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WEATHER:
Wednesday, increasing cloudiness and warmer, 20 percent chance of showers, high of 60, winds southeast increasing from 10 to 20 miles per hour. Low of 50 Wednesday night, 50 percent chance of showers. Thursday, scattered showers in the morning, partly cloudy and breezy, high in 60s. Friday through Sunday, dry and cool, highs in 60s and lows in mid-30s to low 40s.

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'Many factors present'

Papik: Graduation percentage higher among athletes

By Jana Pedersen
Senior Reporter

Although graduation rates for athletes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are below the national average, a UNL official said a greater proportion of UNL student-athletes graduate than non-athletes.

Al Papik, UNL assistant athletic director for administrative services, said that because many factors contribute to graduation rates at different colleges and universities, "about the only comparison you can make is within your own institution."

According to figures provided by Linda Olson, UNL athletic certification coordinator for academic services, 38.1 percent of student athletes who entered UNL in the fall of 1982 graduated by the spring of 1988.

Olson said the graduation rate for

all UNL students who entered in 1982 was 39.3 percent.

The national graduation average for athletes during that five-year period was 47.8 percent, according to a study by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

But Papik said many factors can influence graduation rates that aren't reflected by the statistics.

Some institutions, for example, are smaller than UNL or have stricter entrance requirements, which make their graduation rates higher than UNL's, he said.

Papik said he thinks the UNL athletic graduation rate is "on par" with the graduation rates at institutions similar to UNL.

Comparing graduation rates of athletes and non-athletes at UNL gives a more accurate picture of how Cornhusker athletes perform, Papik said.

In the past three years, he said, the graduation rate for athletes has been comparable to the rate for all students at UNL.

The most recent statistics, from students who entered UNL in 1983, show athletes' graduation rate is higher than the rate for all students, he said.

The rate for all students who entered in 1983 was 40.2 percent while 46.4 percent of athletes graduated, he said.

Papik said graduation rates at UNL for athletes and for all students are similar for several reasons.

Student-athletes probably get the same mean test scores as other students, Papik said.

Being average students would make the graduation rate for athletes average as well, he said.

But because many athletes attend college on scholarships, Papik said,

they don't have to work to pay for their education, leaving them more time for studying.

"And many of them do not carry that heavy a course load," he said.

Another contributing factor is the athletic academic support unit which monitors class attendance and requires study time, Papik said.

Even with consideration of outside influences, Papik said, graduation rates don't accurately portray student abilities.

Students who take more than five years to graduate, leave the institution in good standing or transfer to other institutions to receive their degrees are not figured in the graduation rate, he said.

Papik said transfer students have a stronger impact on graduation rates at institutions like UNL that are part of university systems because a student just may move to a different campus.

For example, he said, criminal justice majors at UNL have to transfer to the University of Nebraska at Omaha to get a degree.

Olson said low numbers of athletes in each sport also can influence the accuracy of graduation rates.

