

Hassles
hamper
Pub Board
plans

Plans for a new student publications board, approved in February by the Board of Regents, still exist only on paper.

The current publications board, a standing committee of the Council on Student Life, will continue to function until confusion over the plans are resolved, according to CSL Chairman Franklin Eldridge, associate dean of the College of Agriculture.

The new publications board was the product of a regents' committee directed last fall with drafting guidelines for student publications.

In a report before CSL Feb. 15, Neale Copple, chairman of the regents' committee, said the committee "tried to set up a system where there would be no pre-censorship."

The new board, although ultimately responsible to the regents, would be autonomous with respect to campus organizations and administrators, according to Copple, director of the UNL School of Journalism.

The report provides that CSL elect the five student members to the publications board.

"A newspaper isn't supposed to be at the beck and call of political groups," Copple said. Since the committee wanted to remove the board from political pressures, he said they recommended that CSL, instead of ASUN, appoint student members to the board.

Although Copple implied that the board would be autonomous from CSL, Eldridge pointed out that there's no statement in the committee's report which disassociates the board from CSL.

Eldridge said Thursday he has written to Chancellor James Zumberge to ask for clarification of the matter. The current board's actions can be disapproved by CSL, Eldridge said, but the council "doesn't interfere in the day-to-day operations of the board."

He said: "I don't see that the present board has lost any autonomy under CSL," and believes the new board could be given the same autonomy under the council.

However, Copple said the intention of the committee wasn't to set up a publications board as a subcommittee of another committee. "The publications board would then be responsible, in effect, to another publications board. The whole idea was to set up an autonomous board."

He confessed that the question of whether the board would continue under CSL "just didn't come up" in committee

meetings.

The committee report charged that the current campus publications boards "are missing one vital element—representation by members of the professional press."

The recommended make-up of the publications boards would include two professional journalists from outside the University, five students and two faculty members.

The current board includes four students and three faculty members.

The duties of the publications boards include hiring and firing of the editors and business managers, approval or major business and legal matters, and judgement on matters involving the code of ethics.

Currently, the board chooses the entire executive staff. Under the new plan, the editor chosen by the board "would have the complete freedom to hire the staff and produce the newspaper."

The current publications boards on both University campuses haven't acted on one of the publisher's major responsibilities, according to the report. "That responsibility is to provide the ultimate voice in decisions on the proper application of a code of ethics."

The committee also wrote guidelines which generally describe the code of ethics followed by the Nebraska professional press.

The report provides for a publications board executive staff composed of two student members of the publications committee, one faculty member and the professional adviser to assist the newspaper staff on a day-to-day basis and to act "as liaison between the student publications and the University constituencies."

In addition, a professional journalist from outside the University community would be hired as part-time adviser to assist the newspaper staff.

The report stipulates that the adviser will have no censorship powers but should offer post-publication criticism or prepublication advice as asked.

Eldridge said he doesn't foresee any change in the status of the present publications board before the selection of executives for next semester's student publications. Interviews are tentatively scheduled for March.

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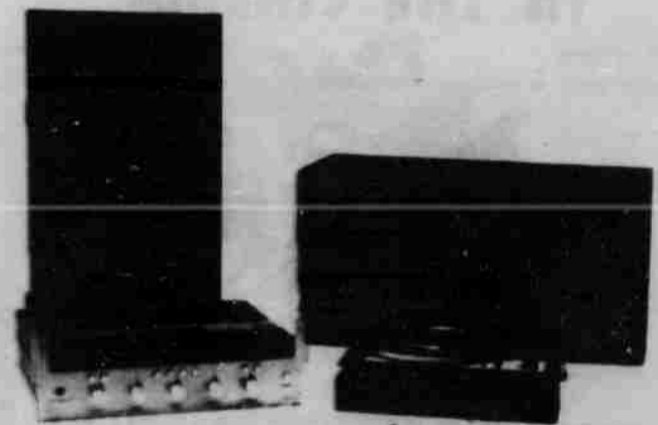
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