

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Proven loyalty Interim Chancellor Perlman's dedication is UNL's best bet

The two chancellor candidates have said their piece, and it won't be long before NU President Dennis Smith will reveal who he intends to tap as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's next leader.

The university played host to the two candidates this week, which included UNL Interim Chancellor Harvey Perlman and University of Minnesota Regent Bill Hogan.

Both candidates have shining qualifications. Hogan seems to have a brilliant business mind — one that could propel the university's efforts to bring in the outside money needed to make UNL's programs the best. He promised to bring in \$250 million in his first three years at the university.

He also seems committed to diversity — a priority that many administrators, faculty, staff and students on campus feel strongly about.

While Hogan has taken a reprieve from academia to run his own company, his commitment to education seems to run deep. During his visit he trumpeted the importance of a liberal arts education, saying it was the basis for the innovative research that can bring cash into UNL's coffers.

Taking Hogan up on his promises is a tempting proposition. Former Chancellor James Moeser identified the need to bring in outside money. And, the recent Omaha World-Herald series "UNL: Confronting Mediocrity" brought the need to light even more.

Although bending to the dollar signs in our eyes is tempting, we feel Interim Chancellor Harvey Perlman's proven leadership, Nebraska ties, willingness to challenge the status quo and sincerity make him more qualified for the job.

During his eight months as interim chancellor, Perlman has done things in line with the thinking of students, staff and faculty.

He got rid of Moeser's infamous alma mater, for example.

He hasn't been afraid to speak out. He publicly condemned Initiative 416, which prohibits same-sex marriages in Nebraska.

He's gone forward with initiatives necessary to move the University of Nebraska forward in the next 20 years. He's led the process of academic prioritization and he's made the goals of the 20/20 vision report his own.

One of Perlman's most attractive qualities is that he's a Nebraskan — and he intends to stay one for his professional career.

Many in the state expressed frustration when Moeser announced he was leaving for a better institution, wondering when UNL would begin to attract talented administrators that wouldn't use the university simply as a stepping stone to bigger and better things.

Perlman is a Nebraskan, and he knows the values of the university and the state.

At the same time, he doesn't seem to be held hostage to those values when it is in the best interest of the university to be progressive and challenge the status quo.

At the beginning of the year, we said we didn't want to give Perlman our stamp of approval too soon. We said he needed to prove his mettle as a leader.

He has. He has weathered controversy, pleased many of his university constituents and shown that the university won't stand still with him at the helm.

We're pleased with Perlman's performance and hope Smith is, too.

We would like to be able to call him Chancellor Harvey Perlman, without the "Interim" in front.

Editorial Board

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

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Neal Obermeyer/DN

Letters to the editor

Sex Appeal

Oral sex is not an appropriate topic of discussion for a newspaper column regardless of sexual orientation.

If I wrote a lengthy column about giving my girlfriend oral sex, there is no chance that it would ever be considered for publication in any reasonable newspaper.

Jake Glazeski's column ("A world hanging in balance," March 1) was revolting, lewd and seemed to serve no purpose. This column belongs in Jake's journal, not in the Daily Nebraskan.

It seems as if the Daily Nebraskan's Opinion Page has turned into a gay pride parade on paper. I would be willing to bet the majority of UNL students also are tired of turning to the opinion page and reading only about the personal lives of the writers on staff.

Adam Scheer
sophomore
chemical engineering

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by the signatures of 50 UNL students in support of it.

Miller should be ashamed

As a white, middle-class greek, I must say how angry I am at Regent Drew Miller's statements against diverse recruitment.

While it is of extreme importance that we bring in the state's best and brightest, not drawing in a diverse group of individuals means dooming this institution to third-tier status.

Regent Miller and anyone who worked to get him elected — especially the liberal minded — should be ashamed of themselves.

Andrew Faltin
senior
philosophy

An Official Response

My purpose in issuing this statement is to clarify the position of the University of Nebraska on the issue of recruitment of minority students.

