

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

One step at a time

UNO should remain urban school

Sunday, the NU Board of Regents voted 7-1 to begin developing the first-ever housing units on the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus.

Everything about these units points to a traditional start-up plan for residence halls. They will open in the fall of 1999. Century Development of Houston will finance and build them at an estimated cost of \$10.6 million. The units will provide 576 students with campus housing.

But these are not residence halls. The six housing units will offer 576 students apartment-style living. Each of the 144 "suites," as they are called, will have four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a kitchen. These units will be allocated equally to athletes, international students and students participating in the honors program.

For this, we applaud UNO, but we offer a word of caution: Don't let this set a precedent. Don't try to alter the very thing that has made UNO a unique part of the university system since its inception.

Don't destroy the sole purpose of Omaha's university.

UNO has always been a self-described "urban university." Its mission is to serve the population of Omaha. It has traditionally been a non-traditional university.

Times are changing. We understand that. But to what extent are things going to change at UNO? A task force is currently looking at the university's long-term goals and reviewing its strategic planning as we move into the 21st century.

Recently, UNO has taken strides to strengthen its doctorate and athletic programs and facilities. Plans are in the works for a state-of-the-art Peter Kiewit Institute of Information Science, Technology and Engineering to be built on 15 of the 70 acres UNO owns at Ak-Sar-Ben.

These improvements, while strengthening UNO's bid to become a "statewide center that also collaborates with visiting scholars," creates more questions about its future than it answers.

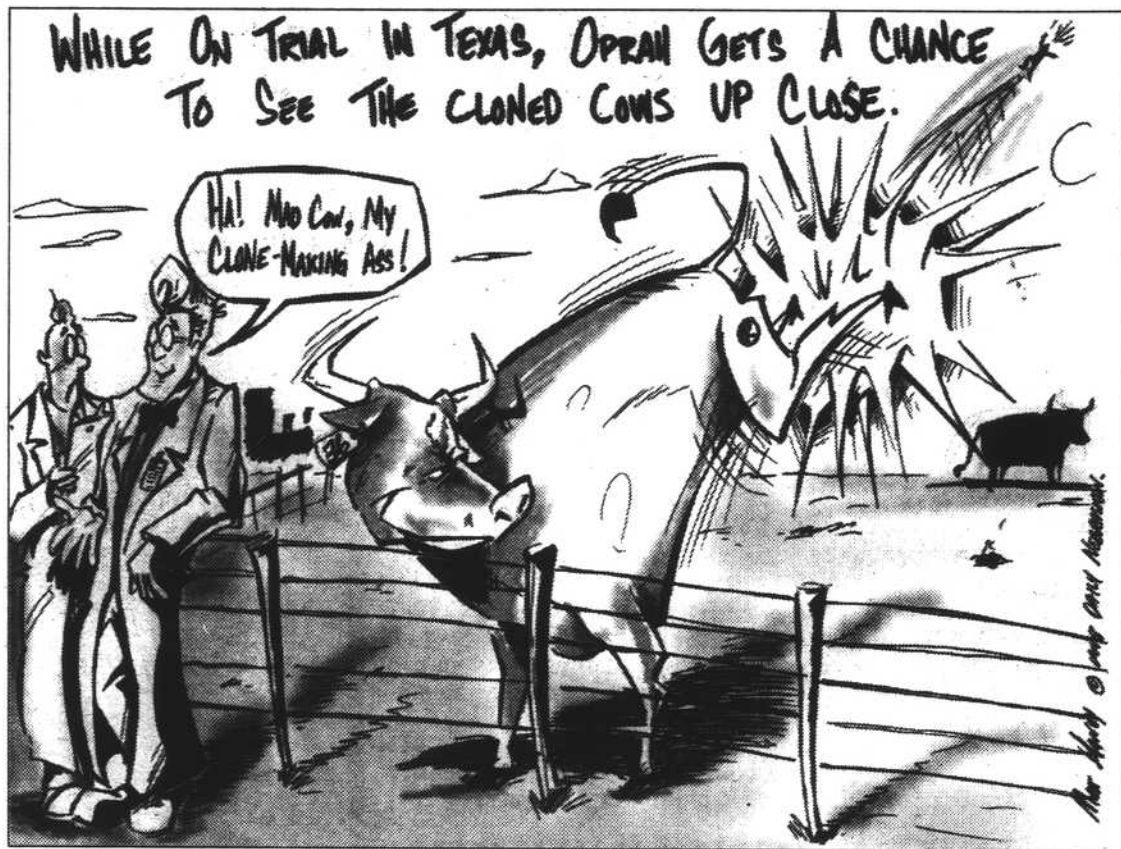
What population is UNO attempting to attract with this new technological investment? Promising young students? What additional amenities for students will need to be built to complement the Kiewit Institute? Some regents claim that additional housing will not be built on the Ak-Sar-Ben campus, but where are these students going to live?

