

Government mix-up delays student financial aid reports

By Mary Kempkes

More than 164,000 financially independent students nationwide, including 550 at UNL, are still awaiting their Student Eligibility Reports because of a mix-up in the technical wording used in a student assistance bill passed last fall, according to a spokesman for the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The eligibility reports are used to determine financial aid awards, including Basic Educational Opportunity Grants.

The reports were mailed Aug. 16, according to Bill Moran, chief of policy and program development with HEW Basic Grants in Washington, D.C.

THE MIDDLE Income Student Assistance Act broadened wage guidelines for the parents of dependent students and liberalized the treatment of assets for independents. Both increased overall aid and gave assistance to some students who otherwise received nothing.

The SERs were sent out following President Carter's Aug. 13 signing of the bill which cleared up the original language, Moran said. The SERs were completed in June and July. Moran explained, but the BEOG center in Iowa City, Iowa, could not mail them to waiting students because they weren't technically legal until the 13th.

Meanwhile, campus financial aid offices were awaiting the revised reports, and UNL was no exception. Of the nearly 550 UNL students affected, 250 are receiving aid which they would not have received before, and 300 independents are getting their aid increased.

The late reports will be no major problem for the UNL financial aid office according to assistant director Debra Knight.

"THERE'S NO confusion in our office," she said. "The student is the one confused. The only real hassle we've had is students calling two or three times to ask where the reports are."

Knight said she did not want students to feel uptight. She said tuition refunds will be delayed, but the financial aids office has asked the housing administration and others to be patient until the students receive their money.

"We're very pleased about it," Knight said referring to the act. "It frees up more money for other people."

At the national office in Washington, Moran said there have been few complaints.

IT HELPED, Moran said, that only independents were involved in the holdup. Independent students are those that fail to meet any of the nine criteria stipulated by HEW, including; having lived with parents during the previous year, having received \$750 worth of aid from parents and if parents claimed the student on their income tax for the previous year.

Explanations for the tie-up are complicated, but essentially it was a disagreement between Congressional committees over legal wording in the two independent provisions, according to Steve Carter, a program analyst for HEW.

The Middle Income Student Assistance Act submitted last fall originally had three provisions. The first concerned dependent students and the other two concerned independents. According to Carter, the bill went into committee and two versions emerged, one with the two independent clauses, one without.

After debate about which version would be accepted, the two were merged once again but the wording was such that the legality of the independent provisions was in doubt.

Because arguments about the budget expansions and wording, HEW officials decided in March not to use the clauses concerning independents, Carter said.

HOWEVER, THIS move caused grumbles from Congress. Following a special on April 16 by then HEW Secretary Joseph Califano to agency officials and members of Congress, a technical authorization bill was drawn up. It was submitted to Congress on May 9, and signed by the President on Aug. 13.

"By this time (May 9), more than 347,000 independent forms had already been processed," Moran said. "Now we had to recompute the forms of 164,000 students who would be affected by the bill, either by having their aid increased or receiving aid when they got none before," he said.

Moran said the agency immediately began refiguring the forms because it knew the bill would be passed.

The technical law did several things, Moran said. It solved the budgetary problems by stipulating that leftover money from 1978-79 be used. It also changed the way in which eligibility indexes are computed for independents concerning assets.

More than 70,000 independents are now eligible for aid who would have received none before. Moran said the two clauses involving independent students increased existing awards \$612,000 and created new awards amounting to \$131 million.

Together, the three provisions have increased the nationwide BEOG budget to \$2.514 billion for the 1979-80 school year. This is up from the \$1.6 billion budget used in 1978-79. The average award per student is now \$931, up from \$847 in 1978-79.

ASUN may consider speaker funding method

By Gordon Johnson

Student fee financing of the speakers program could be before the ASUN Senate at the August 29 meeting, according to Bud Cuca, ASUN president.

Cuca said he contacted legal counsel to discuss the legal implications of action taken last year by the NU Board of Regents which prohibited use of student fees for political or ideological speakers.

The regents' ruling does not prevent ideological speakers from appearing on campus, but prohibits using student fees to pay them.

CUCA SAID there have been some questions about the constitutionality of the regents' ruling. Robert Lange, student legal services attorney, said he agrees.

