

## Vote where your mouth is Don't complain about ASUN if you don't get involved

Tonight marks the start of yet another round of ASUN party election debates.

Impact, Empower, A-Team and Duff will square off in the Nebraska East Union, answering questions from audience members.

Here's the only problem: The only people who will attend tonight's debate and the debates in the next two weeks are the debates' sponsors and the parties' members.

Sure, maybe a few other students will straggle into the room by chance. Or a few students outside the normal political crew will attend because they want to learn about the parties' platforms.

But, in general, if you attend the debate tonight, you can expect most people attending will be students who have been helping out with campaigns.

... Most people attending (the ASUN debates) will be students who have been helping out with the campaigns.

The students have questions prepared for the opposing parties' candidates.

They have studied the platforms, found their weaknesses.

And they have planned to ask questions to expose those weaknesses, not doing the general student population much good, especially if no one else attends.

In addition, the debate sponsors, most of whose members are not connected to the election, will have questions prepared for candidates.

But there will be few students not already familiar with the platforms there to hear those answers.

Like any other political debate, the ASUN election debates are set up to give Joe Public the opportunity to question the students who want to represent the student body.

If you care about who will be sitting in the president's chair in 136 Nebraska Union come April, and what that president's views are, attend a debate and discover for yourself.

The debate starts tonight at 9:30 in the Nebraska East Union. The next one, on city campus, is Feb. 24, and the final debate will be held Feb. 29 in the Nebraska Union.

You could count on the Daily Nebraskan's stories that will be run the day after, but that won't give you the chance to ask the candidates the questions that matter to you.

This year, many students complained about current President Andy Schuerman's stance on the aborted fetal tissue proposal in the Legislature.

Present senators shot back at these students that they should have attended the debates and voted in the elections. If the students had done that, the senators said, they may not have been surprised by Schuerman's move.

They may have a point.

### Editorial Board

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Submit material to: Daily Nebraskan, 20 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448 or e-mail to: letters@unl.edu

### Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the spring 2000 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 acts 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 publication 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. The Daily Nebraskan strives to print fair and accurate coverage; any corrections or clarifications will be printed on page three.

### Obermeyer's VIEW

This campus should recognize its student leaders for their contributions to this institution.

However, the University of Nebraska has used Eddie Brown and his accomplishments to legitimize its efforts to promote diversity. From including him in recruitment videos to celebrating his roles in student government and Scarlet and Cream, he is everywhere.

In the eyes of the powers that be, Brown is the face and voice of minority students. This university has exploited him for the positive image he conveys to the point where he has been dehumanized, objectified and marketed. The University portrayed Eddie Brown as a mascot long before I ever did.

My cartoon was attacking the institutional exploitation of a student at UNL. This was not an attack on Eddie Brown or his success; this was an attack on the University.

In spite of my intentions, people are entitled to their own interpretations. I have no right to tell students

they shouldn't be offended, just as the chancellor has no right to tell students they should.

Chancellor Moeser is telling students what to think. I'm telling them what I think.

However, in the eyes of Chancellor Moeser, my intent is irrelevant. After he called my work racist, I felt that I had the right to explain myself to him and that he should explain himself.

I made several attempts to contact the Chancellor, but he refused to speak with me unless I apologized for my "racist" cartoon.

I had to first admit guilt before I could defend my innocence.

This is an abuse of power on Chancellor Moeser's part. He jumped to conclusions about my character and used me to brandish his authority. While attempting to teach lessons on responsibility, he exemplified unchecked power gone too far.

I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Brown on this issue. He wanted to publicly voice his opinion,

but he had the decency to first contact me to hear my side before he made any such statement. That was a very admirable move that I respect greatly.

Sadly, in the chancellor's attempts at salvaging this situation, we see none of these same admirable qualities.

In his statement, the Chancellor has proven my point completely.

Why can't Moeser see Brown as anything more than an icon for African Americans? Why must Moeser bestow the title of "Representative of All Minorities" onto the shoulders of this one man?

Chancellor Moeser should cry racism when he sees racism. But for him to cry racism to cover up for his own university's exploitation of a minority student to further his goals is deplorable.

It disturbs me that his power is abused in such a way.

It upsets me further that he continues to behave in such a manner with no accountability as chancellor of this institution.

