

## Mueller and Say : Changing of regent, evolution of Senate



### Mueller looking beyond 'trivia' for ASUN issues

By Bryant Brooks

Bill Mueller moved into the ASUN executive office last week, amidst efforts by the Coalition for University Reform to have the ASUN Senate put out of business.

The Coalition, an ASUN-recognized organization, is attempting to get a student referendum allocating the Senate's power and funds to the Coalition.

The new ASUN president said he hopes to devote his time to other issues.

A 21-year-old pre-law junior from Ogallala, Mueller said the ASUN Senate's key issue is the possibility of UNL's College of Business Administration losing its accreditation.

The school's accreditation is threatened, said College of Business Administration Dean Ronald Smith, because it lost 10 per cent of its faculty members last year, bringing the ratio of full-time members to students below standards for accreditation by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business.

"I think ASUN can help them," Mueller said. "We can make other people, such as ASUN senators and other students, find out what the problems are and what we can do to help."

Mueller said he also wants the Senate to cooperate more closely with the Council on Student Life (CSL). He said some outgoing ASUN senators thought CSL was competing for the job of representing students.

#### Threatened by CSL

"I think the former Senate felt threatened by CSL's existence," he said. "I don't feel qualified to make everyone's decisions. We need CSL to deal with some issues. They have the advantage of having faculty members and administrators in the group, so they can offer a different perspective."

The former Senate fell short in other areas, Mueller said.

"I think the last Senate was made up of some very

interested people who were trying to accomplish something," he said. "But they were hung up with power and trivial matters... like rescinding appointments or abolishing CSL, while everything else they were doing took second place or no place at all."

Mueller said he thinks this year's Senate will not have induced trivia on themselves.

"Everybody talks about the black cloud hanging over the new Senate, brought on by those (the Coalition) challenging the representation by the Senate," he said. "It makes it harder for the new Senate to get off the ground because they are already surrounded by so much controversy."

#### Accessible president

But Mueller looks beyond this "trivia." He said he hopes to be an accessible president.

"Whenever I'm in here (the ASUN office), I'll be available to talk to people. If somebody asks me what I think, I'm going to tell them because I'm not running for re-election," he said.

Mueller said the issue of parity between Omaha and Lincoln (NU) campuses concerns him because "UNL stands to suffer depending on how the regents deal with it."

Mueller's ASUN presidency entitles him to a non-voting seat on the NU Board of Regents.

Looking ahead to this weekend's regents meeting, Mueller said, "It isn't as if I'm walking into a room with 12 strangers." He said he knows many of the regents through social events and what he called his interest in student affairs.

Mueller said he would like to see some "belt tightening" on student fees but, added he doubted that they could be lowered.

"Right now, the question is whether you want to cut services or increase fees," he said. But Mueller added he

would like to keep students informed about how student fees are spent.

However, if the Coalition assumes power next year, Mueller said he does not know where he would stand.

"I think that's a pretty big 'if,' but I don't know if they would throw me out of this office or what they'd do," he said.

"I've been spending a lot of my time just trying to stay in office rather than devoting it to ASUN activity," he added.

#### Greeks vs. non-Greeks

He did agree with the Coalition that ASUN's Constitution is too difficult to amend, but said he disagreed with their proposed change of voting districts.

The Coalition constitution calls for voting according to place of residence rather than by college.

"I think the Coalition is trying to make this into a Greek-non-Greek issue, but the residence hall people have as much to lose as anyone," he said. If the Coalition's plan is adopted, Mueller continued, campus living units' representation will drop, while the number of off-campus representatives will increase.

Mueller said he also opposes the Coalition's parliamentary organization because a party rather than the student body would select executives.

Mueller said he intends to drop his class load from 18 hours this year to 13 next year, but added he does not intend to withdraw from his other activities which include Wesley House Chapel, chairman of the Pre-Law Association, Young Republicans and Phi Delta Theta.

He said he would resign as vice-president of the Interfraternity Council, but will wait until it is known whether the Coalition will take over.

"I'm going to stay active in the system somewhere along the line," he said. "I'm not going to resign everything and then watch ASUN Senate go out the window."

