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Racism workshop's effectiveness may be limited by poor attendance

By Ward W. Triplett III

Charles King's programs are designed to bring racism out in the open. But while King still is scheduled to start his workshop at 1 p.m. Friday, the people whom the organizers wanted most to attend probably will not be there.

Kenneth Gilreath, program consultant with Campus Activities and Programs, said the University Program Council Tri-Culture Committee invited 46 people, a mix of administrators, faculty and students, to serve as participants in King's workshop.

King, director of the Urban Crisis Center in Atlanta, usually works with about 30 people in his workshops, Gilreath said.

"We knew we were going to be cutting it close from the start," Gilreath said. "But as of Tuesday, we've only received seven responses saying they were coming, and four who said they were not. The others, we don't know where they're at."

"What it tells me is that while we have an administration that has to deal with other than white people, they refuse to discuss the problems they might have with people of color."

King is the founder and president of the crisis center and has presented his workshop for the Central Intelligence Agency, Congress, several universities and private businesses. His programs attack racism and bigotry in America, and the workshop participants are expected to respond to his questions about views on racism.

King has been giving his program for 15 years, and has appeared on *Donahue*, *60 Minutes*, and *Nightline*.

"I guarantee that he will intimidate some people. He's about 6-4, 240 pounds and has a real deep, baritone voice, and he doesn't pull punches," Gilreath said. "If you say something real stupid about race, he'll tell you to your face you're a fool."

Workshop participants leave with an increased knowledge of minority viewpoints, Gilreath said.

"He's not a savior by any means," he said. "What he is basically going to do is get people to admit blacks and whites do have a problem. They don't understand each other because they come from different socio-economic backgrounds, and have different beliefs."

Because of those differences, it is for example difficult to take a black student from a black neighborhood and put him in the same room with a white student from a Nebraska farm background, Gilreath said.

"Everybody has their own prejudices to begin with. Then, their personalities are going to conflict. But some university offices act like those things don't exist, or maybe they're not aware of them," Gilreath said.

King would admit those problems are there and how they can be approached. But first, the administrators who have to handle the problems should admit they're there. Attending King's workshop could be the start of that, Gilreath said.

"The only excuse I can accept for these people not being there is if they can guarantee themselves a place in society where they will not have to ever come in contact with people of color," Gilreath said.

Gilreath said it is possible for someone to go through UNL and never speak to a non-white person.

"If they can do that and go into the real world and do the same thing, then fine, they shouldn't come," he said. "But offices like housing do have to deal with non-white people. Every single year there is some conflict that comes up because of a black-white situation."

Housing director Doug Zatecha said he declined the invitation because he thought department's budget might come this weekend.

"The timing is really unfortunate, because it's the kind of program people should attend," he said.

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Ted Kaul/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska pitcher Mark Honnor is set to deliver a pitch in Tuesday's double-header against Northwestern (Iowa).

Plains studies new UNL major

By Judi Nygren

While many departments have had program cuts, UNL's Great Plains Studies department is expanding.

The NU Board of Regents voted to change Great Plains Studies from a minor to a 30-hour major earlier this month. The major will be offered next fall.

Frederick Luebke, director of the Center for Great Plains Studies, said the change was made because faculty and students expressed a want and need for the major.

Great Plains courses always have had a high enrollment rate, Luebke said, but only a few of the students had minors in the subject. While he does not foresee a drastic increase in the number of declared majors, he said he believes at least 12 students will major in the program.

Non-traditional students who return to UNL to complete their degrees show more interest in the program than any other group, Luebke said.

Older people look at Nebraska as the place they will always live, he said, and they want to learn more about the great plains as a region.

When the board changed the program's status, they also moved the administrative responsibilities from Integrated Studies to the Center for Great Plains Studies.

Fran Kaye, a member of the center's governing board and chairperson of the curriculum committee, said the administrative change came about because students would have had to meet both Great Plains Studies' and the Arts and Science's requirements. The studies department also did not want to handle an unofficial major, she said.

Since the center was established in 1976, Kaye said, the board has wanted to offer a major in the area.



David Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

One of the Shrine Circus clowns waves to the crowd on O Street during the parade put on by the Circus Monday afternoon.

Wednesday

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