

Former teacher challenges 'meaningless hiring process'

By Gordon Johnson

A former instructor from UNL's College of Architecture has filed a grievance with the state ombudsman's office charging that the university would not rehire him for the 1979-80 term because of his Nebraska background.

The grievance was filed with the ombudsman's office on Nov. 20, by G. Richard Dunn, formerly of North Platte. The university will cooperate with the investigation, according to Richard Fleming, assistant to the Chancellor and director of university information.

The ombudsman's office was denied the right to investigate charges of racial discrimination in October when a black custodian took her case to the ombudsman. "This is obviously a different case since it does not involve an employee," Fleming said.

Dunn said that he attempted to go through the university administration to rectify the situation, but found that since he was no longer a university employee it could offer no help.

DUNN SAID it is his belief that his applications were never submitted to the NU Board of Regents for review because the administration within the College of Architecture are prejudiced against people with an NU education or those licensed to practice in Nebraska.

"Since 1973, the College of Architecture has not hired either a licensed Nebras-

ka architect or a University of Nebraska graduate for a full-time tenured teaching position," Dunn said.

Originally, the position Dunn wished to apply for was closed to him by the administration when they required a minimum of five years teaching experience, he said. After he complained to members of the departmental advisory board, faculty members protested to administrators to have the teaching requirement removed.

The filling of advertised positions in the college were apparently made on the basis of qualifications other than those requested in the publically advertised position, Dunn said.

There is no question that the people hired are qualified for the job, Dunn said, but it is a matter of who is most qualified.

"I HAVE BEEN advised by tenured faculty members that the departmental advisory board rated my application higher than the successful applicants," he said.

Dunn received his Masters Degree in Architecture in 1978 and completed degree requirements while teaching part-time in the college. He received his bachelor's degree from UNL in 1960, while the college was still accredited. The school is no longer accredited.

After having had a successful practice since 1963 in North Platte, Dunn said he felt he wanted to teach at UNL.

However, after receiving his Master's degree from UNL he said he finds that he can't teach because of "inbreeding," he said.

Many schools shun hiring their graduates in fear that students will not get a well-rounded education and hear a varied range of philosophies and ideas in their subject area.

THE POSITION Dunn applied for required having professional experience, he said. Robert Stowers, and Robert Duncan, who eventually received the jobs, do not have experience other than teaching, Dunn charged.

Dunn said that the decision not to hire him was an administrative decision and that the faculty was not consulted as required in the university by-laws.

In a letter dated Aug. 2, department chairman Homer Puderbaugh states that the decision not to hire Dunn resulted from a faculty decision.

However, Dunn said he later found out that this was not the case.

What happened was that the successful applicants were brought before the faculty

and they were told to vote either yes or no, judging from the applicants' qualifications, he said.

FACULTY MEMBERS later reported to Dunn that the qualifications of the successful applicants were too good and they could not say no, Dunn said. Dunn's application was never submitted before the faculty.

In essence, he said, all of this has been brought about because of his Nebraska background, and that the application process is meaningless.

"I am contending that the present situation indicates a possible disregard for due process in the appointments procedure ignoring the advertised specified "qualifications" for architectural teaching position vacancies..." he said.

Dean of the College of Architecture Steward Cecil, and Chairman of the Architecture Department Homer Puderbaugh were not available for comment.

Libraries...

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Rudolph said that about 170-180 students work in the University libraries, and about 140 of those work in Love Library.

"I have told each department in the library how much each department is supposed to save in dollars, which is translated into student wages, and it is up to the individual departments to decide on how to go about this," Rudolph said.

"It might mean not hiring as many student employees or just reducing the number of hours each student employee works during an average week," he said.

Rudolph also said that this cutting back in hours is only the solution for the spring semester and that they are still looking for a permanent solution to the problem.

Even if the libraries were to get the highest increase that they asked for from the Legislature that would still only include a 10 percent increase in operating funds, less than the inflation rate, and the same lack of funds will probably occur again, Rudolph said.

"The answer will probably come some time in the spring, after we find out how the budget turns out and we'll see what

areas can be reduced to hurt us the least," Rudolph said.

Rudolph said that if the reduction will affect students, then they will again make the alternatives public, as they did with the proposed shortening of hours.

"Students have a right in this matter and we want to hear what their opinions are if a reduction of services in some areas would affect them," Rudolph said.

Rudolph said he was pleased by the way students took the matter of shortening hours seriously and gave input when it was needed.



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