

OPINION PACKAGES

OUR VIEW

Curtains down

Budget policies cut into administrative staff

Tice Miller has announced that he is retiring as chairman of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance next semester after 10 years of service. He plans to go back to teaching and to writing.

Miller has said he is exhausted after an especially strenuous year — and looking at the prospects of a 4-percent budget cut next year made his job almost unbearable.

It's a shame to the university when quality administrators cite dealing with budget cuts as a reason to leave their posts. It is clearly time to re-examine UNL's policy for making budget cuts and making them fair.

Though Miller emphasized his need to dedicate more time to the book he is writing and his desire to work as a professor again, he included the hassles of dealing with possible 4-percent budget cuts among his reasons for stepping down.

As an administrator in the College of Fine and Performing Arts, Miller was handed the short end of the stick. That college does not receive as much grant money as other colleges in the NU system, and its resources are already stretched.

The 4-percent cut system requires a review of each department's budget looking for:

- How the department would cut its budget by 4 percent.
- How it would remain at status quo.
- How it would spend the money if it received a budget increase.

Asking the department chair and faculty members to submit programs for possible cuts and then asking them how they would remain at status quo is almost like asking them to sacrifice their heads to a guillotine and then to figure out how they're not going to bleed to death.

Also, a 4-percent budget cut could mean the end for smaller departments, such as the Department of Theatre Arts and Dances, and would not send a positive signal to students wishing to major in those areas.

There's also a chance that the money pooled by the budget cuts would end up going back to a department that, in order to save itself, sacrificed some of its most valuable programs.

The 4-percent plan is theoretically a good solution, because it allows people familiar with the programs and departments a chance to plan the cuts instead of being shocked when a higher-up administrator hands them next year's budget; but it is flawed because it will hurt smaller departments — those that are already hurting. And it will discourage administrators, like Miller, already working with sparse resources.

Miller's job was almost like that of a coach who had to keep kicking players — good players — off the team. If the situation is echoed in other departments, the university can be pretty sure that more people will throw in the towel.

MEHSLING'S VIEW



LETTERS

SLAVE TO MARKETING

I wonder if Cliff Hicks knows the difference between commercialism and art. It seems he doesn't.

When I read his review of "Romeo and Juliet," I could not believe he gave it a D-. Then when I read Monday's paper, I saw that he gave "Space Jam" a B+. Is there no justice in this world?

Baz Luhrmann, the director of "Romeo," has made a bold, visually stunning masterpiece. Shakespeare would be proud.

I am baffled that "Space Jam" — a blatant marketing ploy by Nike and Warner Brothers — could receive a higher "grade" than that of "Romeo."

Mr. Hicks, have you ever taken a film class? Or do you spend all your time watching basketball and Looney Tunes?

Michael L. Svoboda

senior

English major with film minor

HUMANITARIAN HISTORY

Let me start by saying I am an African-American woman with three mulatto children. I was raised in an Air Force family that educated me in the fine points of cultural differences and the richness of diversity.

To begin my response to Nick Wiltgen and the flurry of responses to his column: I do not believe in quotas or the practice of hiring, firing or denying access to people solely on the basis of race or gender. I do however, believe that no one person should be denied opportunities



MATT HANEY/DN

because of their race or gender.

Affirmative action, to me, means that my brown-skinned children will never feel the effects of racism when they attempt to obtain their education and/or employment. I feel that Nick is a bit young in his assessment of history as well his attitudes toward discrimination going from white to black and black to white.

The idea of a color-blind society does not fit well the idea of an American Melting Pot, or now commonly referred to as the American Stew. We must enjoy and celebrate the different cultures and skin tones.

Do not force me to stop being a black woman and exist in a society that refuses to accept me for who I am! People should remember that a

mere 30 years have passed since black people were first allowed to drink from public water fountains.

I would pose some questions to Nick: How often have you felt eyes on you? How often have people questioned your coming and going? My family has been stopped by police and had our persons and vehicles searched by dogs — simply because we looked suspicious (i.e. black)! We are not all the same nor are we treated the same.

America is a continuously evolving democracy. Closing the doors by dismantling affirmative action, we will not solve the problem between races. Nor will complaining that black people are the problem or justifying discrimination by blaming your ancestors to claim no responsibility.

We are all responsible to our history to insure injustice does not infect our future! Yes, what happened to my mother, grandmother and my ancestors was unconscionable. I will move past those crimes of hate, but we as Americans must accept responsibility for those actions.

Affirmative action is not a tool to be used to deny anyone their place in society, but it is a tool to ensure everyone has access to the same equality that is lacking in America.

Lastly, I was heartbroken that Nick tried to use the words of the Honorable Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to defend his position. I sincerely wish people believed that the content of their character determined the manner in which society treated us.

Melinda Mills-Walkey
Lincoln, Neb.

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