

OPINION PACES

Our
VIEW

Troubled school

Harvard students failed by tutor system

Harvard Crimson
Harvard University

Cambridge, Mass. (U-Wire) - Harvard may soon be nearing a day of reckoning.

On Feb. 18, the family of Trang Phuong Ho filed a lawsuit against Harvard University and several members of its advising system. Phuong Ho was murdered in May 1995 by Sinedu Tadesse, her Dunster House roommate. Tadesse hanged herself in their bathroom the day of the murder.

Last summer, Melanie Thernstrom, a former Adams House nonresident tutor, enlarged her controversial 1995 New Yorker article and published a book about the incident, charging Harvard with allowing troubled students to fall through the cracks. When the book appeared, the university vigorously denied its assertions.

Now Harvard is again on the defensive.

Whether Harvard was legally responsible for the murder is a difficult question that can only be answered in a court of law. Unfortunately for the university, no legal maneuvering can release Harvard from its moral responsibility for Phuong Ho's death, if not Tadesse's suicide.

The administration has mastered the art of calling on their role of "in loco parentis" at all the wrong times and neglecting it at all the right ones. Harvard is proud of a 21-meal dining plan that encourages us to eat and libraries that close at 1 a.m. to encourage us to sleep.

But when it comes to advising and emotional support, we are suddenly treated as independent adults with no need for any kind of help. The week of the murder, Tadesse missed three of her four final exams. Shouldn't a tutor have noticed?

The Dunster murder-suicide is only the most famous example of the university's neglect of its students. Many of us don't even know our adviser's name. These "advisers" don't make much effort to change the status quo.

More importantly, the tutor system requires fundamental reform. The university should hire tutors with applicable interpersonal skills, not just absurdly prolonged graduate school careers. Further, tutors should be given more thorough mental health training than what they currently receive.

At best, the lack of a responsible advising system is slightly annoying. At worst, it could fail to prevent another tragedy. Regardless of how Trang Ho's lawsuit turns out, without a better advising system, Harvard fails in its responsibility to its students.

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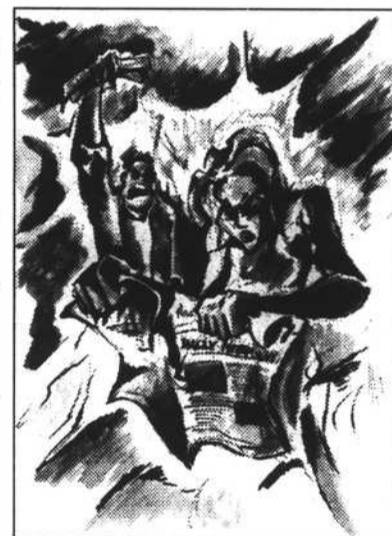
R-E-S-P-E-C-T

For the past few days, hearing about Mr. Hibler brings to mind an important aspect of the university environment ... professionalism.

Yes, it is Mr. Hibler's right to say whatever he wants, but is it "right" for a person in his position? Does it respect other people? His e-mail, did it have any cultural value? I don't think so - pure artistic rhetoric. If Hibler is fired, he can sue all he wants ... ignoring the basis for such a decision. It appears his credibility was an issue long before this e-mail came along. If you are a university faculty member, you need to be professional. If you blatantly cry out that you can say anything you want and you don't care, you don't have much respect for students and society in general. You don't belong here.

The university is right; take your attitude elsewhere. Professionalism, Mr. Hibler, is something you can't defend.

Stephen Kroening
junior
meteorology and
communications



MATT HANEY/DN

tion. UNL has a long way to go before the race relations on campus are in tune, and since the Daily Nebraskan touts itself as an "award-winning paper," they should represent for ALL.

Mark R. Bauermeister
senior
advertising

Other papers do it (why can't we?)

This is the month of February, and is also the month in recognition of black history.

I was wondering why the very last page of the Daily Nebraskan was reserved for the appreciation of soul artists and their music (Tuesday). Can somebody besides myself see the disrespect in having a feature of black artists on the last page of the paper? The last page of any newspaper is usually reserved for unimportant events and often times classified ads.

Since UNL is so "worried" about diversity education and maintaining positive race relations, shouldn't they be more aware of the writings and publications that grace every hall on campus? Come on people, wake up and smell the discrimina-

Missing the mark (again)

With your attempt to be a diversified newspaper and cover the trials, tribulations and accomplishments of minorities, I was quite sure I would open the Daily Nebraskan and read about the Women in Science recognitions on Thursday. Instead, I found a lack of voice supporting the accomplishments of these women.

Sixty-four of our top junior and senior women students in scientific fields of study were recognized at a presentation by the Graduate Women in Science. These women were chosen for their outstanding performances in an area of study typically devoid of women. I am concerned that while this newspaper has taken the initiative to recognize the achievements of several prominent minorities within the university, women, especially those recognized

as unique by stepping over the gender boundary seen in science, have been handed yet another significant setback by the exclusion of their recognition.

If this newspaper is working toward a new age in acceptance of minorities and recognition of their contributions, it is imperative that women, and their achievements, not be excluded.

Grace Lasker
senior
agronomy

Take this advice

It is very frustrating to me that my favorite forum for free expression of opinion, the Daily Nebraskan, has turned into some sort of arena where the students of UNL duke it out over stale issues (college-related or otherwise). Every time I open the opinion page, the students' letters simply attack what was in the paper several days ago.

This seems like a decent idea to me, but what I cannot approve of is the way these students turn their arguments into personal attacks on others who do not share their exact opinions. Everyone has a separate view, but it seems that we at UNL cannot accept the fact that someone out there might not feel the same way we do.

I'm not saying we shouldn't argue. Quite the opposite. In fact, I think we should argue more! Intelligent debate is the only way we can advance our basis for belief. On the other hand, slamming a person into the ground with childish insults is about as useful as trying to put out a fire with gasoline.

If we as students need to express something that we feel strongly about, we have to consider the best possible way in which to say it.

Dan Rempe
sophomore
computer science and German

Editorial Policy

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