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Legislature gears for new session

By Stacie Thomas

The next round of state lawmaking will begin when the Nebraska State Legislature convenes Jan. 4. Bills held over from the spring session will command immediate attention but new bills will be introduced during the 60-day session.

LB56, the bill to raise the legal drinking age to 21, was introduced in the last spring's legislative session and made it to the general file before that session ended. Sen. William Nichol, of Scottsbluff, and Sen. Howard Peterson, of Grand Island, sponsored the bill.

Nichol said the bill has gained a lot of support since the last legislative session but said he isn't sure the bill will win enough votes to pass. He said the bill will be acted on early in the session since it has already made it to general file.

Other legislation may include a bill prompted by the Faith Christian School controversy, Nichol said. He said he doesn't know who will sponsor it or what it will say, but he said he thinks it will include legis-

lation on unaccredited teachers. Nichol said he didn't think the bill, if proposed, will be successful.

"It didn't fly last year, and I don't think it'll fly this year," he said.

Nichol said he also is expecting the proposal of bills concerning the Commonwealth situation and how to prevent a similar event from occurring in the future.

Sen. Carol McBride Pirsch, of Omaha, said the chances for her bill, LB 79, are good in light of the recent Omaha-area sexual assaults and murders of Danny Joe Eberly and Christopher Paul Walden. The bill would make the sexual assault of a child a felony, and would make possible the prosecution of any person who sexually arouses a child to gain sexual gratification. Another part of the bill would encompass the sexual assaults of both children and adults by barring evidence of the victim's past sexual behavior from the courtroom unless the victim is given prior notice that the evidence will be used in court.

Pirsch said she sponsored the bill because sexual

assault, especially of children, is a growing problem in this country. This bill was also introduced during the last legislative session and is in the general file.

Sen. Peter Hoagland, of Omaha, announced last week that he is considering proposal of a bill that would allow voters to decide if the office of University Regent would change from an elected to an appointed office. Hoagland said that since the office of University Regent is a low-visibility office, voters really don't know who they are voting for. He said the election becomes a name-recognition contest with voters choosing ethnic names or names that are similar to other well-known names. Hoagland said if his bill was approved, regents would be appointed for their administrative ability, resulting in higher quality regents.

If the Legislature approves the bill, voters would decide the issue in the next general election. If the voters approve it, the governor will be in charge of appointing the regents whenever one of the six-year terms expires.

Drop/add coinciding with dead week may cause students double misery

By Sara Thomassen

In the past, drop and add has been a trying experience for many UNL students but this year students have another black spot on their calendar to contend with because drop and add coincides with dead week.

"We have drop/add this close to the end of the semester because a lot of times students don't know what classes they need to take until close to finals week," said Mille Osten, administration services manager for UNL Registration and Records division.

Kathy Leeper, a UNL senior, said drop/add did not affect her preparation for finals.

"I can see where it might be an inconvenience, but personally it didn't bother me," she said. Leeper said she went through the entire process in 45 minutes.

Not everyone shared Leeper's positive attitude. Freshman DeeLynn Buss waited more than an hour for her printed schedule to come out of the computer.

"I have a lot of finals this week. It would be nice not to have to worry about this and think about them," she said.

Osten said on the average it takes less than 15 minutes to get a drop or add processed through the computer. When a longer delay occurs, Osten said, it

is because a form has been incorrectly filled out and submitted.

"It's all a matter of timing," said Lisa DeRoin, a junior. "If you're here at the right time you get done faster. If not, you're out of luck."

Mrs. Wayne Hertzler, a part-time administrative employee, said there are only two frequent complaints. First, classes students wanted were closed, and second, a student's registration was incorrect because of computing mistakes made during pre-registration.

"I think the students' attitudes have always been good toward drop/add," said Hertzler.

The present drop/add process is a system started only a few years ago. New elements to increase efficiency are being added continually. This semester, a self-service terminal was installed. This terminal performs the basic tasks previously done by registration consultants. The student punches in the call number of the course, and the computer indicates if there is an opening.

"The registration consultants are still around to help with more difficult problems," Osten said. "The self-service terminal has only made things more accessible to students."

Court rules against holding second office

ASUN's Student Court has declared that because of the obligation to serve on the Electoral Commission, ASUN's second vice president cannot run for any elected office during the second semester of his or her term.

The decision was made in response to concern over whether Kay Hinn, current second vice president, could run for re-election or another executive position and remain in office. ASUN's constitution dictates that the second vice president shall be a member of the Electoral Commission. Hinn anticipated that she might be able to resign from the electoral commission yet remain in ASUN.

Discussion of the case hinged on the interpretation of "shall."

In presenting the matter to the court, Student Life Commission Chairman Mark Scutter said "shall" should be interpreted as "merely permissive and not mandatory." The court found that "shall" is generally a word of obligation.

Rules of the Electoral Commission also require that "... members shall sign a notarized oath of office stating that they themselves are not candidates ..."

The court also ruled that if a second vice president desires to run for an elected position, he or she may resign and do so.

Hinn said Wednesday afternoon that she has decided to remain a member of ASUN and the Electoral Commission. She said she looks for some changes in the constitution next semester, since it has not been revised since 1966.



Staff Photo by Craig Anderson

Gary Kampchneider, a junior business administration major checks the closed course sheets before going through drop and add Wednesday afternoon. Drop and add will continue through Friday.

Thursday

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