

Name remains But callers don't understand it

By Jen Deselms
Senior Reporter

Although it will take a vote from students to change the name of ASUN to UNL Student Government, the organization has been answering its phones "student government" since December.

Marlene Beyke, ASUN director of development, said callers often couldn't understand what was being said when the phones were answered, so changing to "student government" was less confusing.

The experiment in phone answering came about the same time as a bill to change ASUN's name formally, but there were different reasons behind the two actions.

ASUN Sen. Erin Brisben, bill sponsor, said vagueness is the current name and the "undesirable acronyms" it can form were reasons behind the formal name change proposal.

ASUN, Associated Students of the University of Nebraska, presents a picture of the entire university, Brisben said.

Brisben said the name shows what the group represents, but not what it is.

Robert Sittig, UNL professor of political science, said "association" implies a private lobbying group and is a common term for groups as they try to organize politically.

ASUN President Chris Scudder said both names are descriptive of the organization, but the group is probably more government than anything else.

ASUN decisions must be approved by the university administration, Scudder said, so ASUN has less power than an actual government. But the organization has elected members and has a government-like structure.

Changing the name would remedy the inconsistency between the formal name and how the phones are answered, Brisben said.

However, the proposed name change will not solve the problem of other acronyms being created by students. When abbreviated UNLSG, the letters

can be manipulated to spell "LUNGS" or "SLUNG."

"I think I'd rather have SLUNG be our problem than ANUS," Brisben said.

It wasn't acronyms but apathy that led to the creation of ASUN in 1965 when the old Student Council system was abolished.

In March 1965, students voted 1,333 to 335 to create a new three-branched government to be called ASUN.

John Lydick, an Omaha attorney who was president of the last UNL Student Council in 1965, helped restructure the constitution to create ASUN. Lydick said students were apathetic about voting for their Student Council representatives because the council was seen as a fraternity-run organization.

To combat student apathy, the new constitution changed the election rules requiring representatives from each college. It also required that the president be elected by the student body instead of the council.

"We felt we made progress," Lydick said, because voter turnout increased.

Lydick said they chose ASUN after looking at several other university governments and finding the words "association" or "associated" widely used. He said the name showed that the students were representing the student body.

Gerard Keating, 1985-86 ASUN president, said he didn't see any reason to break a 20-year tradition.

"A group should show consistency," Keating said, "Changing names sometimes shows some instability."

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Advocate: Farmers need to fight anti-semitic extremists

By Andy Jacobitz
Staff Reporter

Bigotry and intolerance are present in the Midwest and radical extremists are still here, said Danny Levitas, research director for Prairiefire, a non-profit rural education and advocacy organization, Wednesday night at the Ag Crisis seminar in the East Union.

Levitas said through his work he has seen both a "qualitative and quantitative increase in racist and anti-semitic activity," in the farm communities.

The Midwest is not specifically more intolerant than any other area of the nation but due to economic conditions, farmers are vulnerable to persuasion by anti-semitic groups,

he said.

The extremist message says the farmers are not to blame for farm problems, but a greater international undermining scheme by minorities causes the crisis, Levitas said. These minorities are purported to be threatening the white, Protestant, "superior" race, Levitas said.

He said the groups are using hateful, fascist propaganda which some people are accepting.

Levitas identified several groups as being anti-semitic including the Posse Comitatus. He also said people such as the Rev. Everett Sileven "shares a platform with those who speak about a race war."

Sileven provides a vehicle for recruitment for these other groups by cooperating with their members,

he said.

Levitas said to fight these groups, we need to identify them and to speak out against them.

He also said we need to create viable alternative for the agricultural community to offer them an opportunity for public participation for change.

We need to show farmers that black, Jewish and other minority groups are lobbying and supporting farm relief legislation, Levitas said.

The Farm Crisis seminar, sponsored by Farm Action Concerns Tomorrows Society (FACTS), meets each Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. in the City Union and 4 p.m. in the East Union. Students and faculty are invited to participate in both sessions.

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