

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Aid misplaced Systematic funding of private schools illogical

Follow the money, and it points you to a state government that professes to be gravely concerned about its state university system but doesn't, at least in one case, back up lip service with action.

Last year, students attending the University of Nebraska received just a tad under \$1 million in state-funded financial aid.

Meanwhile, students attending the state's private institutions - Creighton, Nebraska Wesleyan and company - cashed in to the tune of \$3.4 million.

Divide the pie, and you see private school students, which encompass one-fifth of the state's college enrollment, received 57 percent of the aid from the Coordinating Commission for Post Secondary Education for the 2000-2001 school year.

This may be mere pocket change in UNL's total state aid, but it still matters. Nebraska legislators shouldn't be in the business of funding private education, even indirectly. Their primary goal, especially in the wake of UNL's documented mediocrity, should be to strengthen the state's public schools with any tuition-paying students they can.

It seems so simple to us. Private colleges aren't subject to the same rules and regulations that state schools are. A state body like the Legislature trying to tell a private, religious institution like Creighton what it can and cannot teach would cause an uproar.

Yet students are attending these same private institutions with the help of state funds and maybe even because of state funds.

Sure, middle-class students who want to attend private college will be hurt if the aid program is restructured to ignore school cost.

This, of course, is the private schools' fault and problem. They, unlike UNL, set tuition at whatever price they want. An apparent option is lowering the cost of tuition to offset the loss of state aid.

We can already hear the predictions of doom for private colleges. Less tuition money means fewer programs, inexperienced professors and (gasp!) even graduate students teaching classes.

Funny. That's what Nebraska's flagship university looks like right now.

The irony of upper-crust private schools like Wesleyan and Creighton sinking to UNL's level is rich, but highly unlikely. The same private school officials that will bemoan the demise of private education will be simultaneously working to make sure that demise doesn't happen.

Whether they're successful or not isn't our chief concern, nor should it be the chief concern of the state.

That concern should be the University of Nebraska and its students.

Editorial Board

Sarah Baker, Jeff Bloom, Bradley Davis, Jake Glazeski, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Kimberly Sweet

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CHANCELLOR PERLMAN AND PRESIDENT SMITH DISPENSE ACADEMIC PRIORITIZATION...



Neal Obermeyer/DN

Wishing for times long past away

I stare into your eyes and feel as if all my wishes could come true.

As if the sterling silver nobility and cotton candy wisps of my dreams come to life in the rolling, crashing, brilliance of the blue ocean globes wrapping the earth of the iris of your eyes.

I am lost. Words seem to fall all around me like rain on summer afternoons when I would lie in my hammock and watch the drops roll along its weave, forming puddles on the wax tips of the grass.

My world trying to grasp - trying to find the words I can't find for this feeling. I wish I could. I wish I could find the words.

I wish that we could be there now, lying in my hammock. Maybe then we wouldn't need the words. I wish we could be together sitting in wooden beach chairs, sipping sunsets through the bottoms of glasses.

I wish that I could paint the world Picasso coated blue. Make the sun a giant ruby orange. Peel back its deep brilliant flesh and sink my teeth into its Crayola-crayon orange inside. The sweet tang on my tongue, firecracker sparks of summer.

I wish I was a kid again. I could play in cardboard boxes, build pillow forts, wear my Ninja Turtle pajamas and my shoes with the air pumps. I wish I could listen to Vanilla Ice, flip up the collar on my denim jacket and sport my huge '80s flat top, and that social status was still based on owning the biggest box of Crayolas with the sharpener on the back.

Above all else, I wish I could still walk around at family gatherings in my Scooby-Doo underwear.

I can see the faces of those days as I look out into the fields that rest behind me, tall grass - waving, flowing water, and I know - I know that they will fade, softly, gently, forgotten. Distant cotton, blanketing, warm, comforting, touch, rolling across my heart like beads of water on grass following the rain - and here they will stay, simple, soft remembrances, faded portraits in the summer sun.

Sometimes, I wish we could all go back into those fields and find the innocence of the days when it didn't matter who you played with. When skin colors bleed together like watercolor paintings. When nothing mattered but the sandbox and a tub of plastic army men.