### Letters to the EDITOR

#### Colorless World

I guess I must be colorblind. When I saw "Obermeyer's View," I didn't see anything wrong. Does it make a difference what race Eddie Brown is? No, but here in the enchanted land of politically correct-speak, we are determined to bludgeon and beat the life out of the horse with racial undertones.

I am a minority, and I am going to tell you that this crying racism every day is really getting old. Why shouldn't Eddie Brown be ridiculed? Because he's a minority? What if he weren't a minority? Would it be okay to include him in this picture? So now we are going to have separate rules for ethnic groups? That sounds scary.

We minorities are big boys and girls by now. We are not asking for your help in identifying when a minority infraction has taken place. So politically correct masses settle down, and practice being colorblind.

Yasmin Helen McEwen  
'98 UNL graduate

#### Generalizing Neal

Everyone makes generalizations. Unfortunately, some people are more reckless with generalizations than others. Neal Obermeyer, apparently you wrongly determined that your entire audience is understanding and refuses to jump to conclusions. I'm sorry, Neal, you shouldn't make generalizations.

Some of your audience members seem to think you are a closet racist who tries to place subtle persuasion in your cartoons. That would personally offend me. If I were you, I would want an apology from Chancellor Moeser. Luckily for you, I am not you.

However, I want to offer you some help if you want to avoid the backlash in the future: Make me the subject of all of your cartoons, the butt of all your jokes, your humor fodder.

You have my permission - I may

be the last safe target available. Sure, you can only have so many decent cartoons about a goofy-looking computer nerd, but at least you will be safe from offending anyone. No one will misconstrue a Rick Johnson mascot gag as a strike against nerds. Consider it, if you would.

You could save Chancellor Moeser from a number of sleepless nights spent weeping over your cartoons.

Rick Johnson  
sophomore  
computer engineering

#### Questioned Commitment

I believe we have a new opportunity for a teachable moment about the way we treat each other on this campus. I refer to the controversy about a cartoon published in the Daily Nebraskan last week featuring a caricature of student leader Eddie Brown as a campus mascot along with Herbie Husker and Lil' Red.

The editors of the Daily Nebraskan insist that there was no racist intent in this caricature. I take them at their word. However, I do not believe that the matter rests with intent - I question their judgment.

My appeal now is for an atmosphere of compassion, understanding and consideration of the feelings of others as we discuss this incident. Setting aside the issue of racism, no one has mentioned the fact that this caricature constituted a personal attack on an individual student. I object to it, no matter the race or gender of the student.

However, this cartoon and much discussion has been hurtful to minority communities. Once again, our values and our commitment to diversity are being called into question. How we respond to these questions are now as important as the original incident itself.

I want to see other minority students aspire to and succeed in becoming campus leaders. Already, these

potential student leaders face pressure to abstain from working in the channels of student organizations dominated by the majority culture.

We must work hard to make sure that they do not face an additional hurdle of cynicism and ridicule that will further discourage these rising leaders.

Let us all work together to create a campus culture celebrating successful leadership and accomplishment, irrespective of ethnicity, national origin, gender or sexual orientation. I believe most women and men on this campus subscribe to these values. Now, let's act on them.

James Moeser  
UNL Chancellor

For the full text of the chancellor's statement, go to [dailyneb.com](http://dailyneb.com).

#### Nonchalant Accusations

Mr. Larrick (DN letters, Feb. 14), if every editorial cartoon could only be made using the permission of the subject, there would be no such thing as a political cartoon. We as a society would be robbed of a great source of social commentary.

You say it is hard not to perceive the cartoon in a racial sense. On what basis do you make this assertion? I, for one, find it hard to perceive the cartoon on a racial basis.

To me, it is obvious that the cartoon was meant to lampoon the administration's "Look, we are racially tolerant, here's our example!" attitude toward racial inclusion.

We need to be careful and give compelling and irrefutable evidence when accusing a person of being racist. This is something that Chancellor Moeser and many others neglected to do. The accusation of racism is a very serious matter and should be treated as such - not just something that one throws around in a nonchalant manner.

Tim Matas  
senior  
political science

### P.S. Write Back

Send letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 20 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail letters@unl.edu. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.