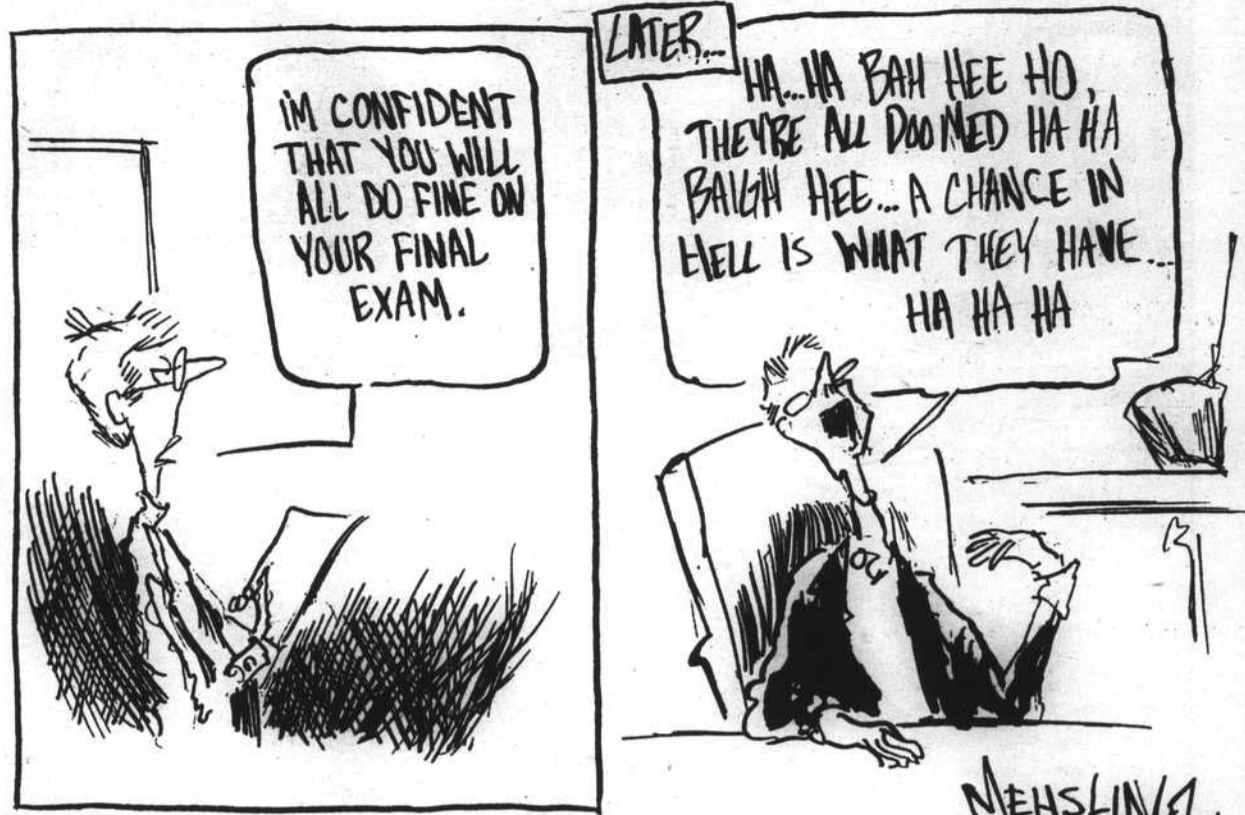
— Clark McCauley, a psychology professor at Bryn Mawr College, on the American militia movement.

## Editorial policy

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1995. 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: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



MEHSLING  
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## Daily Nebraskan readers say:



Send your brief letters to:  
Daily Nebraskan, 34  
Nebraska Union, 1400 R St.,  
Lincoln, Neb. 68588. Or fax  
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must be signed and include a  
phone number for  
verification.

## Tragedy brings us together

For once, we are in it together. Never mind all the America watchers who say this is not a country but a giant centrifuge. On Sunday, the center held in a state fairground in Oklahoma.

Never mind all the analysts who insist that our nation is subdividing into the lowest common denominator, splitting into units of one. This week, we shared an expression of sorrow as wide as a continent.

The common wisdom is that Americans hold too little in common. We are said to be isolated inside our homes, communicating with disembodied strangers along the Internet. We are told that civic life has disintegrated. Why, even when we bowl, it's no longer in leagues: We bowl alone.

Maybe so. But we mourn together. We line up to give blood together. We arrive by the thousands to simply be together at a memorial service. And yes, we sit in front of the television set — a set of 100 options — watching the same service together.

What was it that Gov. Keating said? "If anybody thinks that Americans are mostly mean and selfish, they ought to come to Oklahoma."

Well, this year, many of us have felt a shock wave of meanness, an icy breath of selfishness across the land. The polarizing rhetoric of our political life has convinced us that we are poles apart. But with the guts blown out of a building and the heart torn out of a city, with terrorism and teddy bears, Americans turned to each other as automatically, as naturally, as they can turn on each other.

At an evening press conference the day before the bombing, Bill Clinton seemed more like a candidate, a man defending his own "relevance." By the end of the



Ellen Goodman

weekend, he was welcomed as the president of one nation, indivisible — surely indivisible by the hate carried in a truckload of incendiary fertilizer.

Just a week ago, a cottage industry of O.J. analysts, justifying the coverage, said we were only united by this media circus. After Oklahoma, the bickering among jurors in a murder trial seemed like the shameless whining of spoiled brats.

For far more than a year, the drumbeat of anti-government rhetoric banged out its monotone rage at faceless bureaucrats — the government — with their hands in our pockets. But as bodies were brought out of the Alfred P. Murrah building, the drumbeat became a sad roll call of mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, parents, neighbors. And worst of all, the children.

I find no silver lining to paint on the edges of this bleak week of mourning. No disaster is worth the shared sense of community that comes in its wake. But it does come.

Counselors talk about stages of grief and maybe a country has them too. We are drawn together by a searing sense of vulnerability. We are transformed the way the teddy bears carried by mourners are transformed — from an icon of childhood security to a symbol of adult helplessness.

Our perspective shifts as radically as a strobe light circling a

room. Pain brings clarity with it. It illuminates the pettiness of our everyday complaints. We see things so intensely that eventually we have to squint.

Sooner or later, the teddy bear will become a teddy bear again. The parents holding their children so tightly today — anguished just imagining their loss — will be annoyed at them again for spilling food on the floor or dawdling on their way to school. Even a survivor of the blast will be cursed by a citizen put on hold, mumbling into the phone about "the government." And someone will talk, cynically, about the half-life of sympathy, the shelf life of unity in our society.

But today it's worth remembering that the impulses that bring us together are no less natural than the forces that separate us. We are a porridge of possibilities shaped by our world.

It takes hundreds of people to construct an office building and only a couple to blow it up. It takes thousands of people to create a sense of community, and only a handful to destroy it. The easiest thing in the world is to make noise.

On Sunday the president, not a partisan but a president, talked on "60 Minutes" about all the angry voices in our country: "I do want to say to the American people, though, we should all be careful about the kind of language we use and the kind of incendiary talk we have."

As we go about our business, the business of mourning and the business of justice, keep this one small piece of togetherness alive. A plea to lower the angry voices. A memory of how sadness sounds. As quiet as a house without children.

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