

# OPINION PAGES

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## Our VIEW

### Tunneling to nowhere

*Construction project is waste of money*

Among the various projects the regents approved this past weekend, one caught our particular attention.

It was the approval of a \$400,000 underground tunnel from Kauffman Residential Center to the Selleck Quadrangle. Kauffman will be the new honors dorm on campus, part of a \$32 million donation made to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln toward the honors program.

The tunnel was suggested by the university, not the donators, who then agreed the project would be a good idea. We have to differ.

On the most basic educational level, the tunnel provides no value. It doesn't buy books, it doesn't build programs, it doesn't help attract quality professors or students. It's highly doubtful that a tunnel of cement will be one of the key selling points for prospective students in the honors program. If it is, well, then there's something seriously wrong with the honors program.

Apparently, the tunnel is to provide honors students with access to Selleck dining services. Of course, they could always walk outside to the dining services. However, UNL Housing Director Doug Zatechka said it was either build this tunnel, or bring food to the students. Making students brave the cold was not an option.

Also, the tunnel allows Kauffman to be maintained by the same maintenance staff as the one that maintains Selleck, thus doubling the maintenance staff's work. We wonder if anyone asked the UNL maintenance staff in Selleck about that.

Zatechka also said the tunnel is the only way to prevent elitism. Otherwise, Kauffman students wouldn't mingle with Selleck students. This seems like an insult to honors students, saying they can't make friends without an underground tunnel. For students who live in the other dormitories around campus, we wonder if their number of friends has increased dramatically by way of the tunnels.

Really, the whole tunnel is just a waste of money. And probably more than \$400,000. How many times have construction projects went over budget? And when you have a \$31.6 million safety net to work with, going over budget isn't exactly a problem, is it?

But it is a problem when it's a university trying to build a strong honors program. It should be about ideas, not things. Schools aren't ranked necessarily by the strength of the living quarters, but their academic programs. (Anybody who's ever been to the University of Kansas knows that.)

A tunnel should be the very last thing we should have our minds on with this honors program. Sir Winston Churchill once said, "We are shaped by the building we live in." But this tunnel is one building we just don't need.

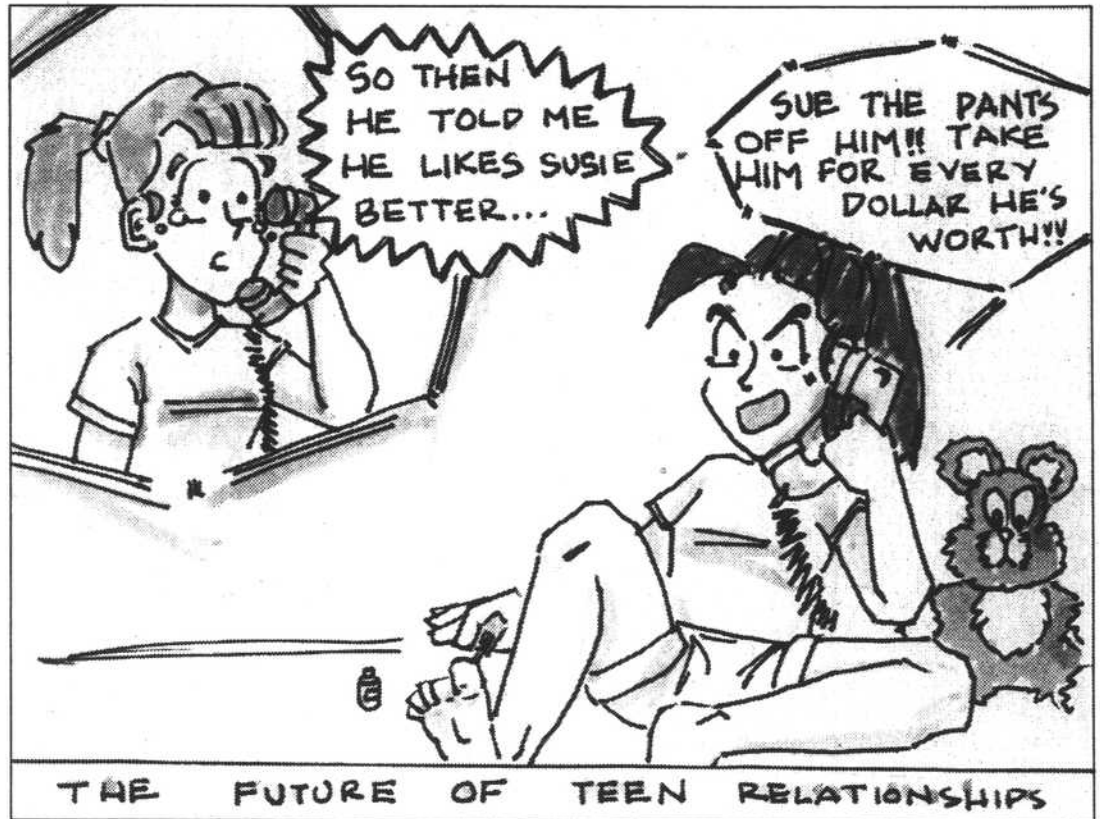
#### Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the Spring 1999 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.