What exactly is all of this going to lead to? We recognize that there is a need for some student housing on the UNO campus. This new building fills the need. But it has to stop there. Nebraska does not have the population base to generate enough tax money to support two major state-funded universities.

We think the creation of housing at the University of Nebraska at Omaha is a good idea. It is a good idea for the allotted 576 students.

But don't let this be set a precedent. Make this the exception, not the rule.

Haney's VIEW



Mail bag

Columnists need your input



KATYA OVCHARENKO is a sophomore English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

“A piece of soul is sent with every letter. Secret thoughts and tender feelings pour out on the cold paper and warm it up.”

pily exciting. I await letters (from my relatives and friends for example). I pass by my mailbox and cannot resist the temptation to look into the small cherished window of it, or in an extreme hurry to rummage in its lock with my key. The sweet and ticklish feeling of expectation fills my weak soul. Blood drums in my temples. Sometimes, the mailbox opens and I see nothing in there. Blood falls back and my feeling of expectation disappears – it hides for better times. Many days the story continues. I wait, look and leave disappointed.

But in that daily routine of searching for letters I have holidays. Those are the days when I suddenly receive a long-awaited letter. I pull it out with trembling hands from my mailbox and stare at the name on the envelope. I still can't believe I've got a letter. Sure, after so many days of waiting! (Calm down! This time it's really yours.)

Fingers, keys and other devices sink ruthlessly into the innocent white flash of the envelope. They tear it with greatest ease. In some seconds, without any regret, the remainders of the envelope, disfigured beyond recognition, are impudently buried among other paper victims in the trash.

I dive into the sea of lines. So, what do we have there? News from your best friend? Maybe this is the letter from your beloved parents, whom you miss so much. ... My eyes run along the letter. They widen the same time my mouth transforms into a broad smile. I feel so happy that this stupid smile remains for a long time on my face after having read the letter.

Those holidays give me soul food for some days, but when they pass, I am empty again. I need more

and more! Each day my shrunken figure creeps to the mailbox, my eyes look for letters with a strange, maniacal flash, and the keys worry the lock of my mailbox one more time.

Strange thing. The hope of receiving a letter this exact day never dies. ...

Letters. ... Oh, I just love them! Now let me ask you something. Did you understand what am I driving at? You, my dear readers, I'm addressing you now.

As a columnist, I expect to receive packages of letters from my readers (if the latter are available). I think this is the only way for me to find out if you guys need, like or hate my columns and my writing as a whole. I would like you to write me in any case, whether you liked a certain article or not. I really need your opinions – it will make my work for you in the Daily Nebraskan more valuable.

If you doubt whether to write me a letter or not, think of a small, scared girl working at a newspaper for the first time in her life. Imagine that she really wants to know her readers' opinions, and I think and hope with all my heart that after such thinking you'll show mercy on her and write her a couple of lines. So if all of a sudden you have a feeling like you want to write me at least something, do not hesitate!

In general, all my colleagues, all columnists, not I alone, need your opinions about us. Just don't be silent! Don't sit there thinking that someone else will write us anyway! Please, don't. We reveal ourselves to you in our columns, and believe me, we want to know our readers as well. Take this column of mine as a slogan: "Letters! – we need them so much."

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