

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

Digging us deeper

Hibler's stunt degrades university practices

We have to give him credit.

After typing a few pages of poorly written prose heavy with racist slang, English Professor David Hibler gained valuable media coverage statewide and the devotion of an all-university forum.

But his alleged purpose — to convince blacks they should refuse to fight and possibly die in the Iraq conflict by stopping the crisis' escalation — drowns in his outhouse of racist words.

Regardless of whether Hibler had a racist intent when he used racist words, those words were seen as racist by many university and community members.

The words hurt people of color.

They did nothing to prevent their possible harm in Iraq.

As a result, Hibler embarrassed himself, the English department and the university with his media circus shenanigans.

In a year top university administrators will ask the Legislature for a faculty pay increase, he made voters question the quality of all faculty members and the archaic practice called tenure.

In a year the university continues to recover from the Sigma Chi cross burning, he brought more divisiveness and misunderstanding.

He has degraded the purpose of academic facilities by rapping during a personal press conference outside the chancellor's locked office.

In an effort to possibly prove a point or make clear arguments of racial standing, Hibler mired himself in the very rhetoric he may have been seeking to do away with. He sought respect for his ideas, but he forced his ravings upon the University of Nebraska-Lincoln academic community.

By doing so, he did not respect the community.

Such hurtful actions may have damaged the university in a way still uncertain. How UNL is seen as a fair and equitable university among its peer institutions is yet to be seen.

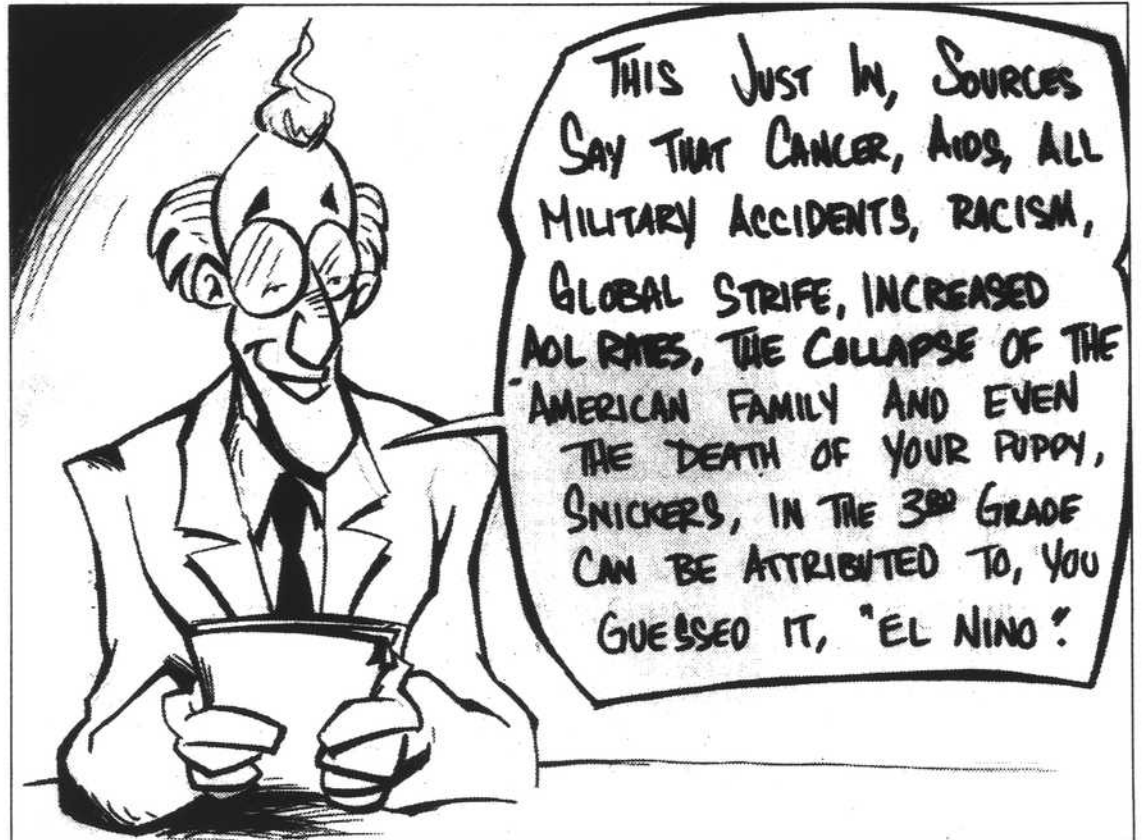
Perhaps the brouhaha was a carefully calculated job-saving device for an unappreciated English professor, who still earns just more than \$33,000 after 30 years of teaching. Surely there are reasons for Hibler's low standing, salary-wise, but his antics may have backfired on him instead of aiding him.

Hibler's self-serving search for notoriety did not help students or advance his role as a coordinator of academic learning at the university.

Hibler does possess the ever-valuable freedom of speech.

