

# Students don't take full advantage of Free University stuff

*Editor's note: Nebraska Free University (NFU) opens registration Wednesday with a registration carnival. Booths will be set up in the north Union and in dormitory lobbies until Friday.*

*In this issue of EXTRA writer Lori Demo examines this year's NFU, while Dave Madsen reviews the history of NFU from its conception in 1967. Reporter Jane Owens looks at three successful "free" universities in contrast to NFU, which dropped to an enrollment low of 50 students last semester.*

By Lori Demo

**G**rab all the free stuff.

And students usually do.

However, last year UNL students failed to take advantage of what the Nebraska Free University (NFU) had up for grabs.

And NFU, after enjoying success in 1971, suffered a decline in participation.

David Howlett, NFU chairman, is optimistic that this year's program will be more successful in participation by both the university and outside community.

And he may have reason to be optimistic.

Howlett estimated that 300 students participated in 33 courses during both semesters last year. This autumn he has lined up 60 courses that will be taught by community as well as university persons.



Photos by Gail Folda

David Howlett

"We are trying to make the NFU as available as possible," he said. "We are getting more courses out into the community in hopes of getting non-university people interested in registering. And we are putting many of the courses back into the dorms where they can reach more people."

Howlett said that he would be "happy to have 500 people enrolled in the first semester courses."

"But this is probably a very, very high estimate," he said.

Even though NFU did not enjoy great success last year, ASUN boosted its operating budget \$200, giving the committee \$1,500.

**ASUN President Ann Henry said she favored the budget increase to help the program.**

"This program is an important part of the informal education," she said. "This increase in the budget gives more leeway, so they don't have to worry about money."

Most of the NFU budget goes toward publicity including printing a course descriptions brochure.

"Printing costs a lot. If you're limited to money in printing your brochure, you can't fully describe the courses so people will want to take them," Henry said. "This is one of the things that happened last year."

**Henry also said she wanted to help the NFU because she thought the courses offered this semester provide areas of study not offered in other classes.**

These courses range from academic courses such as parliamentary procedures, theology and the history of the Nebraska Democratic Party to non-academic courses such as stereo system repair, cocktail hostessing and beginning camping.

Howlett said he stresses the flexibility of the courses and their ability to bring persons together who would otherwise not get together. Getting college credit for taking the course is not the purpose of the NFU, he said.

"I do urge those who want to get credit to ask a professor to sponsor them as independent study. They can do the work this semester and then use that work to get credit next semester," he said.

He said his biggest hope for the NFU is to take it community-wide. He said he would like to start by getting more community persons to teach courses.

"I want to set up registration booths downtown and at Gateway, so that community people can have a chance to hear more about NFU and to register for it," he said. "But I haven't inquired or received permission to do this yet."

Ken Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs, said he has heard about Howlett's desire to take the NFU into the community.

"If this helps get more people involved, then I think this

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