

Note-taking skill sparks new business

By Mona Z. Koppleman
Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

Firmly believing in the American spirit of free enterprise, Jon Donlan decided to start his own business: UNL's first note-taking service for students in three courses.

But unlike those "shady term paper services" that guarantee A's, Jon's Notes promises only a "study supplement."

And Donlan has the written approval of course professors, as well as the go-ahead from the administration. But at least one administrator still has reservations.

"I see the potential of students using the notes as a crutch, a mechanism to fall back on," said David DeCoster, Dean of Students. "It may give students the idea they can miss lectures because notes are still available."

Donlan said that Jon's Notes supports the university's no-skip policy.

"I think the service will be a good study aid for students, especially freshman," Donlan said. "But I don't think it will make up the

difference between a passing and failing grade."

DeCoster said the university does not endorse or recommend using the service. But the service doesn't break any university rules because Donlan obtained the written consent of professors.

Donlan, an 18-year-old freshman studying business and marketing, said he got the idea from a similar service at the University of California at Berkeley. So far he's taking \$17 subscriptions for three 100-level introductory courses: sociology 153, taught by Alan Booth; biology, 101, taught by Wendell Gauger; and Western civilization, taught by Edward Homze.

"Berkeley has had a successful program for 10 or 15 years now," Homze said. "I think (the service) will be useful study aid. And I'm for anything that helps students study."

Homze said he personally will review the service's notes for his class to make sure information is correct and as complete as possible. He said he will look for good organization and clear statements of major points.

He said new students and those who have difficulty taking good notes will benefit most from the service, but also he warned that dependency on the service's notes alone would not get students passing grades.

"I think it's very clear that students — especially history students — have to do the required reading," Homze said. "You can't use a workbook or any other study guide and expect to pass that information alone."

Donlan said students have good reasons for subscribing to his service, even if it won't make or break a grade.

- Students can devote all their attention to the lecture.
- Jon's Notes will provide a model of good note-taking techniques.
- The service can be used as cross-reference to fill in gaps and missed days in notes.

Donlan said he requires note-takers to have a high grade point average. He must see samples of their note-taking abilities, and he relies heavily on references from professors.

Note-takers make \$30 a week

for attending the lecture course and typing the notes after the lecture. They need not be enrolled in the class, but must have taken the class before.

To subscribe, students can contact Jon's Notes at Lancaster House Printing Publishing Co., 1200 Q St. Donlan said for \$17 — \$19 later in the semester — students will get a dated subscription card. Lecture notes will be distributed on the day of the next class. So students can pick up Monday's notes on Wednesday, and that date will be punched out on the

subscription card.

Students must buy notes for the entire semester, not class period by class period. But if a subscriber buys his card in the middle of the course, he will receive all of the preceding notes from earlier class periods.

To introduce his business, Donlan will distribute notes for four class periods in all three subscription courses without charge to all students.

"If we give them samples, I hope they'll get interested," Donlan said.



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