

OPINION PACKETS

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Our VIEW

"Sexual orientation has nothing to do with it. We're going to pick up the best men that have the best résumés to send us."

Tom Scott, Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity member, on whether or not they would accept gay members into their house

"Everybody kind of took it upon themselves to get ready to play in that second half and not let the fans, the state and the Nebraska tradition down."

NU fullback Joel Makovicka, on the Nebraska-Colorado game

"I would like to give southeast Nebraska a chance to succeed more than anything else. I truly believe they can do the right thing."

Commissioner Dick Davis of Omaha, on the decision to renovate rather than relocate Peru State College

"The system totally failed. We had it on speed dial for 2½ hours straight with no luck."

Mike Peterson, salesman at Shooters Guns and More, on the first day with the new FBI background check hot-line for firearms

"We can't just run negative ads about the opposition. We must give (the American people) a reason to vote for our Republican candidates – not against Democrats."

Chuck Hagel, U.S. senator, on his attempt to replace Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, which failed

"There's a lot of misunderstanding about milk. They kind of look at milk as something Mom made them drink at home, and now that they're away from home, they don't want to do that anymore."

Jerry Weber, UNL head athletic trainer, on the "Got Milk?" contest which came to UNL this week

"Her work ethic is very much improved – she always had the talent. And her knowledge of the system has grown."

Paul Sanderford, NU basketball coach, on Nebraska guard Monet Williams and her improved performance this year

"I look back – at the time it sucked – I look back, and it went fast. But at the time, it was hard."

Nebraska point guard Amanda Went, on the 11 months she had to work to get back to playing basketball

"I am real happy we are staying in business. It's time to get back on track."

Larry Boehmer, owner of the Zoo Bar, on the bar's recalculated occupancy of 125 and the ramifications that accompanied it

Mook's VIEW



Guest VIEW

Textbook troubles

University Bookstore must diversify its holdings

JOZSEF SZILAGYI is an associate professor with the Conversation and Survey Division at UNL.

Have you ever tried to find a textbook in the University Bookstore? I am not asking you about the ones that are used for courses and are kept in a nice, spacious room at the back of the store. I mean textbooks in general. Let me share my own experience with you.

Not long ago, I visited my old university (a public university with roughly the same size of student body as we have at UNL), where I was a graduate student for several years.

I met with my old friends on campus and started a conversation about hydrology, which is my field of expertise, and on plant biology, into which I venture only briefly and occasionally. We could not decide on a certain issue, so, in order to settle the argument, we went into the university bookstore and researched for a decisive answer.

In 15 minutes, we found the right plant biology book in which the answer hid. The debate was settled.

What I learned in the bookstore did not let my mind rest, so after returning to Lincoln, I made a trip to the local university bookstore and tried to find the same book.

My experience there was a bit disappointing.

Not only was the specific textbook missing from the bookshelves, but I could find hardly any other textbooks on plant biology – or on hydrology for that matter. My first reaction was that I must be doing something wrong, I did not look in the right place, etc. However, soon enough reality set in.

I would like to explain why I think the University Bookstore SHOULD carry a wide variety of textbooks.

One could say, if you need a textbook, go to the library and get it. But there is one thing you cannot do in the university library you can in a

nice bookstore, and that is browsing by subject.

I remember when I was an undergraduate how happy I was finding a nice textbook that treated a specific subject interestingly. What a delight it was to read such a book.

I also remember that it even helped me to choose my major. I spent countless days in the university bookstore reading introductory textbooks on all kinds of scientific disciplines. Of course, I never had the money then to buy any of the books. But read them, I did indeed. And it paid off for me.

Acquiring a general view (through browsing and reading) about different scientific disciplines I realized that I had a chemistry toward studying the natural environment, and becoming a watershed hydrologist was just the right choice to make.

I believe that mine is not an isolated case. I can imagine that other students who could not yet decide on a major would be helped by browsing through the textbooks in the University Bookstore. Where else could they go? If only there were anything to browse into.

Having textbooks in the University Bookstore would equally help faculty members. Just to stay with my own example, I have difficulty deciding which textbook I should use for the proposed course I am to teach next year. I cannot choose the ones that are already used for courses, since one wants to, and indeed must, teach something that is not already taught.

Of course, I more or less know what was available a couple of years ago in the field, but I do not know exactly what became available recently (since I became a faculty member at UNL). The University Bookstore would be the place to turn to if only it had the books.

I could mention also that in this complex world being interdisciplinary is one key of success. Consequently, easy access to what is

recently available in different subjects would be a great service the University Bookstore could provide. Not to mention that today I can even afford to buy one or two textbooks occasionally on my own.

Let me contribute a couple of suggestions that could make the University Bookstore a more rewarding place to go find textbooks:

- The area where postcards, football memorabilia, perfumes, etc. are sold could be shrunk. If you take a look at the University Bookstore, you'll realize that these things are the main attraction, and the books themselves look like they are secondary citizens. They dominate the place – perhaps they even occupy the largest area – and you cannot reach the books without bumping into them, a clever and widely used marketing strategy.

- I understand that the bookstore probably would like to make some extra bucks, but could it not be done some other way? For example, selling more compact discs would be more appropriate and would probably occupy less space than sweatshirts do.

- The place where course books are stored is spacious and not fully utilized. Why not use this place to store textbooks other than the ones that are being used for courses?

- A couple of chairs and benches (found in any bookstore that takes itself seriously) would help people with browsing and reading.

- And, not to forget, the bookstore should massively buy new textbooks. It could order them on consignment with a very long return period if currently funds are a problem.

After all, even if you have no particular affinity to browsing books, I believe you agree with me on one issue: It is everybody's goal working at this university to make it a better place to study and to conduct research.

The University Bookstore should be a major player in the game.

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