

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Scaling down Other changes should accompany grading system

Who at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is afraid of the new proposed grading system?

Oh, plenty.

And we're willing to bet those students stridently against the introduction of a minus system into professors' grading practices are fearful for self-serving reasons.

In other words, the inflated, inaccurate grades currently proffered to thousands at UNL would suddenly come under closer scrutiny and maybe not be worth as much as it is now. And right now, with the plus in place without the minus, we're getting to have our cake and eat it, too.

And when has that ever been fair?

We know this: The new proposal, regardless of whether it helps us look better next to our peer institutions (which should not be the goal, but unfortunately seems like it might be), it is more fair, simply by not being as unfair as the current system.

Consider this:

In nearly any UNL class at present, Student X gets a 98 percent in a class and receives an A. Student Y gets a 90, eight points worse than Student X and still receives an A. And then there's Student Z, who receives an 86, four points worse than Student Y and gets ... a B.

That's fair? That Z, only half as poor in relation to Y as Y is to X, still receives an entire letter grade poorer, thus losing an entire point in the class. In what mathematics class does that compute?

Essentially, the current system creates unmotivated students not needing to work beyond the 70/80/90 level of work to achieve the grade desired. It hedges their effort. Plus, there's a difference between a 98-percent student and a 90-percent student. That difference isn't illuminated now. Under proposed changes, it would, and it'd also give us a better vantage point in terms of accurate grade distribution.

Which doesn't mean there won't be mathematical inconsistencies as the one stated above. But they'll be on a much smaller scale. Never again will there be the possibility of giant gaps for As.

We believe that scares students, especially those with scholarships because they'll have work harder than they already do to keep them. And honors students, who already drop out of the program like flies, will drop at an even higher rate.

So we suggest that UNL, in accordance with the changes, also review the minimum scholarship GPA and set forth changes to lower it.

Because the major goal isn't to take money away from students, or scare them into cruise courses, which we all know exist on this campus for various reasons. Rather, the impetus for the change should be in the spirit of fairness and accurate grade distribution. Logically, this is why so many of our peer institutions have done so, not to keep up with the University of Joneses.

Most of all, ASUN has to make a concerted effort not to isolate students on this issue and force-feed them "a better image" speech. Students don't care about image, only jobs, GPAs and getting through college. But students, several of who will show in opposition of the proposal at Wednesday's meeting, can listen to reason and compromise, as well.

ASUN has a good idea here. But it needs to be pitched in the right spirit and followed through with compensation from scholarships and financial aid. We ask the student government to go to bat for the UNL students, in the name of fairness and reasonable standards.

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Neal Obermeyer/DN

Learning don't matter: Football rules

Saturday night, about 11:35, I frantically placed a call to the T-shirt company canceling my order. I was having 300 shirts printed that read, "OU sucks, while NU certainly does not!"



Tony Bock

I was planning to sell them outside Arrowhead Stadium before the Big 12 Championship game. I have already bought my ticket to that game, and to the Orange Bowl, sight of the national-championship game this year.

What am I going to do with them now? I wish for the days when I could safely buy tickets to those games before the season was played and know we'd be in them. I'm starting to wonder about the demise of our football program.

We haven't won a national championship in three years. Three years! My friends from other colleges try to tell me that Nebraska fans got spoiled by success and became too cocky.

I tell them to shut up and simply point at my three replica national-championship rings that I wear at all times. Then I remind them that we are a university that prides itself on being good at one thing and one thing only: athletics. Frankly, I don't care that some of our pointless academic programs need help.

Just 'cause I ain't learnin' English the best doesn't mean we shouldn't have a multimillion-dollar skybox facility that's used six times a year. I want to make sure the rich and powerful in the state can enjoy the football games from the comfort of an air-conditioned or heated luxury box. What's wrong with that?

Some of my friends here were angry lately when the Athletic Department went over budget. I simply remind them that the university came out and said it was because student-ticket sales for basketball games were lower than expected.

It's our fault we didn't support the team that failed to make it to the NIT last year. I will take responsibility. I apologize to the Athletic Department.

And don't forget that because of that, the coaches lost their cell phones. How would you feel if you lost your cell phone because stupid students wouldn't come to see an awful basketball team?

