

Former UNL director Phaneuf opens national career center

By Anne Mohri
Staff Reporter

Gerry Phaneuf may be on to something big. Phaneuf, former director of UNL's Career Planning and Placement Center, recently resigned to begin work on a national career planning and placement center. His new center first will be based in Omaha and soon will open branches elsewhere, Phaneuf said. Because many campuses do not offer career-planning centers, he said, his centers will be accessible to students at many colleges.

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Phaneuf

In the 2 1/2 years that Phaneuf was director of UNL's center he made many changes.

A computer referral system was started to increase the number of companies using the service, Phaneuf said. The referral system made student information more accessible to businesses, he said.

Phaneuf also began a university wide Career Information Day designed to give information on different careers. Participation in the event increased greatly over the years, Phaneuf said. The number of companies increased from 43 to 70, and the number of students attending the event doubled, he said.

The center also placed more emphasis on serving East Campus students. Phaneuf said that before he took the job of director, East Campus students were neglected by the Career Planning and Placement Center.

Also during Phaneuf's time as director the registration rate by students at the center increased by 65 percent.

Although the Career Planning and Placement Center has made signifi-

cant advances, they were not made without a struggle. Phaneuf said that when he began his job as director he was asked to expand the center and was assured funding for the expansion.

But with the university's financial cutbacks, Phaneuf said, starting new programs was difficult. He said the only thing he didn't like about the job was the frustration of being underfunded.

Phaneuf said the center also was understaffed — two professional staff members to serve 24,000 students, Phaneuf said.

"It doesn't compare well with other institutions of this size," Phaneuf added.

Despite these problems, Phaneuf said, he enjoyed his position as director of the Career Planning and Placement

Center, and he is looking forward to his new job.

"I like to be able to help a person explore what they would like to accomplish," Phaneuf said.

The assistant director of the center, Jim Schiefelbein, said Phaneuf had a very upbeat nature and was able to deal with people positively.

Assistant Director Janel Queen said Phaneuf was important to the office.

"He had creative insights because of his experience with career planning," Queen said.

Coby B. Simerly, former assistant dean at the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, was named interim director of the center in late January.

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