

Tough act to follow

Loss of Moeser is painful, but new chancellor can better NU

You wouldn't think a short man would leave such big shoes behind.

But when Chancellor James Moeser leaves in July, this university will be challenged to find a successor who can bolster UNL's academic reputation and continue to build programs while addressing important issues on campus.

In his tenure, Moeser championed the liberal arts. Renowned for his skill in concert performance, Moeser approached his job as administrator with the same passion he held for his music.

Yet he did so in an unpretentious manner. Moeser was willing to consider all sides of an issue, and he encouraged discussion. As the leader of the academic side of a football university, Moeser did not blindly cater to athletic wishes.

We need a chancellor who can make sure the university is known for more than its running game.

The move to the University of North Carolina is an excellent opportunity for Moeser, who will now head one of the best public universities in the nation. The choice for Moeser was clear.

Moeser's departure also presents an opportunity for

the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We have the chance to find the right leader.

The next chancellor should bring progressive ideas to this conservative state. As the premier university in Nebraska, UNL should be setting the example for and challenging the rest of the state.

Whoever is hired must understand the dynamics of the NU system and the state that houses it.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is one of three in the NU system, but UNL is the flagship. This university should be more than one of three regional centers for higher education.

The next chancellor must find ways to attract the best students from our state and elsewhere. Minority students are also painfully lacking on this campus.

It will also be important to continue to expand the university's research efforts and increase faculty salaries.

The next chancellor will have the chance to infuse new life and direction into this university, but he or she will have a tough act to follow.

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Obermeyer's VIEW



Letters to the EDITOR

School is cool

Sam McKewon, because you didn't seem to have any main criticism of the School is Cool Jam, I'll try my best to respond to your incoherent cynicism.

You said "athletes have the ability to motivate." These kids admire the athletes for their accomplishments on the field, and the athletes use their influence to deliver positive messages about making good decisions in school and in life.

And they did. Eric Crouch spoke about the importance of character, Brian Shaw and Nicole Kubik delivered an important message about studying for tests and keeping focused in school and Sharolta Nonen gave a moving account of the importance of persevering through adversity.

Through your descriptions of the audience's behavior, you seemed to argue that our efforts to connect with the kids were unsuccessful.

First, it can be extremely difficult to maintain the attention of 12,500 fifth and sixth graders for an hour and a half. This is why we work in a variety of entertainment (the Rope Warrior, Lil' Red, singing) to keep the kids' attention. You made a good point - watching Lil' Red isn't educating in itself. But it keeps their attention so they will focus on the next speaker.

Secondly, I believe our attempts to relate our message were successful. I had the privilege of speaking at the North Platte Jam, and following the event, students and teachers sought the student-athletes and myself to thank us for our message. The teachers spoke in detail about why they thought the messages we had given were important. And the looks in their eyes, the smiles on their faces and the warmth in their voices were some powerful nonverbal confirmation that they were genuinely grateful.

You're right, McKewon. The 2000 Jam was not perfect. But the planners always learn how to make the following year's program more successful from our knowledge of the past years' imperfections.

However, you did not contribute to that process. The attack you launched on Thursday had little real substance. You didn't offer any real suggestions, which I guess shouldn't be surprising, concerning your cynical tone.

And yes, I can hardly wait for next year's Jam.

Greg Krafka
junior
economics
Golden Key
Best of America Chair

No prostate, no problem

David Baker's ignorance in genetics is exceeded only by his ignorance in sociology. His evidence for the lack of a genetic correlation to obesity is supported by his observation that Africa has few obese citizens.

A basic genetic lesson is that a gene or mutation usually gives a predisposition for a condition, not necessarily a guarantee of it. A simple example to demonstrate this is that my father had prostate cancer. So I may carry a gene that predisposes me for that, but will I get prostate cancer? No, because I don't have a prostate!

No one is saying obesity is strictly genetic, just that it is a contributing factor. We have all known someone with the opposite condition who eats non-stop without ever gaining an ounce. The reverse logic applies to many obese people.

Baker's second assertion is that rich, lazy people are the fat ones. Wrong again. Rich countries have a larger population of obese people, but they are not primarily the wealthy. In fact, any small amount of research would have turned up the fact that weight and income in the U.S. have an inverse relationship. Poor individuals are more than three times as likely to be obese.

There will always be a way to lose weight by increasing exercise and decreasing caloric intake, but genetics does help determine how much exercise and how little food it will take for any given individual to lose that weight.

Tara L. Ward
graduate student
molecular veterinary bio-
sciences
University of Minnesota

Insisting interests

Several letters and pieces in the DN have questioned the findings of the committee that investigated the actions of Professor Karl Reinhard. Many have suggested that the committee somehow acted improperly and that its decision was based more on political correctness than on the thoughtful and careful analysis of testimony. Why, writers ask, did the

committee come to a different conclusion than the state patrol or the government investigation?

The faculty committee's decision to censure Reinhard was appropriately different from the conclusions of police or similar investigators. The main reason is obvious: Being unprofessional is not the same as being a criminal.

One can lose one's tenure for not meeting one's classes or one can fail to receive tenure for not undertaking and publishing one's scholarly research. Clearly neither of these things is a crime, yet it is a dereliction for which one can be denied one's job as a professor.

Similarly, falsified research, research deemed unethical by the criteria of a specific discipline, research that improperly uses human subjects or other failed research, can be grounds for dismissal. Freedom of inquiry must exist within guidelines - otherwise, anyone would be free to make up whatever "research" one wanted.

It is not inconsistent for a committee on faculty rights and responsibilities to find that a professor has failed in his responsibilities, even though no crime could be proven against the professor. Faculty committees are not supposed to replicate the ethical questions that, while congruent with laws, are not defined by them.

Committee decisions, like the actions of professors, are certainly open to question. I would ask, though, that we not assume that if a professorial action is not demonstrably illegal, it is professional and ethical and should not be subject to any oversight by the university.

I would also ask that we remember that up until very recently, it was considered both legal and ethical to treat the burial sites, funeral goods and physical remains of American Indian people in ways that were quite illegal in treating the remains of anyone else.

Insisting that the bodies and bones of Indian people are entitled to the same protection as those of any human is not special treatment. As writers question the decision of the committee, I would ask that they be very careful not to imply that somehow the protection of Indian bones is unscientific special interest group politics, and not the same courtesy anyone deserves.

Frances W. Kaye
professor of English