With the loss to Kansas State we are left to ponder two questions:

One, who did let the dogs out?

Two, how can we make sure the fans stay interested in a team on the decline?

For the answer to that, we turn to the genius that's in charge of our athletic powerhouse, and a quote he gave to the Lincoln Journal-Star's "Ground Zero," on Nov. 3: "If you look at what's happening with the X-games, extreme sports and wrestling, you have to be ready to fill that niche when the market moves," says Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne.

Billy, that's damn brilliant. It's about time someone looked at the fans as nothing more than a market, and the student athletes as nothing more than profit-makers. I know if there's one thing I want to see, it's college football becoming more like the WWE.

Don't you? It was getting so boring with all of its tradition and sportsmanship. I hated it; besides, that was so 1990s. Everyone knows that modern-day professional wrestling relies on the characters that the wrestlers play, not just their wrestling ability. I say we apply that to football players.

For instance, Erwin Swiney could play a character called "The Invisible Man," as his coverage in the secondary this season has often been hard to find.

Dan Alexander's character could be "Fumbler," a powerful wrestler who distracts his opponents with a fumble, then body-slams them. Our most potent tag-team duo may be Chris Kelsay and Mark Vedral.

Together, they are a dangerous combination. They could only be defeated by Frank Solich and Eric Crouch, who are the most experienced from constantly wrestling the shadows of Tom Osborne and Tommie Frazier.

The tunnel walk used to be exciting, but its time has clearly passed. Wouldn't it be more impressive if they dropped the team out of helicopters onto a giant Husker half-pipe?

I dream of a day where pep rallies end with Solich's knocking that dumb-ass grin off women's Basketball Coach Paul Sanderford's face with the Sears Trophy. I dream of a day where the winners of a Battle Royale of Scarlets vs. cheerleaders get a night with me.

So we're putting ourselves at risk that someday people will look back at the Danny Nee era as a time of dignity and class. We'd have to sink pretty low to say that, wouldn't we?

So I'm ready to be led by Bill Byrne into an era where "student" athletes stop following the example of heroes like Jackie Robinson, and Jessie Owens, but instead look to "Disco Inferno" and "Mr. Ass" as a source of inspiration.

Letters to the editor

Too much curve

The saying is "There's No Place like Nebraska." So why don't we keep it that way?

This letter is in response to the proposed changes to the grading scale. I have to say I don't see how the ASUN can allow this to go through. If there are any students that are reading this and don't know, the new scale will more than likely hurt your grade point.

Think of it this way (for all you with scholarships): Last year if you just got that 3.5 that you needed, with these changes you may get a 3.33 or even less.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has to stand on its own and not do what other universities are doing just to follow in their footsteps.

Is that what we really want UNL to be - a follower? I think that we want to be a leader. So for all of you that agree with me e-mail the ASUN or go to the meeting Wednesday night.

If we students don't do something we might have to get a new slogan.

Michael Tveit
chemical engineering
sophomore

Who's inconsiderate?

Ali Sezer spoke very decisively in his letter concerning Initiative 416. That being said, forgive me

if I'm still a touch confused on the topic.

Sezer urges us to be "loving and accepting" of everyone, regardless of gender, race, social status or religion.

Does this also apply to Christians that consider homosexuality a sin - people that accept and love homosexuals for who they are but will not embrace the things they do?

Are their beliefs met with the open arms and open minds that all other followings seem to demand?

Sezer pleads impassioned against actions that "deteriorate our family values."

What of the values that have been passed down throughout the world since the time of Christ, which are now more threatened by "deterioration" than ever?

Sezer declares that "only God is to judge." What am I to gather from this if, several paragraphs earlier, Sezer condemned the entire state of Nebraska as "so behind in manners, democracy, equality, and human rights" simply because we decided not to give homosexual couples tax cuts?

I voted for Initiative 416, and I don't hold a fraction of the malice and contempt toward others that Sezer displayed in his letter. Perhaps the real shame lies elsewhere.

Christy Linnell
computer science
sophomore

Filmgoers are being bamboozled

If I could speak to Douglas this is what I'd say: "Douglas, you suck!"

