

Hill, regents assess low turnout's effect on unofficial vote

By Lisa Twiestmeyer
Staff Reporter

Although only 11.72 percent of students voted in Wednesday's ASUN elections, ASUN President-elect Bryan Hill said low voter participation should not be a factor in retaining the unofficial student regent vote.

Of 21,047 eligible voters, 2,466 voted in this year's elections. Last year, 2,726 of 20,743 eligible students voted, or 13.14 percent.

Hill said he doesn't think voter participation among 18- to 24-year-olds in student government elections "is any different than in any other elections."

"Politically, they are one of the least active segments of society," Hill said, "but I don't think student concern should be overlooked (by the regents) for low turnout.

"I don't think voter participation

should be the main focus with keeping the ex-officio vote," Hill said.

The regents approved the unofficial student regent vote in January on a one-year trial basis. During discussion of the vote, regents expressed concern about low voter turnout in student elections and whether student regents are truly representing their constituents.

Hill said the ex-officio vote makes sure the student regent takes an active part on the NU Board of Regents and lets regents hear about student issues.

The elections for the board of regents have a lower percentage of voter turnout than the elections for governor, Hill said, but that doesn't take away the legitimacy of the regents.

"Rather than looking at the percentage of voter turnout, it is more important to look at the good and bad effects of having a student regent," Hill said.

Regent Kermit Hansen of Elkhorn

had expressed concern over low voter turnout at the January meeting. He said that when the ex-officio vote comes up for discussion again next January, he would consider adding a stipulation that if 20 percent of the student body did not vote in student elections, student regents would lose the ex-officio vote.

Hansen said Wednesday night that "it's a darn shame" more students didn't vote, and he wants to discuss his stipulation with the board again.

"I'd like to see what can be done to see that there is a strong awareness of students being for or against an individual (student regent)."

Regent Nancy Hoch of Nebraska City, chairperson of the Board of Regents, said the decision to retain the student regent vote will depend on a broader range of issues. She said Hansen's 20-percent stipulation was his own opinion and not that of the board. Hoch said the vote should be considered "in the context of how it

works."

Regent Don Blank of McCook said he was disappointed that there was not a larger turnout in the ASUN elections.

"Students have a lot of priorities -- studying, getting to class, trying to survive," he said. "Many times, student government isn't the top priority."

But, Blank said, the low turnout does not change his opinion on the student regent vote. He fought hard for the student regent vote, he said, and it is important that student regents are able to express their opinions to the board.

Regent Robert Allen of Hastings, who voted in favor of the student regent vote, said low election turnout "isn't going to help matters" on keeping the vote. It is important that the regents hear from students, he said, and people should "get their heads together" and see what can be done to increase turnout.

"That (the turnout) surprises me," Allen said. "I would've expected at least 20 percent."

Allen said he was impressed with Jeff Petersen's work on the board. Petersen made "very informed comments," he said, and has done "a heck of a job."

"If the new man is as good as Jeff, we'll sure listen to him no matter what the percentage is," Allen said.

Regent Rosemary Skrupa of Omaha shared Allen's opinion of Petersen's performance as student regent. Skrupa said she has been "totally impressed" with the student regents on the board.

"They are knowledgeable and into the facts and issues," Skrupa said. "They are not afraid to speak their minds. They're new young people with fresh ideas."

Skrupa said that although the low turnout is "tragic," it does not change her opinion that student regents should have an unofficial vote.

Parking signs to be erected

By Amie DeFrain
Staff Reporter

As soon as weather permits, new handicapped parking signs along the entire west-side street of Selleck Quadrangle will be erected, according to University of Nebraska-Lincoln officials.

Ron Fuller, staff assistant of the parking services division, said about six signs will be posted stating that cars without handicapped parking permits will be towed and the owner fined \$50.

Previously, Fuller said, people complained that the signs now there weren't "specific enough" and were "hard to see" when vans were parked in the stalls. The signs, which spread over only half the block, read

"Reserved Parking" and have a handicapped symbol at the bottom.

The entire block was changed to handicapped parking because more handicapped students will be enrolled at UNL next fall, Fuller said.

Christy Horn, coordinator of the educational center for disabled students, estimated that the number of handicapped students will increase from 200 to 300 students by next year.

However, UNL Parking Administrator Lt. John Burke said the police department decided to add more handicapped parking stalls even before they knew of the enrollment increase.

Burke estimated that the new signs are three times the size of the old signs.



Eeny-meeny-miny-moe

Mike Harshman, a junior actuarial science major, registers to vote in the ASUN elections Wednesday afternoon in the Nebraska Union.

Shaun Sartin/Daily Nebraskan

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SLUMBR, BEER accept their defeat

BEER From Page 1

pleased with the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska. No executive candidates of the SLUMBR party were present at the post-election party.

Once SLUMBR declared themselves a serious party, the only joke party left was BEER, who finished in 3rd place. As of 12:30 a.m. Thursday BEER had received 11.9 percent of the vote.

Greg "Jobby" Johnson, BEER first vice presidential candidate, said BEER was most proud of the number of election violations his party committed.

Bob Gestring, BEER presidential candidate, said that since his party spent only about \$300 on the election, and was budgeted nearly \$1,100, "We had \$800 of 'funny money' to blow on fines."