



Photo by Ted Kirk

Don Wesley, NUPIRG president

Nader group hopes to represent student voice in community

NUPIRG members plan to make their organization the campus voice in community issues.

NUPIRG (Nebraska University Public Interest Research Group) is a student information resource group that works on non-campus community issues, according to Don Wesley, UNL president of NUPIRG.

Wesley said NUPIRG stems from a Centennial College course of last semester. The recognized student group received ASUN approval in February, 1975.

Since that time, NUPIRG has participated in many community issues, Wesley said. NUPIRG now is working on a landlord-tenant handbook which will be available to anyone needing information concerning landlord-tenant relations.

Consumer complaints

In addition, NUPIRG is in the process of opening a consumer complaint center. Wesley said students will be able to tell NUPIRG members their problems and the group will direct them to the proper service.

NUPIRG is preparing for the upcoming legislative session. Wesley said bills the group is most interested in concern consumer issues or bills directly related to students. NUPIRG is working to establish an income tax basis for state aid to education instead of the present property tax.

The 24 active NUPIRG members at UNL are working with \$675 in student fees for this year. Wesley said NUPIRG has contacted many individuals in the last two weeks, seeking additional financial support.

Petition drive

NUPIRG plans a petition drive in October to obtain

support for use of student funds. The petition then would be presented to the NU Board of Regents. Wesley said the regents can vote to use a portion of student fees for NUPIRG.

NUPIRG needs about \$2.50 from each student for support, but currently that amount is questionable.

"We have to wait and see what student support there is for NUPIRG," Wesley said.

Wesley said if students don't want to pay into the NUPIRG fund, they wouldn't have to. It would be a voluntary contribution, similar to PACE, Program for Active Commitment to Education, which students can choose to support by paying an additional amount of money to their tuition statements.

Parent organization

PIRG, parent organization of NUPIRG, is a Ralph Nader creation. Wesley said the first PIRG was financed by money Nader won in a court case involving General Motors. Currently PIRG extension groups are located in 25 states and work for change within the political system, Wesley said.

Most PIRG extension groups have a budget to work from and many are financed by student funds, Wesley said.

He said NUPIRG can be successful if enough students are interested. An example, Wesley said, is that NUPIRG helped organize an energy project to inform Lincoln Electric System (LES) and the Lincoln City Council of alternative energy conservation proposals.

Other states

The NUPIRG group presented to LES and the council, research it had conducted concerning other states' energy conservation plans, Wesley said.

Wesley said both LES and the council expressed what he called a positive attitude toward the information NUPIRG presented.

"They weren't aware that students were that interested in community issues," Wesley said.

Students interested in the NUPIRG program should visit room 336 in the Nebraska Union, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

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