No comment? I thought so. What are you afraid of? That no one will come to your theaters if you don't play movies with your usual rotating bunch of "hot" actors in their touching "controversial" roles, which means little more than someone like Tom Hanks playing a gay man with cancer?

The pool of actors that we see is getting more shallow with each movie, yet Douglas keeps playing Adam Sandler flicks like they're works of art that should be coveted.

I want Douglas (of Douglas Theatres) to know a few things about me. First, I watch a lot of movies. Second, my favorite bird is the albatross. The first item (but nary the more important of the two) is what I'm trying to make you realize and then understand why I'm upset. The second item is what I'm having for dinner.

I watch a lot of movies for a couple of reasons that should be obvious; I don't have many friends, I don't like to deal with reality, and movies are a cheaper form of entertainment than cocaine.

For these reasons that have spawned my love of movies, I want Douglas to see that it's getting harder and harder for me to go to his theaters.

I understand that Hollywood itself sucks, and you must cater to the "iron claw of crap movies" that towers over little local theaters that are barely breathing anymore, but couldn't you at least understand that being selective (i.e. leaving out Spike Lee films) isn't going to win you any friends?

Why is it that we have eight Douglas-owned theaters, with 36 screens, and not one of them is playing Spike Lee's truly controversial film "Bamboozled"?

Maybe I wouldn't be so mad if, of these 36 screens, "Meet the Parents" wasn't being played in three different theaters, "Red Planet" in two, "Remember the Titans" in two, "Charlie's Angels" in three, and well, you get the picture (sometimes).

I think people shouldn't bitch about driving across town to see a flick; I have to go to Omaha where "Bamboozled" is being played in one theater (not a Douglas one, by the way, which owns the 20 Grand and about 25 more screens in Omaha).

My car won't make it, so will someone give me a ride? Great, except the film is probably gone by now. A flash in the proverbial frying pan.



Karen Brown

The Douglas-owned theaters are a force to be reckoned with because their contracts for movies obviously aren't unmainstream-worthy.

Can one argue that Lee is unmainstream? Perhaps for Hollywood, but he is one of the most revered filmmakers in history. He has enough clout that his film should not be silenced.

Then again, it is a "black" film. And, as I understand it, neither Brad Pitt nor Harrison Ford are in it, so it can't be too good.

Perhaps Douglas isn't showing it because he couldn't scrape together enough change from the bottom of his theaters to be able to afford this film. I'm sure it wasn't that perhaps Nebraskans can't handle a (hush, now) "black" film. Not just black, like a Morgan Freeman/Denzel Washington powerful duo, but black. Black faces painted black, black. Issues of race. It's racy. Too racy for Lincoln.

Sure is. Why else wouldn't they play it? And why am I targeting Douglas? Well, I could target the other TWO theaters in Lincoln that aren't Douglas owned - the Joyo and the Mary Riepma Ross - but, I would hear the usual "Where the hell are the Joyo and the Ross?"

No one goes to these places anyway, but people should. The Joyo gets slayed for being too far away and besides, it plays only previously released movies that are worth playing again.

The Ross is too artsy. Everything is foreign. I want to scream "Not true, not true!" like I'm 5-years-old. I want to pull my hair and tell people that these places aren't just for the elite or strange of the community.

For those who have called me uppity and pseudo-intellectually snobby about movies, well I can enjoy B-movies and "low grade" flicks just as much as truly great films. But what we keep getting aren't even bad enough (i.e. campy, cheesy, intentionally artistic flops) to be viewed by humans.

Hollywood movies are like hot dogs; we know they're bad for us, amalgams of waste left over from potentially more productive ventures, but we still consume them as if they are the only thing out there.

I'm not a snob, I just refuse to sit through boring, reshaped plots about discovering new planets, remakes of old TV shows and whatever else Adam Sandler thinks of while taking a piss.

Oh well, I like going to the video store anyway. At least there I can rent movies that cater to my needs as someone who enjoys all genres except action.

I refuse to think I'm alone, but then again the Ross is never packed, and I'm sure the Sandler flick will do great at the box office.

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Write back
and tell us what you think!