

Terminal illness issues discussed at conference

"The Rights of the Terminally Ill," a conference on the legal, moral and medical issues of terminal illness, will take place Feb. 4 and 5 at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege Sts.

The conference is sponsored by the UNL Extension Division, the UNL Philosophy Dept., the University of Nebraska at Omaha Gerontology Program and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Center for Humanities and Medicine.

Program coordinator Chuck Havlicek said the program is open to anyone interested in the rights or care of the terminally ill. It is expected to attract legal and medical professionals, representatives from health institutions and clergy members.

"The purpose of the program is to help Nebraskans focus in on issues raised by terminal illness and to look at

these issues from the focus of the terminally ill," said Havlicek. Another goal of the program is "to help people who attend become more knowledgeable (about terminal illness) who in turn can better inform public policy makers," he said.

Speaking at the conference will be Dr. Walter Friedlander, director of the Center for Humanities and Medicine at UNMC, presenting the medical issues of terminal illness. Moral issues will be discussed by Robert Audi of the UNL Philosophy Dept. Chairman and Stephen E. Kalish associate professor of the UNL College of Law will cover legal issues.

Other speakers, including doctors, social workers and humanists, will speak on dying and death, care of the terminally ill, and public policy affecting the terminally ill.

The academic humanists are an important part of the program, Havlicek said, because they can "add humanistic insights to the conference . . . and give humanists a chance to affect public policy."

The conference is the first of its kind presented at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, although there have been others on death and dying in Nebraska, Havlicek said.

Planned since last spring, the program is partly funded by a grant from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, a state based program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Participants in the program will be charged a registration fee of \$15 to cover the cost of dinner, lunch, refreshments and conference materials.

Grade inflation complaints overshadow deflation gripes

By Maxine Kubicek

Although "students seem to have a myth" that professors may be placed on probation for failing too many students in a class, more complaints are received about grade inflation than deflation, according to two UNL administrators.

Ned Hedges, assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs, said there is no university policy concerning complaints of a professor failing too many students. Each department or college has its own procedure for handling such complaints, he said.

Gary Schwendiman, associate dean of the College of Business Administration, said the few complaints of excessive failures he received were referred to department chairmen to determine whether the students met course requirements. The government of the university ultimately is in the hands of faculty members, he said, and a student's final recourse would be to appeal to the Faculty Senate.

Schwendiman said many more students have complained to him that professors fail to differentiate between excellent and average students. Generally the students who complain of grade inflation are the ones who work hard but are graded on a par with those who do not work as hard, he said.

High potential

"The worst thing we can do as a university is to practice grade inflation," Schwendiman said. "It indicates to the students that they're performing at a higher level than they actually are, and it cheats the good students. I think UNL has very good students with very high potential."

"The saddest thing I've seen is when a student graduates without any professor ever having demanded that he push himself," he said.

John Robinson, chairman of the English Dept., agreed that grade inflation is much more common than the failure of too

many students. The attitude toward grading seems to run in cycles, he said.

"Six or seven years ago, the general feeling across the campus was that grades were too low, which was why the 'plus' system of grading was started," he said. "In another six years people will be complaining of low grades, but right now I've come across very few such complaints."

Robinson said any complaints he receives about grading are dealt with individually. The professor involved and the department dean would probably be contacted but faculty members are "pretty well autonomous" in their grading, he said.

Low grades appealed

W. Cecil Steward, dean of the College of Architecture, said all grade appeals in the college are filed with a grade appeals committee comprising three faculty members and two students. Steward said the committee has received an average of two appeals per year during the three years of its existence. Most appeals do not

concern failing grades, but a lower grade than the student believed was deserved, he said.

The final grading responsibility rests with faculty members, he said, but in about 99 per cent of the cases the professor involved complies with the recommendation of the committee.

Russel Meints, director of the School of Life Sciences, said he has not received a complaint of a questionable failure in the 12 years he has been at UNL.

"There seems to be a feeling among the student body that professors are put on probation all the time for failing too many students in a class, but the word 'probation' doesn't apply in the usual sense in my department," he said.

Meints said complaints are heard by a standing committee of three faculty members, a graduate student and an undergraduate student, but such complaints may be handled in "any number of ways." The failure rate is not generally high, he said.



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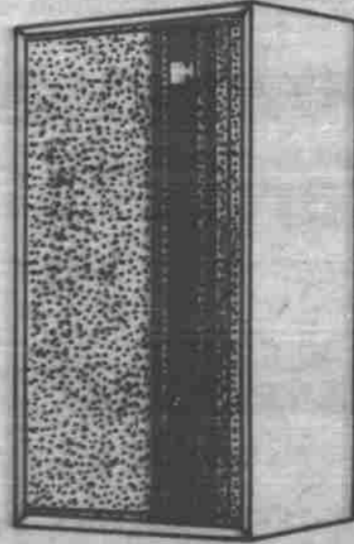
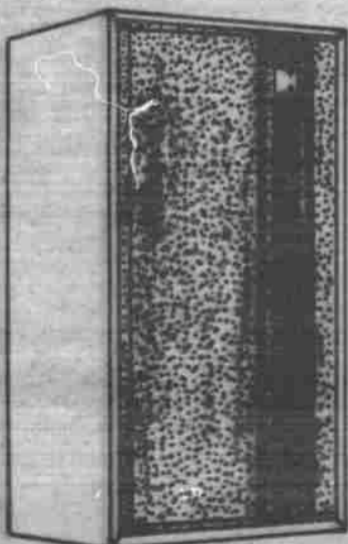
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