It is the goal of the university to improve the diversity of its student body as well as its faculty and staff on all four of our campuses. It is our firm resolve to aggressively recruit students of color as

well as those of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Statements made by a member of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents during the March 3 board meeting on the subject of recruitment of minority students have understandably caused concern and anger among students and members of the faculty and staff of the university. Many Nebraska citizens have had similar reactions.

It has been the university's experience that standardized tests are not a strong predictor of academic performance for students in general and are an even less reliable predictor for students of color. Academic performance in high school is a much more accurate indicator of potential for success in higher education for all students. We are confident that all students who meet our admissions standards have the potential to succeed at the University of Nebraska.

At the meeting mentioned above, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents unanimously adopted a resolution on student recruitment that urges the university to direct its recruiting efforts to several key student groups, including those who would contribute to campus diversity. In addition, the Strategic Framework document approved by the Board of Regents sets the following goal for the university: to develop and implement a universitywide effort to recruit and retain a diverse faculty, administration and student population and create an environment that welcomes, respects, values and honors diversity. We fully intend to achieve this goal.

Dennis Smith
president
University of Nebraska

Daring Drew

If our administrators, to say nothing of the DN editorial board, all agree the Affirmative Action emperor is wearing the most beautiful set of robes imaginable, how dare Drew Miller notice he's naked?

It's time Miller realized he's a regent of a university and not some intellectual institution dedicated to the pursuit of truth!

Gerard Harbison
UNL chemistry professor

Logic six feet underground

From a certain point of view — a very Planet Vulcan point of view, no doubt — Regent Drew Miller's recent comments may appear logical.

Major Premise: Minority students, on average standardized tests, score (for whatever reasons) lower than whitey.

Minor Premise: Lower overall scores could hurt UNL's ranking among other schools.

Conclusion: Don't recruit minority students — QED.

Even some of his critics are willing to go along with his logic, though they're astonished and grieved to have that logic supersede the existing plan to recruit minority students.

Joel Schafer, student body president and student regent, said, "The fact that test scores and national rankings are more important (to Miller) than diversity is something I abhor."

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, agreed.

"For a minority student to hear someone say it's more important to rank high than to have us in that institution — that's negative," he said.

And in a world of negatives and positives, one has to agree.

But both of these reactions imply that the logic Miller uses is valid.

What's being bemoaned in both statements is that Miller would let logic stand in the way of all important "diversity."

But is this reaction logical? Or are we supposed to throw out logic when race rears its ugly head?

I would submit that it would be better to put to rest Miller's fallacious logic (if one could) than to suggest we should ignore it, however logical it may be.

So, with all due respect, here is the flaw in your argument, Mr. Miller.

Other universities are recruiting minority stu-



Mark Baldridge

dents and at higher rates.

If these universities have higher standardized exam scores than we do, it is then very likely that our white students are the ones dragging us down.

So stick it.

Now, having put Regent Miller's specious logic to rest, let me do something to help resurrect his reputation.

This comes in the form of some free advice. Miller, you bumpkin, with your provincial backwardness and crotch scratching, wake up!

You're in deep doo doo and all your amateurish flailing about, trying to spin your doctor, is not doing you any good.

If anything, you're digging a deeper grave for your honorable family name.

Let me propose a way to marry your main interests in student recruitment with a minority you can get behind and push.

Native Americans are a large minority in Nebraska, one of the largest, making up about 10 percent of our citizens.

You've said (over and over I'm afraid) that until we're spending "enough" money on in-state recruitment, you don't think we should spend a cent on recruiting out of state.

Well, I can sort of see your point, here. After all, this is a land-grant institution and exists to serve the state.

Then there's the "brain drain" you've spoken so often of — educated persons moving away from Nebraska. (Let me tell you, I can see why they want out.)

Native Americans are Nebraska citizens and minorities. They are underrepresented in institutions of higher learning. They've been here a while and might actually stick around if they had better opportunities (for education as well as the attendant higher wages), and they need a champion in the Board of Regents.