## Lupo's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### A letter from the prez

I'm writing because I want to set the record straight about the ASUN constitutional amendment proposing to change the constituencies from which ASUN senators are elected. I have heard and overheard story after story about what this amendment supposedly is and would do. The problem is, almost all of what I'm hearing is wrong. Unfortunately, it is the misinformation and opinions formed as a result that spread like wildfire. Although I can understand the confusion resulting from numerous debates about various aspects of the amendment, it's time to let people know about the amendment - as it stands.

Granted, I have my own opinion about this issue, but my concern today is more about voter education on the issues than for a legitimate fate for the amendment. I am for this amendment. In fact, I wrote the initial legislation, but my plight is not necessarily to convince you of its merit. Don't get me wrong; I want the amendment to pass, but I would much rather see it fail because people were truly informed and did not support the idea than to see it fail because nobody really knew for what they were voting.

- The facts:  
This amendment would:  
A) Increase the size of the body of elected senators from 35 to 40.  
B) Change the districts from which senators are elected such that:  
i) Senators will no longer represent only large academic units (colleges and divisions); but,  
ii) Under the new system  
- 25 seats will be apportioned, as now, among the academic units;  
- 10 will be apportioned among three identified "types of living units" (residence halls, greek houses and off-campus dwellings); and,  
- 5 seats will be held by persons elected from the student body at large.

Misperceptions:  
The five additional at-large seats would be reserved only for certain individuals. - Wrong. The at-large seats are just that, at-large. They are open positions to be voted on by the entire student body.

The 10 additional living unit seats

have already been "divvied out" to specified residence hall clusters. - Wrong. The "types of living units" and groups thereof cannot be specified in the constitution. These will be clarified, should this amendment pass, in the bylaws.

The seats for residence hall students will duplicate the mission of our Residence Hall Association. - Wrong. The legislation that passes through RHA and ASUN are traditionally distinct. ASUN's scope is not residence-hall specific, just as RHA's scope is not universitywide.

This is a misdirected attempt to "solve" the ASUN representation problem. - Wrong. No legislation in the world could ever solve any representation problem. Only activism, multilateral communication and visibility can. This legislation creates more avenues through which students can decide to get

involved in ASUN.

Finally, I'd like to just clarify the driving force behind this amendment (realize these are my opinions). It was written to open doors to a student government that has been historically perceived as closed and elusive. It was designed to give people an option. To allow interested students to decide which path best suits them as a route through which to get elected and a capacity in which to serve.

If you have any questions or concerns about the amendment or the election, call the office at (402) 472-2581, visit our office at 115 Nebraska Union, or e-mail us at asun1@unl.edu.

