

daily nebraskan

Study to evaluate graduate, teaching assistants

By Betsy Miller

Two UNL groups may apply for the UNL Teaching Council's grant to study Graduate and Teaching Assistants' effectiveness.

ASUN's Commission on Quality Education and the Speech Communication Department are interested in the grant. Delivee Wright, a Teaching Council member said.

Wright, who is also the director of the teaching and learning center, said that these are the only groups that have contacted her.

The deadline for filing a grant application is Nov. 5, she said.

Reg Kuhn, chairman of the ASUN Commission on Quality Education, said the commission is laying the groundwork for its grant proposal right now.

Kuhn said that the commission proposes that its members go to one class taught by every graduate and teaching assistant at UNL.

"We would give a survey to the students in each

class so that they could assess the communication and teaching skills (of the T.A.'s or G.A.'s), Kuhn said.

Next semester

The surveys would probably be conducted next semester because the commission will not find out until Nov. 17 if they received the Teaching Council's grant.

The commission would wait a few weeks into next semester before questioning the classes.

"We would like to give students time to get used to their T.A.'s," Kuhn said.

The questionnaires for the survey would be passed out in classes during the last 15 minutes of the period.

Commission members would have to get permission from department chairpersons before they could visit the classes.

Cooperation from faculty members in getting names of all teaching and graduate assistants has been good, Kuhn said.

The questions for the survey have been developed by commission members and would be checked by the speech department to see if they work.

The questions would be on a computer sheet, and

space would be left on the back of the sheets for students to write additional comments.

Two methods

The Speech Communication Department is considering two survey methods.

Gustav Friedrich, chairman of the Department of Speech Communication, said the department's proposal would involve either an assessment approach or a student interview approach.

The assessment approach would ask students to assess the communication of their graduate and teaching assistants.

The students would observe their teachers' success in relating class material and involving students in the class.

The student interview approach would involve questioning students about their teachers' effectiveness.

Friedrich said that his department is interested in devising some tool to rate communication skills in graduate and teaching assistants.

"We are trying to build an instrument out of local concerns," he said.

The department's plan to submit a proposal is not definite yet, he said, but it will work on one this weekend.

Energy expert urges new solar trends

By Ward W. Triplett III

While much has been heard about the socialization of solar energy, there would seem to be relatively little progress made in its direction, according to an authority on energy.

Dr. Skip Laitner, chairman of the Center for Renewable Resources in Washington said that this trend is in desperate need of reversing. Laitner spoke Thursday night at the Rostrom of the Nebraska Union.

"If you provide people with the real desire to do things through solar energy, to step out of the conventional views of how energy should operate, there is no way this can not work. We have more energy to produce from the sun than we know what to do with," he said.

Laitner formerly worked as the Environmental Research Director in the Iowa Public Interest Research Group, as well as a citizen organizer for Ralph Nader in Washington D.C.

Laitner enlightened the small crowd on several of his and other informed sources' ideas of why solar energy is needed and why it isn't more widespread.

"We have failed as of yet to develop an energy system that gives a prerequisite for insuring social and human equity. Power plants have a way of running the community instead of being defined by it."

"Instead of shaping it, it should greatly accelerate the sense of community. Renewable resources, like that we can obtain from solar energy, can do this," he said. In our present system it's almost as if one develops economic success by exhaustion of resource, and if you destroy the ecosystem, you destroy the economic structure and the production system for each needs input from the other to keep going."

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Photo by Jon Natvig

The stark reality of a soon-approaching winter is made apparent in Pioneers Park. Soggy autumn leaves blanket the ground after a morning rain shook them from their tree branches.

Alternate parties insignificant

Leaders see maintenance of two-party system

By Colleen Tittel

Does the future of America politics hold room for a third or fourth party, or will our two-party system prove representative of differences in issues and provide valid alternatives for the public?

Leaders of both established parties in Nebraska foresee a two-party future.

"I think the American people believe in the two-party system," said Dave Heineman, the executive director of the Nebraska Republican Party. "It served us very well for a long period of time."

"Sure, there'll always be a few splinter groups, but I don't think they'll be of any significance," he added.

Heineman foresees the same for any future independent candidates like John Anderson.

"His (Anderson's) campaign is essentially disintegrating," Heineman said. "He has to start from scratch, and that's a difficult thing."

Charles P. Brown, state coordinator for the Carter-Mondale campaign, also criticized Anderson's third-party candidacy. Although Anderson has filed as an independent, he still considers himself a Republican, Brown said.

Anderson is running as an independent only because he could not win the primary or the caucus as a Republican, Brown said, and therefore he is not really a third-party candidate.

But Brown said that although he thinks the two-party system serves the voters well, he also values alternate-party candidacies because of issues raised for public scrutiny that otherwise might not be brought out.

Barry Commoner, Citizens' Party presidential candidate, is a valid third-party candidate, Brown said, because he voices energy issues.

Brown said he thinks issues raised by alternate parties will continue to be effectively merged into either Democratic or Republican party platforms.

Ron Kurtenbach of Lincoln, a Democratic Socialist, also expressed uncertainty about the future of alternate parties. If the state economy continues to decline, the public could turn to "a reactionary like Reagan," he said.

"I find the future really ambivalent," Kurtenbach said. "The potential is there. If people organize and come around to truly democratic values . . . a strong (Socialist) party could be developed."

"I think there will be fragmentation. There are several third parties that are underway."

Kurtenbach said the two-party system limits the options of voters, because Democrats and Republicans embrace the same ideals.

"I do make distinctions, but there are not really major differences between the two. Both don't really deal with the deep and abiding issues of the American people," he said.

Although he supports the idea of inde-

pendent, alternate parties, Kurtenbach said, independent candidates like Anderson have little impact.

"The Anderson candidacy, I think, is really whimsical. He's not a clear alternative to Carter and Reagan."

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