

Student aid fraud often undetectable

By Diane Andersen

There is little detectable student loan fraud at UNL but much sophisticated fraud is undetectable, according to Fred Kinney, investigator of compliance for the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance in Kansas City.

The BSFA is in charge of student loan and grant programs for universities in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.

Students in several states other than those four have recently been found guilty of thousands of dollars worth of student aid fraud. Some students lie about their income, others use false names and social security numbers. Still others file for aid—and get it—at several different schools they aren't enrolled in.

"It's difficult to detect those kinds of things," Kinney said. "The amount of time necessary to check out false information is tremendous."

Although BSFA hasn't found much fraud at UNL, they are worried about foreign students who may be falsifying information about their citizenship and residency status in order to be eligible for certain aid programs, Kinney said. He said BSFA is looking into the problem.

IT COULD become a large problem," he said.

Some of the methods used to validate aid application information include requiring applicants to furnish copies of their income tax returns and checking similar names by computer.

It is almost impossible to detect a false social security number, Kinney said.

"There's no doubt in my mind that wealthy kids use these monies for profit," said Don Aripoli, director of scholarships and financial aid at UNL.

Aripoli said Federally Insured Student Loans (FISL), which are given out as cash to almost anyone who applies, probably are used for things other than tuition. He said many parents probably pay the tuition of students who have an FISL, while their children invest the loan money and make interest on it, or use it to buy a car.

"These people are not technically subject to fraud," Aripoli said, because as long as they pay back the money, no one minds.

"WED HOPE more people are trying to get an education than are trying to rip off the system," Aripoli said.

For those who get caught ripping off the system, things may be a little different.

Kinney said all fraud cases are referred to the U.S. Office of Education, which refers them to the U.S. attorney if criminal intent is determined. His office can also file a civil fraud suit against a student if that student refuses to pay back a loan that was obtained illegally, Kinney said.

Kinney said he has no idea how many frauds are going undetected. FISL policies should not be changed, he said, because "Congress's intent was to provide money for all."

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Of those interviewed

Most smokers kept it up

By Kathy Stokebrand

Where there's smoke there's fire, and the effort to convert all smokers to kick the habit for a day, although not appearing to be widely effective, was widely recognized yesterday.

The Lincoln Chairperson of the Great American Smokeout, Sayre Darling, said most comments about the nationwide effort were positive.

Most smokers interviewed about the smokeout downtown and on campus said they felt the motives behind the smokeout were worthwhile but most said they were unable to abstain for the entire day.

Jayne W. Anderson, Coordinator of Sororities and Fraternities and Cooperatives, said she had no opinion about the Smokeout.

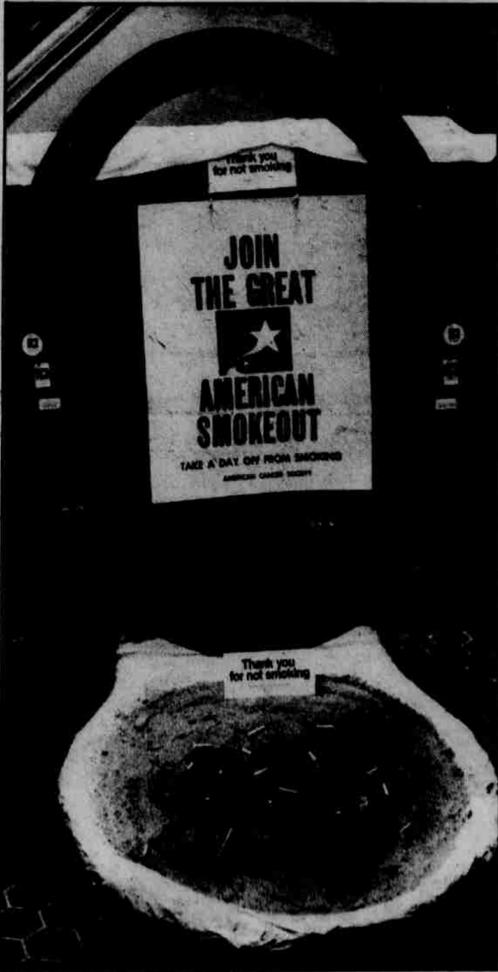


Photo by Tom Gessner

Smokers flush away the habit in a paper mache toilet at the Centrum. The toilet was constructed and donated by the NU Meds.

