

OPINION PAGES

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Our VIEW

Lost opportunity

Low faculty salaries still a sore spot

Most students have signed up for spring classes. They consulted their friends on who the best professors are.

Heard of any class where you actually learn something?

Take chemistry with Paul Kelter. He was awarded UNL's outstanding teaching award two years in a row.

Oh wait. You can't. He's gone.

Need a good English class?

Take Marly Swick. She's been here for 11 years, and her most recent novel received kudos from the New York Times Book Review.

It's too late. She's gone too.

Add sociologist Paul Amato and English professor Moira Ferguson to that growing list of UNL professors who have said adios to the university this year for higher salaries or better opportunities at other schools.

UNL offered Ferguson, who founded the women's studies program at UNL, \$82,000 a year. Another university offered her \$100,000.

Ferguson, who was with UNL for 23 years, went on sabbatical and never came back.

"She's a very long-time, very dedicated professor. Like so many women professors at the university, she finds herself more welcome at other universities," Ferguson's lawyer, Vince Powers, told the Lincoln Journal Star.

You see the pattern. You get the picture.

The powers that be have recently shown some improvements in faculty salaries, but those steps might be too small, too slow.

The damage may already be done.

This spring the Legislature included about \$20 million for faculty salaries, which will bring UNL up to barely the midpoint of our peer institutions.

UNL just designated interest from a recent endowment to recruit 24 new nationally acclaimed professors.

But it might be too late for the good professors we already have. Maybe they have put their resume out there, fed up with not getting paid what they deserve.

Maybe they see other respected professors leaving, and they want to head out, too.

So in the meantime, hordes of young, eager freshmen who would have been dazzled by Kelter's chemistry class, pondered great literature in Swick's class and studied under the founder of UNL's women's studies program are out of luck.

Students continue to pay higher tuition each year, but if the best professors continue to feel unappreciated and underpaid, students will get less for their money.

It all adds up to a lesser university.

Obermeyer's VIEW



DN LETTERS

(Sarcasm)

What a victory it will be for Gov. Johanns and other pro-lifers if they stop the use of aborted fetal cells for research at the University of Nebraska!

Rather than being part of the effort to cure a disease debilitating millions of Americans each year, the fetal tissue will instead be stuffed into red medical waste bags, incinerated and then sent to the landfill.

That's terrific, Governor, because, as the director of Lincoln's Family First pointed out, it is crucial to avoid the potential black market for aborted fetuses.

While we're at it, we should also ban organ donation, since it has created a huge black market, and adoption, since children are sometimes bought and sold.

Come on, people! Whatever your feelings about abortion, understand that these cells are being used in important research as opposed to being dumped in the garbage.

Rachel Kester
senior
civil engineering

Not Funny

Whoa Thereeeeesa! (Letters Wed.)

Where do you get off thinking that paying child support doesn't change the lives of the men who pay it?

Yeah, you're right, that extra \$400 a month would be insignificant to a person.

If women were held responsible for both parties' actions, then men

would not have to pay child support (this is where the light above your head actually lights up).

Think about this: If we aren't using a condom, then you aren't. And who the hell said that you can't enjoy the same casual sex life that I, or rather we men, do. I wouldn't mind.

That's a privilege you give to yourself. It is a matter of using contraceptives. In fact, many women do give themselves this privilege and don't use contraceptives, a mutual action with their partners, and this is why I agree with J.J. Harder's "Abortapatch" column (DN Nov. 10).

One more thing, clinic commercials during the Super Bowl - not funny.

Scott Richard Phillips
sophomore
college of business administration

E-hell

Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan article on the "new and improved" e-mail system for UNL was right on the mark: It's a boondoggle.

Our entire lab is Mac (eight computers), and NONE will handle Lotus Notes because Lotus is such a large and cumbersome piece of software.

None of our computers is new or large enough to accommodate the software.

It may be good for administrators who use calendars and other bells and whistles (and who seem to be the ones mandating the change and who, coincidentally, have the newest computers), but the faculty and students need rapid and efficient communication with our available hardware.

The system I, and many of my colleagues and students, now use (UNL Serve and popmail) is well-suited to our research, teaching and communication needs.

Combine this with the fact that one needs to attend classes to learn how to use this less "user-friendly" system, and you can clearly see there is a problem. Even after these training sessions, most of the e-mails I receive from people using Lotus Notes are poorly or incorrectly formatted, which attests to the difficult nature of the program.

No, we don't need the 30 e-mail systems mentioned in the article, but we should not be forced to migrate to an expensive and inefficient program that is heavy with features we shall not use and is TOO BIG for most of our computers.

I suggest the supposed savings to UNL won't materialize were we all to switch to Lotus.

The current system of letting those go to Lotus who wish to, but leaving the rest of us with our popmail capability, seems the best compromise to me.

Is the University of Nebraska REALLY going to make some faculty and a lot of graduate students go without what is now an essential communication tool (for lack of sufficient hardware) in order to establish a new system that was designed for a smaller community of users with different needs?

I hope not.

Brett C. Ratcliffe
curator and professor
museum

A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste



If you want to offer the campus a piece of your mind, there is not a better way to do it than to have it printed weekly in the Daily Nebraskan. Apply for a columnist or editorial cartoonist position at the DN and you too can have one of those cool mug shots run with your silly ideas. Get an application at the DN offices or online at www.DailyNeb.com, and return it with two sample columns to 20 Nebraska Union by Friday, Dec. 3, 1999. The Daily Nebraskan is an equal opportunity employer and adheres to all applicable hiring guidelines.

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