

Omaha schools to aid recruiting

By Lisa Broman

Postsecondary opportunities for low-income and ethnic minority students will proceed normally because of an Omaha Public School System decision that gives higher educational institutions aid for recruiting students, said Jimmie Smith, multi-cultural affairs director.

The decision, announced last week by the Omaha school system and director Don Benning, will allow institutions access to directory information on students of an ethnic minority or a low-income family.

Following the passage of the William Buckley amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Smith and his staff have been denied any information that would enable them to determine who was qualified to receive aid from their office, Smith said.

The legislation, Smith said, was not meant to disable offices such as his, but, "It is a case of a law with good intentions creating major problems."

The problems referred to by Smith have been resolved with the recent decision of the Omaha system to help postsecondary institutions by compiling a list of students who would fit into the minority or low-income category.

This directory information, which will include name, address and phone number, is everything the office has ever requested, Smith said.

"We have never wanted or needed to have access to the files themselves for our own personal use," he said.

Smith said the Omaha school system has said that it will "cooperate to the fullest extent as long as the work being done is for the students well-being."

Smith said that he did not receive an explanation of the decision, but said he is very pleased.

"I didn't push them to explain," he said, "but I think that they reviewed the case and saw that our intentions did not conflict with the intent of the Buckley amendment."

"We will be allowed to visit each school and establish personal contact with the students of interest to us," he said, "and we will then contact them by mail and telephone."

Next year, Smith said, the school system will compile a master list of low-income and minority students to aid the institutions and save them time in contacting each individual school.

However, this year Smith and the others seeking the information will have to work with the individual schools rather than one coordinating office.

"Due to the lateness of the decision," he said, "we will be hampered to some extent in that we will not be able to contact everyone and will lose some prospective students."

"But next year," he said, "we will be in full swing and ready for a booming year."

Furniture, carpet installed in Love

Studying should be more pleasant in Love Library since the installation of carpeting and lounge-type furniture in three library study areas, said Gerald Rudolph, UNL dean of libraries.

Rudolph said rooms 109, 205 and 204 in Love South have been carpeted and comfortable furniture installed. Resource materials for some departments also have been consolidated in the rooms for easier access, he added.

Room 109 contains Teachers College references, and room 105 will house listening facilities, tapes and references for the School of Music, he said.

The improvements were financed by the library's budget, Rudolph said, and each room cost "a few thousand dollars" to renovate.

He said he did not know the exact cost, but carpet remnants were used and the library already owned the furniture. Carpet installation was the major expense, he noted.

Budget limitations prevented additional improvements from being made, according to Rudolph. He said new lighting and a better heating and cooling system will be installed in Love when the Nebraska Legislature designates official library renovation money.

The study areas received financing priority because "it was embarrassing that we had these vast rooms and nothing to do with them," Rudolph said. "We knew they could fulfill special functions."

Rudolph said the rooms are designated as non-smoking areas. He originally had planned to keep them as smoking areas, he said, "but students abused their privilege."

Students are permitted to smoke in the first and second floor lobbies, and the entire first floor of Love North, where some study carrels are located, he said.

Accidental shower doesn't hurt lawn

No damage was done to trees or grass around Love Library when the sprinkler system accidentally went on during Sunday night's freezing temperatures.

Tom Nycum, assistant to the director of the UNL Physical Plant, said the lawns around the library were being watered during the warm temperatures last week. However, through an oversight, the timeclock on the sprinkler system was improperly adjusted, causing the system to go on Sunday night, he said.

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