

New wage system means equal pay for equal work

By Alice Hrnicek

Even though most UNL student employers have followed their own wage guidelines in the past, they agreed that the new wage classification system creates more uniformity across campus in wages for similar jobs.

The system, effective since the beginning of the semester, calls for five classifications of student jobs dependent on skills, training and specific knowledge. Each classification has a different range of pay.

With the help of a task force appointed in January, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aids developed the standards to promote UNL as an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Institution.

OSFA Director Don Aripoli said that voluntary compliance to the guidelines is favored at this point. To ensure that departments do not abuse the suggestions, however, OSFA has added a new staff person who will consult with employers.

Larry Apel, assistant director for on-campus employment, not only will counsel students in seeking jobs, but will work with departments and report noncompliances to the Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Officer and the Office of Civil Rights.

Employers report few difficulties in following the guidelines. A concern shared by some is that they are not able to hire as many students, which results also from a lowering or non-increase in their budgets.

HOUSING DIRECTOR Doug Zatechka said the move would help improve consistency in wages across campus.

"There's no reason why a rich division should be paying \$4 an hour while a poor one pays \$2.90 (for similar work)," he said.

Residence halls employ 550 to 630 students each year in 20 to 25 different positions, he said. None are employed in level five, the top pay range category.

Housing has followed its own guidelines

in the past, he said, so compliance has been relatively easy.

"All we've done is to marry the new directives to the present structure," Zatechka said.

Stephen Blom, University Health Center director, also said he has found it easy to follow the suggestions.

Most of the 18 student employees at the health center fit into the level one category, but one computer programmer is a level five which has a pay range from \$3.80 to \$4.60 per hour. The programmer is hired only for the semester.

The chemistry department may be hurt by being able to hire electronic technicians, who are also at level five, on only a temporary basis, according to Chairman G.C. Meisels.

"OUR MONEY FOR hiring student's hasn't gone up in the last few years," Meisels said. "But the ones hired get paid more."

The department offers mostly level one and two positions, he said, adding that he was ambivalent in his reaction to the program.

"I'm not terribly in favor of over bureaucratization of anything," Meisels added. However, he said that the system was a plus in assuring equal pay for similar work.

Union Director Daryl Swanson said that an on-campus wage system has been necessary.

"There was one before, but it was not administered as widely," Swanson said.

The present system is an improvement, because it gives some departments more leeway in rewarding students by pay raises while limiting overpayment, he said.

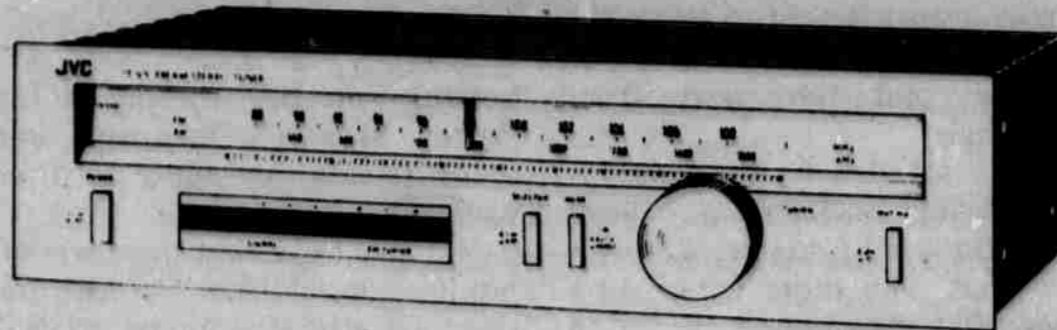
In the past, students performed similar duties at a wide range of pay because the employing units were not brought together, according to Swanson.

The guidelines are especially important for the unions because of the variety of jobs, he added.

"We depend on student employees, much like full time."

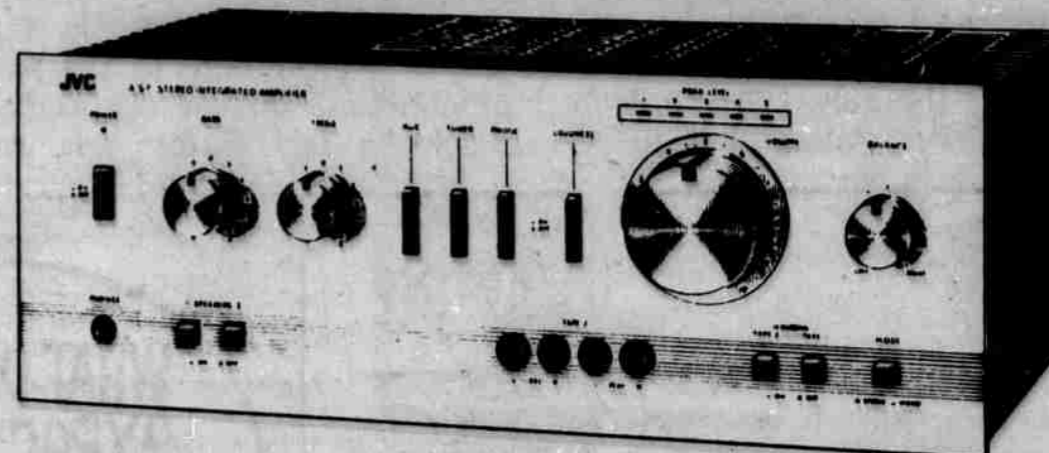
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