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Task Force Report a giant step in the right direction

UNLV has made a serious move in the direction of athletic reform with its recently released Presidential Task Force Report on the College Student-Athlete at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

The university will implement 49 of the 50 recommendations. It should have adopted all 50, though.

The report was the result of UNLV's 1990 decision to join the College Student-Athlete Project, a program started by Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society.

UNLV's report, released in six parts, follows much of what was recommended by the Knight Commission's Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete in March 1991.

Many of the new policies that result from the 109-page report are "clearly related to progress toward graduation" by student-athletes.

The message sent by the formation and its report is a good one: this university is serious about furthering its athletic endeavors, not at the expense of academics. It's a clear step away from the foolish idea that one was the cause of the other's ills.

Clearly, President Robert Maxson seems aware that the growth of this university is dependent upon academics and athletics being partners, coexisting with the same goal.

The formation of this council was vital to ease for what have been, for UNLV, uncomfortable growing pains.

The release of this report and the adoption of its policies—some of which are more stringent than the NCAA's—could very well propel UNLV from a laughingstock to a major-college leader in the national movement toward academic-athletic reform.

'Yell' complies with audit; others should follow suit

The Rebel Yell was recently requested to prepare for an audit, covering the period from February 1992 to March 1993.

Apparently this move was requested by Student Body President Joel Kostman, who was concerned about finances as the paper prepares to change editors.

But that's a strange reason considering the editor of The Rebel Yell is not the chief financial officer; the business manager is. Rebel Yell Business Manager Steve Anderson plans to return for a second year.

This seems to be another attempt on the part of Student Government officials, who seem certain something is wrong with the paper's books, to keep the paper busy proving its accountability. It was Kostman who requested the investigative "report" made to the Senate by Sen. Patrick Smith in April.

Smith's investigation, originally intended to shed some light for the Senate when it voted on the Yell independence resolutions, turned into a search for some phantom negative information about the paper's business practices. (Now, the Senate has chosen Smith as its representative on the Rebel Yell Advisory Board.)

Still, this audit may be beneficial in the long run. If the changes made in The Rebel Yell's business practices over the past year had been known by all, there may have been less concern about "accountability."

Let's hope that this will start a new trend. We'd like to see other student organizations open their books for the same type of scrutiny.

The above is the opinion of The Rebel Yell. All other inclusions on the opinion page reflect the opinions of the author or artist indicated and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Rebel Yell staff.



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Illustration by Thomas Moore

Academic Freedom at UNLV?

BY JAMES YOHE

What is academic freedom? I really couldn't tell you, since it doesn't exist at UNLV.

I would think that academic freedom involves the ability of competent professors to profess whatever they want in the safety of their own classrooms without the fear of persecution by the university for expressing their points of view while educating students.

This would include a professor's job performance being evaluated according to their scholarship and teaching skills, not according to the "correctness" of their political, social or economic views. If I have come close in describing academic freedom, then we aren't seeing it at UNLV.

Today, any professor with views to the right of Karl Marx is a target for political employment discrimination. A well-proven track record of political persecution has already been laid by departments such as history, economics and political science.

Free marketeers hide their view until after tenure review, even in the classrooms of Beam Hall, College of Business and Economics. Some of UNLV's prominent professors have received treatment worse than students (if that's possible) by their departments and colleges because they differ with the "correct" views of their departments.

Political diversity is almost nonexistent in departments such as political science and history where they are needed most. These two departments need diversity because they are subjective and not purely objective art. In history, by including or excluding bits of information one-sided views can be easily represented. The importance of one action or event over another is also subjective and open to political bias. That is why we need diversity in the department to receive a full and complete education in history.

Diversity is also important to provide students with a good education and enable them to become confident graduates who feel they have learned something, instead of "jumped through a hoop." If a conservative or classical liberal student takes a class taught by a liberal or communist professor, he may benefit just as much as he would have by taking that class from a professor with his own views.

By allowing opposing viewpoints to be taught a student becomes aware of arguments against his or her particular position. By hearing opposing views similar to his or her own, one of two things can occur. Either the student will change their

position or after hearing the other side of an argument, realize his or her position is right and become more confident in that position.

Diversity and academic freedom have recently taken another crushing blow in the history department. Lawrence Klein, chair of the history department, recently admitted to me that, "Yes, most of our history professors are Democrats with a Big D," and that his department does "lack diversity."

Klein has added to this lack of diversity by using his POWER as chair of the history department to ensure David Beito (a classical liberal) did not receive a position at the university. The history department converted Beito's lecturer position as an economic historian to a tenure track position. Klein appointed himself to chair the search committee for a position outside his field (Klein is an 18th-century British cultural historian and the position was for a U.S. economic historian.)

He then used his power as chair to exclude student representation on the search committee, and tried to prevent Beito from even being interviewed for the job. Beito has recently received an award for the outstanding article published in the "Journal of Urban History," a prestigious journal and is well liked as an instructor by his students. Why did Klein try to prevent Beito from being interviewed?

After Klein had weeded more objective members from his search committee, the job was given to an outside person, who has not met the requirements of the advertisement placed in professional journals. Klein took it upon himself to narrow the points of view to which students are exposed to by blackballing an outstanding classical liberal professor at this university and installing another democrat with a "Big D."

Klein's excessive intervention in the search committee and strong-arm tactics are a disgrace to higher education and a virtual crime committed against all student sat this university both on the right and the left.

I believe it is in every student's best interest to call Klein (895-0810) and question him on his action in this matter. Academic freedom and diversity at this university are in deep trouble and we should not allow this university to take up an ideological stance as to what is to be taught and what shouldn't be taught.

— James Yohe is a senator for the college of business and economics