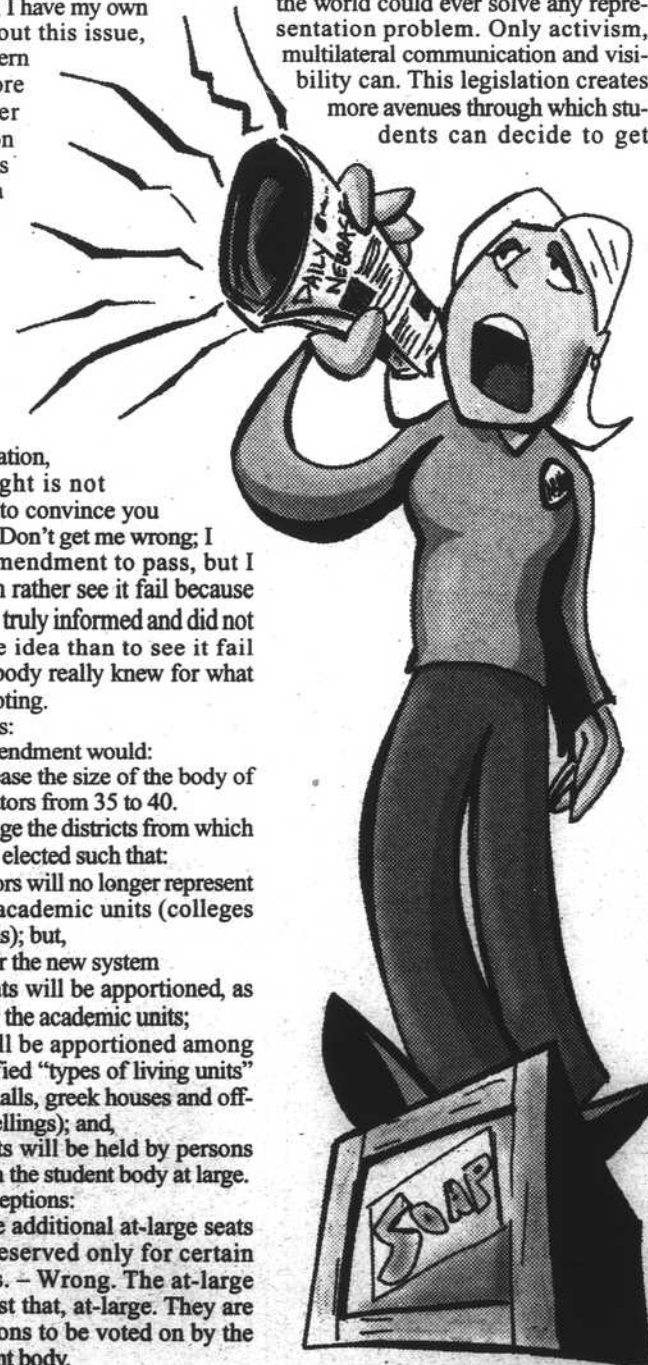
And please, please ... get informed before you vote on March 3rd.

Sara Russell  
senior  
math  
ASUN president

### Propaganda machine

Would it have been possible to have any more conservative propaganda in one issue of our beloved school newspaper? Not only was there a one-sided, questionably ethical insert added, with no opposing point of view offered, but there were two conservative letters in the editorial section. Normally this paper has seemed to be good about offering both sides in a given debate, but that principle must have slipped everyone's minds on this day. The pro-life propaganda insert seems to be uncalled for. This paper should be more responsible than to distribute this campuswide. The paper should have either advocated it as an editorial or left it out. There is no counter-point offered, and there is no direct identification of what it is. The DN should not be in the business of being a platform for any extreme group just because they pay. The insert should be clearly marked as what it is, a paid advertisement, and the DN should clarify its stance on the issue, so that we do not get the impression that the DN condones the views in the insert. Journalistic responsibility would mandate this. You are not the Wall Street Journal. You are the sole paper for a community of college students, and your responsibility is more. You have the responsibility to promote certain values, and it is irresponsible to publish this insert without an opposing view or without a clear marking of what it is: propaganda, nothing else. Please refrain from distributing this type of propaganda, from any source, be it liberal or conservative, in the future.

Ed Fox  
sophomore  
political science



MATT HANEY/DN