Some of them may be your own constituents.

Redeem yourself, if not your reputation for having a logical mind. (Leave that to the professionals, K?)

Do the right think.

Naiveté in the Oval Office

Two cars in every garage. Two big, meaty chickens in every pot. Last Tuesday, in his nationally televised address to Congress, President Bush basically delivered that kind of speech.



Seth Felton

He promised to cut taxes, increase spending to education and defense, build a great big missile shield, find alternative sources of energy and resurrect.

But when you pick his proposed tax cut apart, it's horrifyingly biased towards the wealthy. According to Citizens for Tax Justice, the America's poorest 20 percent will receive an average \$15 tax cut the first year and \$37 by 2004. Wow. You could buy a toaster with that.

More to the point is the break for the wealthy. The top 1 percent of taxpayers will receive an average \$13,469 cut the first year, rising to \$31,201 by 2004.

You could buy a new Lexus. Or, if it tickles your fancy, about five Hyundais with that kind of money.

Bush and his posse argue that since the rich pay more in taxes, they should receive their fair share of the cuts. More money in, more money back.

A simple-minded explanation. Ignored in that argument is that the workers, the office drones and the middle class are largely responsible for the money of the wealthy. The "new" economy and the boom of the last 10 years is not solely the result of a few billionaires throwing their cash around. It owes its existence largely to common workers.

All those in management, in the service sector, manufacturing and sales, those of us who held down two jobs to make ends meet and all of us who worked for corporations owned by those in the top earnings bracket contributed substantially more to the economy and the wealth of this nation than CEOs who make \$5 million even if they screw up. Most of us don't have that kind of luxury.

Bush's advisors haughtily dismiss this kind of talk as class warfare, but I can't help it if it's the truth. Without us, the economy would collapse in a heartbeat. The man at the top is expendable. I don't understand why someone as secure as a CEO, making \$5 million a year, deserves more in tax cuts than most people earn in annual income.

And, while a break in income tax is a relief to anyone, that's not really where the tax burden lies. A break of \$15? Who cares? But my payroll taxes — including Medicare and Social Security payments — are enormous. What's worse is that these taxes are ludicrously regressive.

The Social Security tax, for example, has a cap of \$72,600. I make considerably less than that, so every cent of my income is taxed for Social Security. But someone in the top 1 percent bracket, who makes over \$918,000, only has the first \$72,600 of his income taxed.

One hundred percent of my income is taxed for Social Security, while a guy who makes \$920,000 would see 7.9 percent of his income taxed. The guy who makes \$5 million sees 1.4 percent of his income taxed.

This is simply unjust.

The whole mess gets unloaded on those who deserve it least. With more of the tax burden placed on the middle class, people look for a scapegoat. The poor are the most convenient targets, and politicians are all too eager to incite the polemics against them.

Hence the clamor for welfare reform, for the "poor to get to work, do their fair share, we're not going to pay for them to be lazy!" talk.

Never mind that the poor do jobs no one else wants — they are the janitors of the world.

Largely overlooked as well is corporate welfare — government kickbacks to ailing corporations. Corporate welfare, according to the Government Accounting Office, cost the taxpayers \$53.8 billion in 1994, while welfare to the poor cost only \$8 billion.

When Bush says "tax cut," he really means "up yours." Tax cut means the wealthy become wealthier, while we struggle and services get whittled away.

Incidentally, while Bush promised in his speech Tuesday to make us more energy independent, he proposes to cut the Energy Department's funding for the fuel efficiency and renewable fuels program by 22 percent.

Also embarrassing to the new administration was the fact that, one day before the Seattle earthquake, with hundreds of calls for assistance being made to FEMA, a federal relief agency, Bush called for substantial cuts in that same program. He's even called for a complete halt on AIDS research.

These are the hidden costs of a tax cut — programs, services and research on potentially life saving discoveries, as well as funding to agencies that help people directly are all reduced.

This is why I and a majority of Americans didn't vote for Bush.