

OPINIONPAGE

Our VIEW

Show some support

UNL needs to keep funds for departments

Those in counseling psychology or geography departments may have felt a little isolated and dejected lately.

In counseling psychology, people with high expectations for one of the oldest, accredited counseling psychology programs have felt the cleaver fall slowly as their resources dwindled away.

Many resources moved when the university targeted the school psychology program for enhancement two years ago.

In geography, the university split the department ranked in the top 20 in 1997 and created the new geosciences program.

Now, only six faculty members remain. One more may retire; another may leave.

Both departments contain students who began work in their programs several years ago, sinking tuition dollars and research hours into a degree they expected would have the reputation to back it.

Both departments contain frustrated faculty members who work desperately to maintain excellence.

Right now, the university is disappointing these groups.

Granted, the university acts in the best academic interests of the majority of students and faculty when it creates new areas of strength.

But when it builds these areas with existing departments' resources, it must also support moves that will help the departments left behind.

In other words, students and faculty have devoted boundless energy to keep their areas among the best. The university should keep its end of the academic bargain by contributing the appropriate resources.

Faculty in both departments now call merging with another graduate program vital to survival.

Arts and sciences Dean Brian Foster said he would support such a merger for geography.

But in the Teachers College, Dean James O'Hanlon said he did not know if he would combine the program with another.

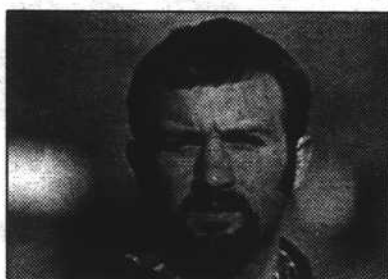
In both cases, administrators should view making department-saving policy decisions a priority and not allow once top-notch programs to slip through the cracks.

Allowing excellence to be defeated is bad policy, especially for a university trying to add jewels to its academic crown.

Haney's VIEW



Physical attraction Rugby is cooler than football



SHAWN MEYSENBURG is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

I'm about to make a statement that may anger quite a few people.

This opinion is also a bit out of season, but the recent celebration during which Tom Osborne (and our football team) was honored got me thinking about football.

And rugby. My opinion is this: Rugby is way cooler than football will ever be.

Before I attempt to explain why I feel this way, I need to be honest about something.

I don't know a damn thing about rugby. I don't know any of the rules, and I sure as hell don't know what a "scrum" is.

But, although I don't know much about the sport, I still feel that I can make a strong argument for why rugby is way hipper than (even Husker) football.

First of all, rugby players don't wear pads. To me, football would be way better if the players didn't wear pads.

I mean, what's the point of watching a bunch of guys pound the snot out of each other if they're just going to wear a bunch of protective gear?

Rugby players, on the other hand,

do battle without such protection. To me, this situation is much more interesting.

Football would instantly become twice the sport it is if the players refused to wear pads.

The second thing that makes rugby cooler is the pace of the game. There's too much starting and stopping in football, if you want my opinion.

The faster-paced nature of rugby makes it more fun to watch. Maybe the NCAA could adopt a more fluid approach to game play. If this happened, football would be almost as cool as rugby.

My next reason for favoring rugby over football concerns uniform design. I'm not about to say that rugby uniforms are swank enough to be worn out for an evening of nightclubbing, but, let's face it, they're much better-looking than football uniforms.

Those tight-ass, knee-high, knicker-looking pants have got to go. They're hideous. Those mesh jerseys, too, are in desperate need of a redesign.

Finally, if the players must wear helmets, couldn't the helmets' design be improved? I mean, have you ever seen old pictures of football teams? Those old leather helmets that Knute Rockne wore may have been pretty useless, but at least they looked good.

My next reason for feeling that rugby is cooler than football is that, from what I've heard, rugby players are better sports than those over-hyped prima donnas on college football teams.

I sincerely hope someone calls me on this if I'm wrong, but I've heard after playing a blood-drawing

game, two rugby teams who have done battle will get together and party.

If this is true, I think that that's great. Could you see our beloved Huskers and their opponent hanging together and throwing down a bunch of cheap beer after a game?

I didn't think so, but wouldn't it be great if they did?

This brings me to my next reason for favoring rugby over football. Rugby players sing songs. Obscene songs. Songs that test the limit of First Amendment rights and would make even the saltiest sailor blush.

Football players don't have songs. Too bad. If football players sang, football would become cooler than it is.

I have a final reason for believing that rugby is much cooler than football: Rugby still has a soul.

Football is so glorified in this town and the players are so revered that I think people have lost sight of what makes sports so great in the first place: They're fun.

I'm not saying that rugby players don't take the game seriously; I'm sure they do. I'm sure they give their all when they play, like all great athletes.

I'm just saying that their motives for playing seem purer than those of some college football players.

Rugby players don't get the glory, adoration and juicy NFL contracts that sometimes come with college football. They aren't heroes to every 10-year-old kid in the country.

But they don't care. They don't play for all of that crap, they play for themselves. They play because they love the game.

They play for fun. And, after all, isn't that what sports are all about?

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