



December 1, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

In “An Open Letter from University of Nebraska Faculty on Recent Attacks on Our Institution,” School Choice Lincoln was charged with “leverag[ing] a single campus interaction into a sustained attack on the University.” We would like to address the false statements about our organization and express our true concerns.

First of all, the letter alleges that “staff of anti-public-education nonprofits affiliated with Governor Ricketts, such as School Choice Lincoln, have leveraged [attacks against the university].” Our organization is not a non-profit, nor does it have staff. We are also not “anti-public-education.” Our own children currently attend or have attended public schools here in Lincoln. We are not affiliated with Governor Ricketts. We are simply an unfunded, grassroots group of parents and concerned citizens who advocate for expanding educational options, improving current educational options, and increasing transparency so parents are better able to make decisions regarding their children’s educations.

We focus most of our efforts on K-12 issues like reading proficiency and expanded educational options, but we occasionally comment on other issues, as individuals and as a group. Many members of the community have commented about the issues addressed in the Open Letter; we’re not sure why we have been singled out and named as “attackers.” And we’re also not sure how pointing out a problem that needs attention could be considered “an attack.” How can improvements be made if no one is willing to identify problems?

It may be helpful if we connect the dots between our work with K-12 education and our concerns regarding the University, specifically the English Department. In the past few years we have noticed changes in our high school students’ LPS English educations. Some of the teachers, especially the more recent college graduates, seem unusually focused on social justice. Students receive less instruction in classic literature and grammar and more instruction about identity politics and other social justice priorities. While there may be nothing inherently wrong with learning about social justice, it appears that essential academic skills like reading, writing, and critical thinking are being replaced by the teaching of political ideas and theories in required English classes. This substitution leaves students with gaping holes in their educations and a leftist ideological bent. Why should English curriculum be delivered with any sort of ideology?

When UNL English instructors caused a scene on campus earlier this fall, we took a closer look at what was going on in the department. The department’s mission statement and core values line up perfectly with the changes we have noticed in our kids’ high school English classes. This makes perfect sense: many of the LPS high school English teachers are graduates of the UNL English Department.



As parents, we feel it's our duty to advocate for quality education for our children, and that's why we have made comments (at times; not in a "sustained" manner as described in the letter) on social media regarding our concerns. More than anything, we want every department at the University of Nebraska to be strong, vibrant, and productive. We know that our community and our children depend on the strength of the University, and that's why we care so much about it.

We are not a non-profit with staff conspiring with politicians to attack the University of Nebraska, as imagined by the English Department. We are concerned citizens who love our children and our community and want all of Nebraska's students to have a solid academic foundation. How else will our young people compete in this ever-changing global economy?

We, the undersigned, fully support the University in its mission "to provide its citizens with the highest quality of post-secondary education." Like many others who have vocalized concerns, we are invested members of the community who simply want the University to hold high standards for academics and to respect students in all their viewpoint diversity.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,