I wish I knew what happened to Saturday mornings. My world was once defined through the hot batter and blueberry juices of my dad's pancakes. Why the downhill slide in Saturday morning cartoon lineups? I miss Garfield. Did the Smurfs retire to sunny Jamaica? Can a mushroom house grow in that weather?

I wish we still had recess. Time for making your move under the twisty slide. Create playground basketball dynasties. Dominate the gridiron of four-square. Settle battles of "am not," "are to" with "my dad can beat up your dad," or "I know you are, but what am I."

I wish we still had the days of: supper was over three hours ago, but the game never is; diving touchdown catches, way past our curfew; game-winning, fade-away "I wanna be like Mike" three-point shots; I just won the World Series, Mickey Mantle, Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, Ted Williams, step aside for a moment home run shots that seem to travel forever as if time was on hold.

These days are different. Playing in the sandbox is a late night covert operation. I have to hide my Fruit Loops addiction. Picking up a date on a Big Wheel doesn't seem to impress the ladies quite like it used to.

No longer is it cool to consume things that aren't a part of any recognized food group. Maybe we finally learned the "ummmm, those berries look good, but I sure threw up afterwards" lesson.

I wish I could stop my world, pretend I was in elementary school and when the teacher wasn't looking, I would take it off its axis.

I wish I could paint a self-portrait. Build a house. Cook a gourmet meal. Stand at the top of the world. I wish I could play the piano. Compose a symphony. Take a shot at acting.

I wish I had a swimming pool full of pillows to sleep in. If tomorrow the lungs of my life were to collapse in a puff of smoke - I wish I would have written a novel. Changed the world. Stayed in bed for a day. Climbed a tree. Gone fishing. Been to Europe. Spent an afternoon with my grandma. Played with my cousins.

I wish that we didn't have to put our dreams aside. That we weren't also working toward them. My life teeters on the edge of self-nullification - a balancing act of heart pressed against the cold steel of reality. Take it for what it's worth - as if there was no tomorrow.

As for me, I wish - in your eyes - and it feels as if it could all come true, but if it doesn't, I think I will be okay as long as I have you.



Dan Leamen

Letters to the editor

No more bull

Alisa Hardy says that No Bull would try to switch student's e-mail to a "Web-based provider" and calls that approach "more efficient."

This is just plain wrong, and No Bull should be careful in what it wishes for.

The bigred e-mail system, while not perfect, is not "troublesome" when compared with other systems.

Compare it with the Lotus Notes system, which crashed twice yesterday. If his imperial majesty, L. Dennis Smith, has his way, all University of Nebraska students will be moved to Lotus Notes for e-mail.

Ask any staff or faculty (who are forced to use Lotus Notes by fiat) what they think of this. Better yet, ask the people who run the systems required to run Notes.

There is (at UNL) no future alternative to bigred other than Lotus Notes. Yet, there are "Web-based" options for students to use with bigred. Bigred can be used with standard e-mail clients such as Netscape, Eudora, Outlook, etc., and it can also be used with UNL's BlackBoard Web site. For the point-and-drool crowd, it will even work with Hotmail and Yahoo.

No Bull should try harder before they go blindly trying to "improve" things.

Joshua Hesse
Electrical Engineering
Senior

Social Security numbers secure?

I am glad that someone in the upper echelons of power has made the realization that there may be problems associated with using students' social

security numbers as a means of tracking a student throughout the university system.

Ever since I filled out my first forms here at UNL, I have been appalled at the carelessness with which these very personal numbers are tossed around.

During the previous summer, I worked on Offutt Air Force Base as an assistant secretary. As a government organization, they had to comply fully with various laws, the least of which was the Personal Data Privacy Act of 1974.

This act of Congress requires that any piece of paper emblazoned with a person's Social Security number be summarily destroyed when no longer useful. As a result, a large part of my time was spent in a small closet feeding a shredder reams of paper.

What bothers me is that I know for a fact that the university is not in compliance with this act and takes no such precautions when it comes to handling my personal information.

Regardless of the administration's financial qualms, this situation must be fixed. I know from personal experience that many institutions utilize Social Security numbers as a reliable means of identification. With a person's number in hand and a little bit of initiative, access to bank accounts, credit cards and other stores of private information become as open for dissemination as the newspaper.

