

OPINION/PAGES

Our VIEW

Silence isn't golden

Harassment issues need to be addressed

The recent allegations of sexual harassment in the political science department have proven silence can only tarnish the university's effort to address such issues.

Many people in the department have responded negatively to their publication because, "We never heard about any of this."

Well, of course you didn't.

As the handling of this incident comes to light, it is obvious the mute button was pressed at every turn. And within the silence, there was no provocation for action. There were singular voices speaking from the minority to the authority and getting nowhere.

It seems that unless you were a victim of sexual harassment in the department, you did not hear what was happening.

While it is understandable that exact details must sometimes be omitted to protect one's privacy, the complaints, actions and sanctions must be made public to know someone is being held accountable.

And if this doesn't happen, the silence is going to come back and haunt those responsible.

The nature of the complaints should have been open to public review in their initial stage. There should have been open meetings to discuss the general issue among the other faculty members.

Some type of awareness, either through individual counseling or group discussion, should have been started to teach people about the effects of this type of behavior.

Either the dean or the department chairman should have set forth a clear procedure for how he was going to address this incident, specifying what action would be taken and what time it would be completed.

There should have been notification that the Academic Senate's Rights and Responsibilities Committee was going to review the matter, and people should have been allowed to submit their independent testimony to the committee.

And this report should not have been confidential, especially at a state university. Far from randomly releasing photocopies of the report, the Academic Senate's Rights and Responsibilities Committee at least should have acknowledged there was a report and issued a summary of what it said.

To the committee: Do that next time.

For now, it is the department's responsibility to call its faculty, students and staff together to go over the nature of this report.

Yes, speaking out is going to subject the department to some criticism.

But speculation will damage it even more.

Haney's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Leadership is not tolerance

A number of incidents have occurred within the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus community that create a less than welcoming climate for some of us.

While I can't comment on specific cases under review, I want to reinforce what I've said on several previous occasions.

We have talked a great deal about being a tolerant community, but that does not include tolerance for harassment or unprofessional behavior.

I have zero tolerance for behavior that prevents others from taking advantage of our learning environment. The time has come for others on campus to adopt this zero tolerance attitude as well.

Faculty, staff and students alike must be the positive forces of change.

Why can we not learn enough from each other to eliminate racist, sexist and homophobic behavior from this campus?

Why can we not be more accepting of those with disabilities? To have the kind of climate we want to have on this campus requires positive leadership from each of us.

We must all prepare to step forward and say "this is wrong" when we witness acts of discrimination or harassment. Standing by passively is not leadership.

I speak out on these issues because to be silent is to be complicit. Now I appeal to the larger academic community to join me in working toward change. Together, we can make a difference.

James Moeser
chancellor
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Planned response ... part 2

I feel I must take a moment to comment on Josh Moening's column, "Poorly Planned Parenthood."

He quotes Margaret Sanger as having Nazi-esque and quite disturbing views of the minorities of this country.

This is possibly, even likely, true,

given the society of the early 1920s. "Birth of a Nation," a blatantly anti-black film, had been released and endorsed by Woodrow Wilson, which sparked a huge growth in the KKK.

Lynchings occurring as far north as Minnesota and the pseudoscience of eugenics was widely accepted. However, Moening's specious research leaves doubts.

The only source he lists is Human Life International. HLI was founded in 1981 by a Benedictine monk, Father Paul Marx, who was a pro-life activist in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to their Web page, which can be found at www.catholicity.com/cathedral/hli, "the organization sees itself as broadly promoting what Pope John Paul II has called 'a culture of life' and opposing those groups that advocate a 'culture of death.'"

This biased source only makes me

more skeptical of the validity of Moening's claims.

Also, HLI and Moening contend that "in the 11 major U.S. cities with less than 10 percent minority populations, there are only 15 abortionists present per million people. But in the 11 major cities with more than 70 percent minority populations, there is an average of 53 abortionists per million people."

While this appears disturbing, those cities with a smaller percentage of minority population generally have a smaller TOTAL population, thus the suggestion that "abortionists" have settled, like seething bombs of infanticide, in racially corresponding pockets across the country, is absurd.

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freshman
undecided



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