"I smoke. If I do, I do," she said. Anderson said it is a very bad habit and added, "I'll just live with my bad habit."

Her daughter, Laurie Anderson, a UNL senior, said "She's setting a terrible example for students."

David DeCoster, dean of students and a smoker for 20 years, said he started with good intentions this week, but hasn't been able to quit completely. DeCoster said he has been trying to quit for some time and did cut down on the day of the Smokeout.

DeCoster said he participated in a month-long program sponsored by the American Cancer Society within the last year. He was very impressed with the dedication of the instructors and the materials used. The group support he received in the meetings was helpful also, but unfortunately it didn't stick, he said.

DECOSTER SAID SMOKING is very much on his mind and one of his highest priorities is to quit. He referred to smokers who wish they weren't smoking as a "terribly miserable lot."

Tami Ekert, a UNL sophomore and a smoker, said she didn't know about the smokeout. She said she would love to quit but added she wouldn't until she decided she really wanted to. Ekert said she hasn't stopped smoking for one day since she started five years ago, but thought if she did quit for a day she might be able to go for a longer period.

Yvonne Anderson, 3414 Smith St., a Magees employee and smoker, said she was aware of the smokeout and felt it was a worthy effort, but added she "wasn't a very good example" yesterday. She is very conscious of her smoking and is trying to quit. The smokeout, she said, made more people aware of the health dangers of smoking.

FATHER DAMIAN MESSIRES, 446 E St., said he forgot about the smokeout at the beginning of the day but later saw the sign advertising the campaign and thought "Oh no!" If someone wants to stop they will he said, but he isn't anxious to quit now. He said smoking is just a habit and habits can be broken.

One smoker interviewed said she hadn't lit a cigarette yet that day in an effort to participate in the Smokeout. Sue Pfeil, 1201 J St., said with a smile, however, "I wish I hadn't said I'd do it." Pfeil said she wouldn't consider abstaining for a longer period because she still wants to smoke. "I enjoy it," she said.

Smoking, was not allowed in the Lincoln Taco Inn restaurants on the day of the smokeout. David Russell, an employee, said his manager told him no customers had to be asked to put out their cigarettes and no problems had come up yet that day.

New student organization hopes rally creates interest

By Patti Gallagher

"It's now or never" for the University Students for Educational Development to make their pleas known to the NU Board of Regents and the administration, according to USED's organizer.

USED, a newly formed student organization, will have a rally Friday at the Broyhill Fountain north of the Nebraska Union, at 11:30 a.m. said Tim Rinne. The rally is USED's vehicle to stimulate interest in the organization, and to bring their pleas to the regents' 1 p.m. meeting, on East Campus, he said.

Rinne said USED has been trying, without success, to get on the regents' Friday agenda.

The rally will start with an 11 a.m. press conference. The rally will include student and faculty speakers, "a couple of musicians," and the distribution of leaflets explaining the goals of USED, according to Rinne.

Rinne added he hopes "to have a lot of students" at the rally, and is expecting an attendance of "several hundred."

USED is concerned with the inability of the regents and the central administration to deal with pressing educational issues, Rinne said.

USED filed a letter with Campus Activities and Programs Nov. 5, but will not be recognized as an official organization until they submit a constitution, Rinne said. The constitution will be written and submitted to CAP next week, he added.

The current membership of USED is "about 20," Rinne said. He stressed the fact that the members represent a "wide cross-section" of the UNL student body, to illustrate that USED is not a secluded group of "hot-headed" radicals.

The concerns of USED are compiled in their "14 points." An immediate goal contained in those points concerns the 10 percent tuition hike and gaining a concrete explanation from the regents of exactly where that money goes.

Other points to be brought before the regents concern gaining student control of student fee expenditures, returning political speakers to campus, and "establishing a mechanism" of communication between the regents, students and faculty.

Rinne said establishing this communication is of utmost importance because "we just don't know what the hell they (the regents) are doing," and because the students and faculty have the right to be involved in deci-

sions that affect them.

Rinne asked how the regents can consider closing libraries because of a funds-shortage, when UNL has the highest administrative salaries in the Big Eight. He said such inequalities will be a concern of USED.

Rinne said ASUN focuses on many similar topics. USED has declared, but USED will be a tool for more immediate action to issues directly affecting students and faculty. Rinne said USED offers a "real opportunity to being a compliment to ASUN."

inside friday

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