If the university has any sense of respect for their students' privacy (they are doing fairly well keeping the Daily Nebraskan away from Judicial Affairs records), then they will take advantage of the bright minds over in Ferguson and fix this potential problem for everyone.

Ben Ehlers
International Studies
Junior

Sweet tropical dreams

The coolness of my room comforts me, and as I look around my bedroom, I am at least content to feel the quietness of being stagnant. There is nothing to do but lie here and dream. My mind rocks and sways to the swells of the breeze that blows.

My curtains softly carry my thoughts back to green rain falling down on monster-sized palm trees in Guyana, their leaves bigger than small children, their coconuts the size of large pineapples and their pineapples the size of watermelons.

They're sweet and porous when you bite into them, the juice comes gushing out and you have to wipe away the rivers of sweetness that drip and run down the sides of your mouth.

The pineapple stands are scattered along the country road. There are no signs and no turnoffs, only tiny thatched huts along the shoulder of the muddy road with girls in grass skirts and machetes that swing in big arcs splitting the giant fruit.

I am riding in the back seat of my grandmother's white Jaguar. The seats are brown leather, and the car has a smell to it that I cannot describe only to say that it smells positively English. She wears a wide brim hat, and her gold jewelry is piled on so thick that I can't see her wrists beneath the heavy bracelets that go clink, clink as we drive on, heading further into the jungle.

We are on our way to her sugarcane plantation where she will bring food and rations to one of the families that lives on her land. The road becomes wet and dark. The mud is a watery, milk-chocolate brown, and the tires are slick, making spongy tracks as we drive along.

The car lurches over a large bump in the road; I look back to see a prehistoric-sized snake, his length stretched across the road and further still into tall, green grass. I am too shocked to scream, and my grandmother doesn't even take notice. She is focused on the road and the Bobby Darin coming from her tape player.

I am 10, and this is my second time back to this country where my mother grew up and where my grandmother refuses to leave. This is her home after all.

She has learned to survive here. More than that, she has learned to make herself a success even after she and my grandfather divorced more than 30 years ago. At one time, they owned shipping yards and built schools.

They donated money to build churches, which were then named after my mother and my aunt. They



Yasmin McEwen

used to take their girls out of school to travel for months on excursions that took them to see the Pope and the Queen of England.

My mother was driven to and from school by their chauffeur, and she often told the story of days when she didn't want to go to school. On the way to school, she would take her shoes off and throw them out the window, and when they got to school, the chauffeur would open up the door and say, "Where are your shoes?"

My mother would say, "I must have forgotten them," with a big smile.

So he would get back in the car and drive her home, where she would hide under the baby grand piano while the driver explained in agitation to my grandmother what had happened.

Playing under the baby grand, my mother would invent a life all her own. Her adventures became bedtime stories she would tell me years later as I was being tucked into bed. "Mom, please tell me the stories of 'S.'"

"S" had a post office under the piano where she organized and delivered her father's mail. "S" had a candy store too, which she operated from underneath the piano until her older sister came and said, "I will buy all of your candy, but it will have to be credited to my account." Which "S" agreed to in full enthusiasm and happily handed over all of her candy, only to find that when she wanted to collect, the older sister laughed and said, "You know I don't have any money."

"S" learned a lesson. Never give her big sister anything without receiving something in exchange first.

"S" had a little scooter that she would ride around the block, and she had a big collie named Snoopy. She had cooks to torment and big geese in the yard that honked at her and sometimes chased her, but Snoopy kept them at bay. There was a parrot who would knock on the door with his claws when she was in the shower, and his voice would imitate someone who wanted to get in the bathroom; He would squawk, "let me in, let me in."

Over the years, my mother's stories have continued on, and I suddenly feel shame for not returning to Guyana for more than 19 years. All those times my mother returned, my sister in tow, she would later recite exotic stories of the jungle and the green fertile land, the flowers, the smells and most of all her people, my people.

Always she would ask me, "Will you please come visit grandma with me?" Always an excuse, always a reason, "No, I can't possibly..."

Regret fills me. My grandma is 78 now. As I feel the cool tides of sleep beginning to wash over me like soft rustling waves, I know it's time for me to make a return trip. There can be no more excuses. Time doesn't wait for those who ignore it.