Lange is not the attorney Cuca has contacted. Cuca said he could not name the attorney he talked to.

According to Lange, the ruling could be in conflict with the First Amendment because it may impose prior restraint on who may or may not speak.

Prior restraint, Lange said, is the censoring of a speaker before he has spoken. Prior restraint may be used only if clear and present danger, such as inciting a riot or causing physical damage or bodily harm can be shown to be a result of someone speaking, Lange said.

LANGE SAID the regents clearly have the right to finance or deny dollars to the speakers program, but that once they have committed dollars to the program any process to censor speakers on an individual basis could be in violation of the First Amendment.

The regents' ruling states that in case of a dispute, the chancellors shall have the final authority to approve a speaker.

"It would seem to me it would be best to have a process to question him (the chancellor)," Lange said.

CUCA SAID bringing ideological speakers to campus is part of the total education of a student.

"I don't feel we get enough variety and numbers to get a wide range of ideas to fulfill the obligations of the university," he said. "We want to make sure that student fees are giving us something educational."

Even if the regents' ruling is in violation of the First Amendment, Cuca said he is not sure whether the students will bring the issue before the regents.

THE POSSIBILITY exists that by pushing for more freedom the regents could become angered enough to stop all financing, Cuca said.

Before action is taken, Cuca said it must be determined that the University Programs Council, which sponsors the speaker program, wants a change in policy, that the situation is serious enough to warrant a new policy and whether the students want to pay for a speakers program out of mandatory fees.

Cuca said he would also like to find out how the ASUN senate feels about mandatory funding of a speakers program before any action is taken.

IF THE STUDENTS and UPC say they want a change, Cuca said they "will go through every political and legislative channel possible," to convince the regents a change is needed.

Cuca said he would also like to get the support of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and UNO, but said he would not allow a lack of their support to hamper action.

Pam Fritz, president of UPC, said UPC has kept current on the issue, but has not considered taking action to change the program.

"We are making do with what we have," she said.

IF THE ASUN determines the students want mandatory funding of all speakers, Fritz said UPC can consider putting the issue to a vote.

Continued on Page 12



Daily Nebraskan Photo

Jane Fonda

Letter prompts call for Regent's resignation

A letter sent to six state senators by Scottsbluff Regent Robert Simmons, criticizing NU President Ronald Roskens and his budget proposal, prompted Omaha Regent Kermit Hansen to call for Simmons' resignation earlier this month.

The letter was sent by Simmons to the senators in his district following the July regents' meeting, at which Roskens recommended a 19.6 percent increase in the amount of state tax money requested by NU for the 1980-81 fiscal year.

The board, instead of accepting Roskens' proposal, decided to request an increase not to exceed 15 percent.

The Daily Nebraskan has obtained a copy of the letter Simmons sent to the senators. Hansen called for Simmons' resignation because the letter attacks Roskens and because Hansen said Simmons should be committed to getting funds the university needs.

BOTH SIMMONS and Hansen refused to comment on the contents of the letter.

In the letter, Simmons said that since Roskens addressed the board on budget needs in December "his attitude has been downhill." Simmons said that although Roskens indicated that reducing the number of university employees would be necessary, "we had more employees than ever at the end of our fiscal year."

Simmons wrote that rather than complying with the public desire and public interest enacted by LB285, which places a lid on spending of governmental subdivisions, Roskens requested more than the 7 percent limit.

"Because you will correct us, in a way, no harm will be done by the regents in making our fantasy (budget) request to you," Simmons wrote to the senators.

SIMMONS CHARGED that by requesting the nearly 20 percent increase, Roskens has damaged gains and constructive programs to reduce the university budget.

"I can only guess to why Dr. Roskens changed his mind and tactics," Simmons wrote. "He had rearranged his staff and schedule so that he will be doing less running of the university and more speaking throughout the state—speaking on the state's time and at the state's expense, lobbying for more money from the state. We will now have the highest paid and most eloquent full-time lobbyist in our history."

Continued on page 8

inside
wednesday

Where is the Nebraska Union: Sophomore looks back on first-year follies. page 10
\$26.40 times 15 credit hours equals: Regents approve budget proposal that includes tuition increase page 17
And it's Native Dancer in the lead: Daily Nebraskan reporter and photographers spend a day at the track pages 54 and 55