

Church groups question ASUN

Religious policies conflict with non-discrimination clause

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Jerry Roemer, speaker of the ASUN Senate, admitted that some religious groups object to the "creed" portion of the clause, but he said he thinks these groups are expressing an "unjustified concern." Roemer said he doubts anyone would join an organization if he did not share its interests or beliefs.

The Great Commission Students, a campus religious group, has enlisted the services of a Kansas City lawyer to assist in obtaining an exemption from the creed portion of the non-discrimination clause that ASUN requires all recognized student groups have in their constitutions.

Dave Dickmann, pastor of the Great Commission Church, said the lawyer will send a letter to ASUN citing existing legal precedents that support the right of religious groups to discriminate on the basis of creed.

Dickmann said the Great Commission Students submitted a constitution to ASUN that included the clause, but it was rejected because membership in the group was dependent upon a statement of faith.

Joanie Eickoff, ASUN's special topics chairwoman, said an exemption already exists for residence halls on

the basis of place of residence and ASUN and their lawyers are now exploring the possibility of an exemption for religious groups on the basis of creed. However, she added the group probably would not be allowed an exemption.

Not only religious organizations are having difficulty with the clause. Roemer said the percentage of religious groups in compliance with constitutional requirements is slightly higher than the percentage of all student organizations.

Many "inactive" groups simply have failed to submit updated constitutions, Roemer said. Officer turnover has been a problem and new officers in some organizations have not received ASUN mailings regarding constitutional reform.

On Thursday, Eickoff met individually with organizations that have not complied with constitutional requirements. Another meeting is scheduled for today. The special meetings are designed to help groups formulate acceptable constitutions so that they may regain "active" status.

While student organizations continue to have problems revising their constitutions, the former chairwoman of EOC said she hopes the revised constitutions will begin meeting their original purpose — making student organizations more accurately reflect the composition of UNL students — primarily ASUN.

Mary Marcy said the EOC had compiled statistics showing that ASUN's elected and appointed positions were held primarily by white male Greeks. Instead of confronting ASUN directly

with this information, which Marcy said would be "politically suicidal," the EOC initiated a reform strategy to include all student organizations along with ASUN in their non-discrimination proposals. Marcy said that increasing the scope of their legislation to include all student organizations, the EOC had hoped to snare the real culprit: ASUN.

Roemer said no legislation indicates that ASUN was the main target for the non-discrimination clause, but because ASUN is a student organization it must also meet the revision requirements.

Marcy said ASUN has "a moral obligation to clean up their own act before they go after others." If ASUN becomes more representative, other groups are likely to follow.

Roemer said ASUN is making progress. He said ASUN has expanded its pool of applicants for governmental positions by increasing its mailings across campus.

He said he hopes that measures such as this one will make ASUN more representative.

However, some people think this move is not enough. CAP activities coordinator Kathy Shellogg said ASUN has "turned the non-discrimination bill outward," neglecting its original intent. The clause has turned into a "meaningless statement for groups, simply a gesture," she said.

Despite the barrage of claims and counterclaims, most people who have considered the non-discrimination clause remain optimistic.

Marcy admits the proposal may have been idealistic, but she still says she thinks the realization of its purpose is not far away.

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The balloons, \$1 each, will be sold before the UNL Homecoming football game against Oklahoma State University. The game is scheduled to begin at 6:45 p.m. in Memorial Stadium.

This will be the eighth year the Tassels have worked with Juvenile Diabetes Foundation-Lincoln Chapter, Tassels president Teri Watkins said.

Watkins said Tassels balloon sales people will be helped by about 150 volunteers from the Lincoln chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation before Saturday's game.

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