But he does not possess our respect.

Haney's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Smoke this!

I was considerably troubled by an article I read in the DN on Friday ("Student fees may rise"). In regards to Nebraska Unions Director Daryl Swanson's proposal to raise his budget by 9 percent, I say, "Hey Daryl, don't you think that we, the student body, are paying quite enough for our education?"

I mean, come on. Do we really need an art gallery in the student union? Now, don't get me wrong. I enjoy art just as much as the next guy, but if I want to see art, there are plenty of art galleries here in Lincoln. I don't see any reason to open another in the student union, especially when the bill comes out of my pocket! Unfortunately, this is just one example in a long line of misuses of the money that WE pay to the university.

Before I go any further, I want to say that this is not a personal attack on Daryl Swanson or the Nebraska Union. It's an attack on those continued misuses of our student fees. I am constantly hearing students complain about their cost of education being too high. And I think some of it has to do with misuse of funds.

I'm not a smoker and I find cigarettes repulsive, but if selling them keeps my education costs down, hell, I'll help advertise the damn things. Some of us work two or three times more hours than we go to school just to make ends meet. If this passes, who's the next panhandler in line to ask to take more money from our pockets?

If a lot of students write letters to the Committee for Fees Allocation, maybe we can stop some of the nonsense. But, if you don't write them a letter, and Daryl Swanson gets what he asks for, don't bitch about how high your bills are. It'll be your own fault.

Jon Hieb
sophomore
finance

Academic Affairs Evelyn Jacobson said that the university will not survey the campus to determine its cultural climate. It's very easy for the university to ignore a culture of homophobia if they do not have the statistics.

Ms. Jacobson's position of not surveying the campus for its cultural climate leaves us in the position of assuming that UNL's climate isn't much different from the rest of the United States' climate. And as that climate pertains to gay and lesbian youth, it is one of murderous inaction. According to a 1989 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report on youth suicide, young gays and lesbians are two to three more likely than other young people to attempt or commit suicide.

Twenty-six percent of young gay men have been forced to leave home because of conflicts with their parents over sexual orientation. And young gays and lesbians comprise one-quarter of all homeless youth in the United States. Considering that, according to the Kinsey Report, between 4 percent and 10 percent of the adult population is exclusively homosexual, homophobia affects approximately 1,000 to 2,500 students at UNL. These statistics do not take into account bisexual men and women and transgender persons, who, if included, would show the numbers of affected students to be higher.

Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Richard Edwards stated "that any plan must comply with state and federal laws." There are no state or federal laws that would prevent the university to be inclusive of sexual orientation in their Diversity Plan.

I do agree with Vice Chancellor Edwards on two points, however. I agree that the university needs to explore "what kind of campus culture we want to build." Does the university want a culture that, like the general culture of the United States, throws its gay and lesbian youth away? Or does the university want to truly "move the university forward?"

Robert W. Anderson
graduate student
English

Writing on the wall

The furor over David Hibler's e-mail is understandable, but I feel it is misplaced. Granted, the term(s) ... do

James A. Sank
senior
English

Man with a plan
While I applaud the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for exploring a Diversity Plan, like many faculty and students, I, too, am disturbed that the Diversity Plan proposal does not currently include provisions for sexual orientation.

I am also disturbed by the fact that Associate Vice Chancellor for

have an offensive quality to them, and directed at any individual or group of people, they qualify as hate speech.

However, Hibler was writing fiction: English instructors are known to do that from time to time. Admittedly, it isn't a coherent fiction at this time, and its quality is a personal assessment everyone can make for themselves.

Does using controversial terms ... degrade something from being acceptable to be put out on e-mail? Or read in a class room? I surely hope not! Would those individuals so outraged by Hibler's e-mail have as much as a complaint getting an e-mail from Mark Twain or Richard Wright? I will give the offended the benefit of the doubt, as well as pointing out that Twain and Wright may have used derogatory language for a higher artistic purpose. The latter is something that so far David Hibler hasn't demonstrated, but I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt, too.

To me it seemed premature for Chancellor Moeser, as well as the rest of the local community, to come down so hard on Hibler, before he could be heard from.

Given how "objective" the chancellor and the administration tried to be with the Sigma Chi cross burning last year, I was stunned by the speed at which the condemnation of Hibler's writing came. Has the student code of conduct been reviewed to emphasize that the university DOES have the ability to punish student organizations for misconduct during the organization's sanctioned events off campus? It's always been there as an option, but the university declined to show moral leadership in favor of legal cowardice.

A year later, the current president of Sigma Chi admitted that they DID know that the cross burning had a racist connotation at the time, something that they wouldn't admit to the university community at the time. What a great way to avoid the punishment from the university! Will Hibler be the first high-profile test case for tenure review? If so, the university could be treading on thin ice.

Would they fire a Mark Twain, but let a David Duke fraternity remain unpunished for an act of terror? I hope not.

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