### Say's goals 'partially' met, but regent status slips

By George Miller

ASUN Senate's growing influence and a lessening role of the student regent marked his term as ASUN president, Jim Say said.

Say, who ended his year in office Wednesday, said he thought he had "partially accomplished" the goals he set when he took office. He will be graduated in May with a political science major and has been accepted to the NU College of Law.

"I wanted to make sure that ASUN didn't turn into a small bureaucracy and remained student oriented," he said. "There was a feeling (when he took office) that ASUN was becoming too involved in administrative detail."

However, Say said he would at times become burdened with details and "would lose sight of the big picture."

During his term as student regent, he said, his position became "really relegated to a lesser role" because the novelty of the position started to wear off.

"We had hoped that once the newness of the student regent wore off, it (the student regent) would settle into the status of a (voting) regent," Say said. However, he said he thinks other regents viewed his role as "just another student."

#### Paternalistic attitude

Say said he thinks he could have prevented this lessening of influence if he had "kept quiet and fallen into line" with other regents.

The student regent has not become "more visible" to the average student since the position was created in 1974, Say said. However, this could be changed by having the student regent "generate press" behind his own actions, he added.

The student-regent could "grandstand" for one or two issues he thinks are important, Say said, but he warned that this grandstanding could cause friction among the regents.

"The regents will claim that they delegate authority (to the NU central administration), but there is a ques-

tion of which is the cart and which is the horse," Say said. "Sometimes it seems that the cart pushes the horse."

Most voting regents look upon students with a "paternalistic light," he said, thinking students do not always know what is good for them and have to be guided, and as an "unwanted irritant" who should be "seen and not heard."

#### Highlights

During his year in office, Say said he thought ASUN Senate took more initiative than previous Senates because it went to administrators instead of letting the executives do "all the contact work."

Say said the outgoing Senate's major accomplishments were organizing the October open meeting to discuss the Arvid Sherdell Lewis shooting and the clarification of the appointive powers of the Senate, which resulted from the recall of ASUN's appointees to the Council on Student Life (CSL) in November.

"It seemed like tension (over the Lewis shooting) died down on campus and to some extent all over town (after the open meeting)," Say said. "We showed that someone outside of the Malone community was willing to listen to both sides of the story."

As for the CSL controversy, Say said the fight over the Senate's power to recall its appointees helped slow what he called an effort by the administration to divide student opinion into several brackets by appointing new committees.

Afterwards, the administration tried to reinforce divisions between these committees and seemed especially more willing to work with ASUN as the one voice of the students, he said.

The biggest disappointments of the year, Say said, were the absence of new programs launched by ASUN Senate. He said he would have liked to have had a seminar for off-campus students, featuring speakers discussing renting apartments, cooking and household repairs. However, he said that idea was assigned to a committee which never followed up on it.

The failure of the regents to grant students 24-hour visitation in residence halls and alcohol on campus was another disappointment, he said.

One danger Say mentioned was the tendency of ASUN senators to sometimes become "co-opted" to the administration's way of thinking once there is much exposure to its viewpoint.

"The administration is persuasive," he said. "Students tend to think of administrators in a superior role."

He said the basic role of student government is to serve as a student "watchdog" over the administration and to lobby for student interests.

He said he thinks the administration should start university programs, but that student government should review them and make sure they are in students' interests.

Say said the biggest problem confronting the new ASUN administration is showing students that senators and executives elected on the Greek slate will represent all aspects of the university.

#### Representing all students

If someone from "outside the Senate" attempts to keep the Greek senators voting together on issues, the question will be raised of whether ASUN represents all students, he said.

Asked if he thought being ASUN president helped in getting into Law College, Say said, "The Nebraska Law School supposedly is one of the few schools that does not look at recommendations for law school."

Say said he was glad his term was over "in a way," but said he would still like to do more things. He said he will work with ASUN as an administrative assistant until the end of the year, finishing up on remaining paper work.

"Everyone should have a chance to be ASUN president for awhile," he said. "You have a sense of doing something worthwhile. You get a sense of the university."

"Overall, it's really been an interesting experience," he said. "There's very little I'd trade for that experience."