

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Cream of the crop

Magazine's poll rankings are deceiving

Every fall, one magazine grabs the undivided attention of college and university administrators across the nation.

We're a little confused as to why.

U.S. News and World Report ranks schools based on factors such as academic reputation, financial resources, alumni giving, faculty resources and student selectivity.

It was this last factor that boosted UNL from the third to the second tier this year, meaning UNL is ranked between 51 and 120 out of 228 universities.

But wait. Don't reach for those party hats yet.

The validity of the rankings is questionable. Let's take a look at the top of the list.

The cream of the crop.

You'd expect to see Harvard, Yale and Princeton. Typically, those three do grace the top of the chart.

But this year, the California Institute of Technology took the top spot. It moved from No. 9 to No. 1 — in one year.

Possible, perhaps. But not really.

Come on, nine to one? We don't think so.

The magazine admits a change in methodology helped CalTech move into first place. U.S. News simply placed more weight on one factor: how much the school spends per student.

CalTech spends \$192,000 per student, more than any other school.

Other than that characteristic, not much else shifted for CalTech. So, its sudden jump into first is a surprise.

That leaves us wondering whether the change in methodology was made to add a little excitement to the magazine's annual issue.

Who's going to keep buying the rankings if the same colleges are always on top?

True, these changes in methodology don't really affect schools, such as UNL, that are in the middle somewhere.

But the truth is, no college on that list — not even CalTech, and definitely not UNL — improved drastically from one year to the next.

The rankings are deceiving.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen has said in interviews two years in a row now that the university's academic reputation continues to be strong, regardless of what tier UNL is placed in.

We agree.

Numbers don't say it all.

“
Who's going to keep buying the rankings if the same colleges are always on top?”

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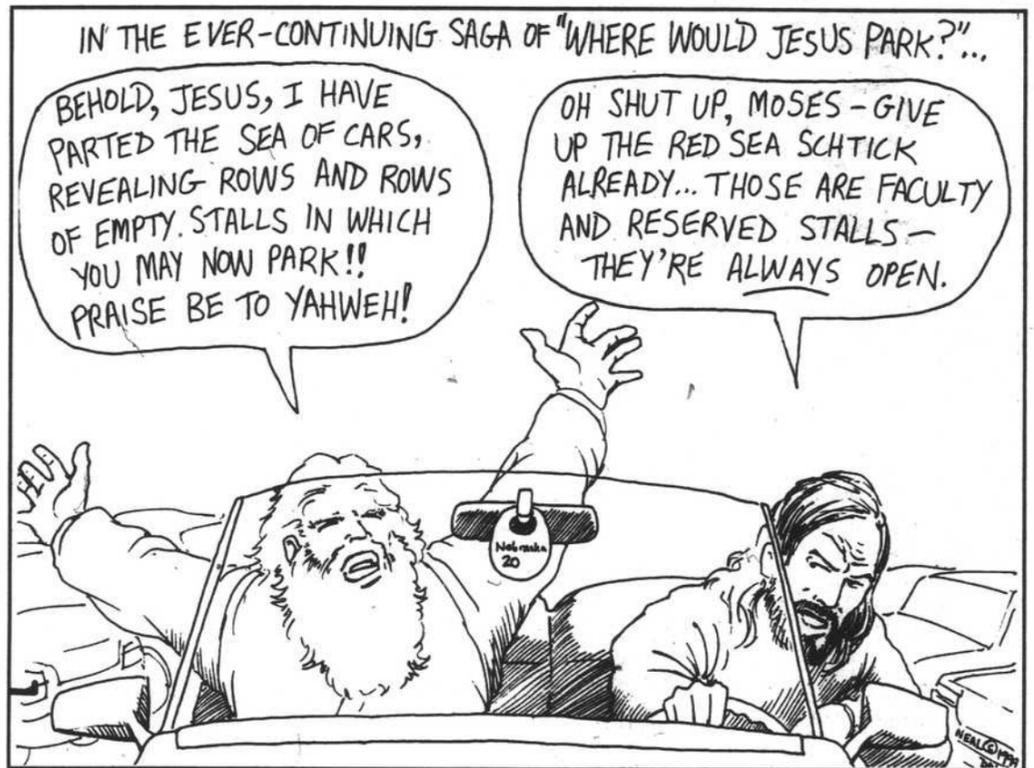
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Obermeyer's VIEW



DN LETTERS

A Good Johnson

Trevor Johnson's column "Sex, lies & eggplant" in the Sept. 8 Daily Nebraskan was one of the best articles I've ever read in the Nebraskan.

It was funny, sweet and above all, realistic. I too have the odd habit of falling madly in love with people not interested in guys.

Keep up the good work!

Jeremy Patrick
Lincoln

Red Letter Days

When I was informed by the "parking guy" that I could not park in the Beadle Center lot early last Saturday, I left uttering a few choice, yet obscene, words.

Why is it that the university sees fit to make academic endeavors so difficult on game days?

Does the university exist only as an excuse to have a football team or does football exist because the university allows it to?

Somehow we have gotten confused about what is more important. Let me enlighten you ... academics is more important than football.

Football should not be allowed to interfere with academics.

John H. A. Amery
graduate student
chemical engineering

Newcombe to wingback

Kudos to Samuel McKewon for his excellent column (Wednesday) on how Bobby Newcombe is handling the switch to wingback.

It illustrated the kind of character Newcombe possesses, a refreshing attitude of "I'll do what's best for the team" in this era of "me first" prima donna athletes.

Newcombe will be a fantastic wingback and punt returner, plus I'm sure he knows that if he has a future in the NFL, it will be as a receiver or



MELANYE FALK/DN

punt/kick returner, not as a quarterback. The change should only strengthen the team.

Mike Lawson
Joplin, Miss.

Dear Doctor J.J.

Your letter to Mr. Byrne (Wednesday) truly opened my eyes to the extent that we are getting screwed. It really makes students more aware — not that the cost of the skyboxes isn't enough to make us aware.

But the fact that all other Big 12 schools pay little to nothing shows their team spirit.

We can't even get decent seats for

decent price for our own team.

I guess we aren't paying the full price/scalped ticket price that most everyone else does. But if students are going to have to shell out the big bucks for these tickets, shouldn't they at least get to sit somewhere other than in the corner?

I haven't had to sit in the corner like this since I was 5 and picked a fight with my brother.

A little respect is all the student body wants, but I guess we are seen as second rate when people like Mr. Byrne feel that it's "all about the Benjamins."

Meggan Peters
junior
business administration

P.S. Write Back



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