

# OPINION PACKAGES

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*Our*  
**VIEW**

## Voices carry

*Successful pleas prove administration listens*

UNL students learned this week that when they speak up, people listen. More than 1,000 students signed petitions sponsored by the Residence Hall Association urging administrators to hire Bill McLaughlin as a permanent employee.

McLaughlin, winner of this year's Outstanding Educator Award and a visiting instructor from St. Joseph, Mo., taught chemistry and chemistry education classes that were well-liked by many students.

Some students said McLaughlin was the best teacher they had ever encountered at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Even with strong student support, administrators said there would be no money to hire the instructor when his one-year term expired this August.

They said even if money were available, it was necessary to conduct a search to find the best possible candidate and to fulfill affirmative action requirements.

But student opinion should count more than the opinion of a search committee because students in the classroom are better prepared to evaluate teaching than a committee in a boardroom.

The ratings students gave McLaughlin illustrated his commitment to the classroom - he secured the highest student evaluation scores ever given for beginning chemistry classes.

Despite this student support, administrators initially said no.

But students wouldn't take no for an answer. Through protest, the support of student government and media attention, administrators realized that if their commitment to undergraduate education was real, they had to act.

Administrators finally listened to the students. They should be commended for this because it puts our education back into our own hands.

We were trusted to know a good teacher when we saw one.

**Can't keep your opinions to yourself?**

**Be a Columnist!**

Apply this week to be a fall Daily Nebraskan columnist. Applications are available at the newspaper office, 34 Nebraska Union, and are due Friday at 5 p.m.

**Editorial Policy**

Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the Spring 1998 Daily Nebraskan. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, its employees, its student body or the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. A column is solely the opinion of its author. The Board of Regents serves as publisher of the Daily Nebraskan; policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. The UNL Publications Board, established by the regents, supervises the production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student employees.

**Letter Policy**

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor and guest columns, but does not guarantee their publication. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject any material submitted. Submitted material becomes property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Those who submit letters must identify themselves by name, year in school, major and/or group affiliation, if any. Submit material to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St. Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. E-mail: letters@unlinfo.unl.edu.

*Haney's*  
**VIEW**



## Abuses of power

*Women should defend against harassment*



**PAULA LAVIGNE is a senior news-editorial major and Daily Nebraskan editor in chief.**

"You're such a lying bitch."  
Pow.  
"You can't do anything right."  
Smack.  
"Everyone hates you."  
Slap.  
"You're looking rather dumpy today."  
Punch.  
"A woman can't be trusted to do this job."  
Knockout.

You don't see any bruises, do you? There are no broken arms, black eyes or split lips to convince you.

It is hard enough for women who are physically abused to see justice even with their physical scars. For women who are being verbally abused, sexually harassed or discriminated against because of their gender, the invisible bruises are even harder to prove.

Now is the time to make those bruises come to light. March is National Women's Month. While I think some women's issues are exaggerated, I will say women still need to fight in the arena of justice.

Women who are physically abused, and have the scars to prove it, have a very clear-cut case for vindication. But it still remains that in some cases, even if the physical abuse is obvious, the woman has to fight for due process.

If women being physically abused are ignored, imagine the rampant dismissal of women who are sexually harassed, verbally abused or

discriminated against. It's much harder for them to prove abuse if they can't show someone a black eye. The case boils down to her word against his.

Being stung by words may seem insufficient to deem abuse. Words are just words, right? They can't really hurt us, true? These types of social mores have told us that abuse is always tied to physical violence. It is time to realize those mores are wrong.

If you are intimidated. If you feel trapped. If you are scared. If you feel threatened. If you are hopeless. If you are desperate. If you are hurt. If you are silenced. If you always defend yourself. If the only route you have is to escape.

You are being abused. You do not need to wait for society to validate your feelings. You do not need a policy to prove your emotions. You do not deserve to live with hostility.

You do need to act. If you don't, you are showing a poor example to those around you. And you may be endangering yourself because verbal abuse can turn into physical abuse. Abuse in any form is wrong. It is a crime. Believe me, do not wait to see if it gets better because it will not.

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, here is what you do.

If you are a student being harassed or abused by another student in any setting, you can file a complaint in the Student Judicial Affairs Office at (402) 472-2021. According to the Student Code of Conduct, the person has to be warned the behavior is inappropriate, after which time disciplinary action can be taken. You may be referred to the Women's Center, Victim Services or the University Health Center.

If you are a faculty member, administrator or student being harassed or abused by a faculty member or administrator, contact the Affirmative Action and Diversity Office at (402) 472-3417 or the Department of Human Resources at

(402) 472-3101. If you want a more private forum for abuse or harassment outside the university, the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center can help you at (402) 476-2110, or through the crisis line at (402) 475-7273.

You may want to contact a lawyer if you are not getting any results elsewhere. If you are a student, you can start at the Student Legal Services on campus at (402) 472-3350 for free consultation.

Document in writing everything you feel is abuse. Or get actual proof - tape it. In Nebraska, only one party must be aware a conversation is being tape recorded. (That one party is you.)

Do not expect people to understand. Both physical and verbal abuse, harassment and, oftentimes, discrimination happens in private.

If a family member, fellow employee, coach, friend or another student is abusing or harassing you - or if you feel someone in the workplace has discriminated against you because of your gender - that is all the validation you need.

Always remember everyone is a human being and everyone's right is the same as the other person's. No matter how liked or respected someone is, if you feel that person is abusing you, your feelings are valid.

During National Women's Month, remember that an abuser has the same face if he is your uncle, the president of a fraternity or the chairman of a department. It is not uncommon for an abuser to be someone in power or someone with influence. The more power a person has, the more secure he is in his position and the more willing he is to abuse you.

It does not matter if your relatives, co-workers, classmates and others do not believe you. You have to believe in yourself.

You may lose a few "friends." But you will find your dignity.

**P.S. Write Back**

Send letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification