

OPINION PACKAGES

OUR VIEW

Time out Can't keep cramming college into 4 years

Every time a study or magazine ranking refers to "four-year, public universities," they're pulling one over on the American public, making hard-working college students look like slothful foot-draggers.

The four-year college concept is a thing of the past. It is as out-of-date as pet rocks and Barry Manilow albums. Take UNL, for example.

This university is classified as a four-year institution, but less than a quarter of the freshman who entered UNL in 1992 had graduated by May. Many UNL students take five years to graduate. Some take six or more.

Four-year institution? It just ain't so.

Recently, administrators in the University of California system decided that college students needed a little nudge to get them out of the ivory tower.

The nudge they proposed was more of a slap in the face. A plan currently being reviewed by UC administrators calls for a "surcharge" (also known as "fine") of \$1,000 for each quarter over four years a student remains in school.

That's \$4,000 a year — in addition to the normal costs of attending college.

Some schools use methods other than financial penalties to entice students to fly the collegiate coop "on time."

Doane College in Crete, for example, guarantees that students will graduate in four years ... if students meet regularly with their advisers, take no fewer than 15 credit hours per semester and attend school at Doane's Crete campus for eight consecutive semesters. And, of course, if they have one and only one major all through college.

In other words, if they promise not to act like college students.

We all could graduate in the magical four years if we picked one major and stuck with it, denying the changes in our goals and interests during college. We could do it if we didn't take jobs during college, if we passed up study-abroad opportunities or if we tried really hard not to get involved in campus activities and organizations.

But the fact is, such an arrangement is neither feasible nor beneficial.

Times have changed. Students who work to pay for their education or change majors to satisfy their intellectual curiosity should not be seen as nuisances or laggards.

They represent the majority — the ones who know how outdated the label "four-year university" really is.

So maybe the administrators at the University of California, who seem so eager to herd students out of the hallowed halls of higher education, could use a refresher course.

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MEHSLING'S VIEW



MEHSLING OR
DAILY NEBRASKAN

LETTERS

BATTLING BIGOTRY

I would like to express my appreciation to Nick Wiltgen for his Oct. 11 column on homophobia. Although I am not gay, I am still enraged every time I am confronted with homophobia, which is on a daily basis.

Homophobia is a sick mentality that much of our population holds. It is no less bigoted or discriminatory than racism, sexism or anything else that represses minorities.

Homosexuals are the most repressed minority in our country today, even though they constitute more than 10 percent of the population.

I can't go a day without hearing the word "fag" come out of someone's mouth in a condemning manner.

Sexual orientation is no less an intrinsic characteristic of who someone is than skin color or gender. Nobody chooses to be part of the most persecuted group of people in our society today — regardless of what the Religious Right or the politicians who voted for the Defense of Marriage Act say.

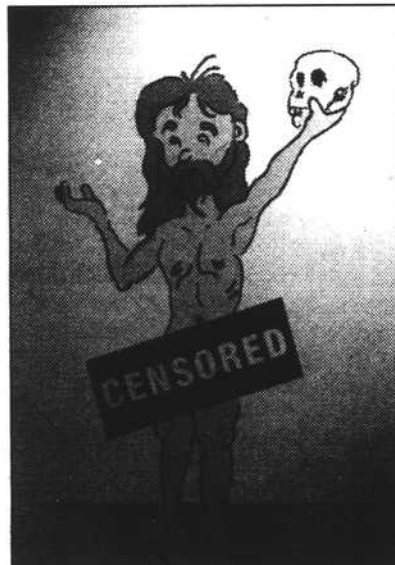
Again, thank you, Mr. Wiltgen for your enlightening column. I can only hope those who read it gained a better understanding of what it's like to be gay.

Kent Downing
freshman
political science

HOMOPHOBIC HATRED

I would like to offer my congratulations and support for Nick Wiltgen for having the courage to write the column that appeared in the Friday DN. If the words that he wrote changed the views of even one narrow-minded person, then that was the most valuable column that he has written.

As a gay man living in today's society, I also have to endure the bigotry and hatred that is put forth by many in the world today. My hope is that more people in the media (like Nick) continue to write about tolerance and understanding.



RUSSELL JOHNSON/DN

As for the people who continue to hate ... I feel very sorry for them, having that much anger and having to hide it under the cover of "Christianity" and "morality," when all it really is is hate.

Ryan Green
Lincoln

CENSORSHIP APPLAUDED

Matt LeMieux wrote of the threat to freedom posed by the removal of nudity from a play at the University of Nebraska at Kearney ("Censorship has foot in door at UNK," Oct. 15). In typical ACLU alarmist fashion, he asked, "Where do you think the next act of censorship will take place? ... Will plays dealing with politically or religiously controversial issues be censored because they may be morally offensive to some in the community?"

I would like to point out to Mr. LeMieux that no issues were censored. No ideas were banned. It was behavior, not ideas or issues, that UNK's chancellor objected to.

The play itself, which did not contain nudity until the director at UNK added it, was not banned.

The theater department continues to be allowed to address any issues or ideas it wishes to address. The fact that UNK will not be a venue for public nudity does not inhibit the

discussion in any way.

There is no question that the chancellor of any state university is responsible for the use of the tax dollars appropriated to the institution. The primary purpose for the University of Nebraska at Kearney, like any other institution of higher learning, is to educate. Because we value that education, we support UNK with precious tax dollars.

I do not see how the taxpayer-financed education of the students at UNK is advanced by having them expose themselves in public in any situation, and especially in a play that didn't require the nudity to begin with. We don't fund the theater department at Kearney or anywhere else simply to enable a director to make artistic statements that do not further the educational purpose of the institution.

By objecting to this behavior, UNK's chancellor has shown prudent stewardship of limited resources. I applaud her, and I encourage Mr. LeMieux to find a real threat to freedom to challenge. If this is the only one he could find, I'd be more than happy to suggest a few.

Brad Pardee
Love Library

WILLEY RETURNS

The DN printed the letter I wrote about Steve Willey's disappointing first column of the semester, and I want to clarify on what I think happened to the poor chap.

I ranted about how he must have been castrated because his column lacked any references to masturbation, the butt, or mayonnaise. Now I know the truth of the matter.

Willey is back! I now realize that Willey was not castrated but was in fact replaced by an evil clone. After reading his Oct. 11 column, I am convinced that the true Willey is back in full effect.

His humor was mixed with a bit of seriousness, and I felt he actually had a point. Rah-rah-rah, our savior, Steve Willey, has returned and we must all repent for our sins.

Jason Flatowicz
sophomore
undecided

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