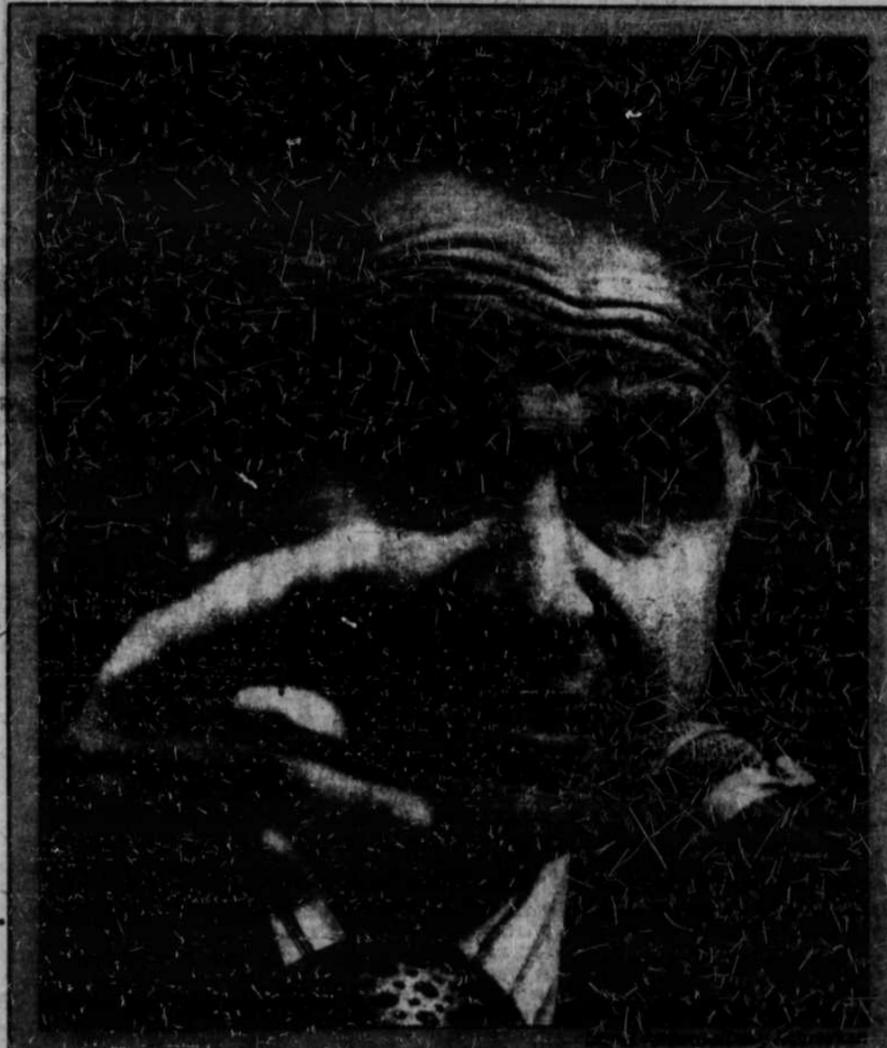
The NCAA report gives national averages for different sports, but those statistics aren't always an accurate representation of an individual campus, Olson said.

If one student doesn't graduate in a sport with few participants, it can significantly lower the sport's graduation rate, she said.

On the other hand, a sport with many participants wouldn't be as adversely affected by losing one athlete before graduation.

Because of such inequalities, she said, UNL will not release graduation

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U.S. relations with China depend on caution, waiting

U.S. relations with China depend on caution and waiting, a top U.S. official said Tuesday. The United States should not allow the erosion of the strategic alliance with China, he said, and must remain a source of honor in dealing with China.

Styrofoam a social mainstay despite attempts to ban use

Editor's note: This is the fourth part in a four-part series on recycling.

By Jana Pedersen
Senior Reporter

Despite nationwide efforts to ban it, fast food containers, coffee cups and other items still are being made from Styrofoam.

Gene Hanlon, recycling coordinator for the city of Lincoln, said Styrofoam has survived because no product has been designed to replace it.

"Styrofoam is a very convenient product," Hanlon said. "In terms of food containers, nothing has been developed to hold in warmth like Styrofoam."

Although Styrofoam does not make up a large portion of the waste stream, Hanlon said, it receives a lot of attention because it is so visible.

Most restaurants use some form of Styrofoam containers, mostly for hot drinks and takeout orders, he said, which stand out as litter on the streets.

In the past, efforts to ban Styrofoam were based on the detrimental effects of chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, on the ozone layer,

Hanlon said.

But, he said, most Styrofoam no longer is made using CFCs.

Today's debate about Styrofoam centers on its biodegradability, he said.

"As with other plastic products, Styrofoam takes many years to decompose," he said.

A Styrofoam container will take anywhere from 300 to 500 years to decompose in a landfill, Hanlon said, while a paper container will take about 50 to 100 years.

For decomposition to occur, Hanlon said, there must be both water and oxygen in a landfill.

But Environmental Protection Agency regulations prevent all but a minimum of water and oxygen to penetrate landfills, he said.

Because of ground water contamination fears, Hanlon said, full landfills are covered with a three-foot clay cap to prevent water from coming in contact with the garbage.

The cap also prevents oxygen from penetrating, he said, which, combined with a lack of water, slows the decomposition process for all garbage.

Even though Styrofoam and other plastics are very light and only make up about 7 percent of all garbage by weight, they take up 20 to 25 percent of landfill space, he said.

That means that much of today's landfills will be around for hundreds of years, he said.

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Reunion bookstore possible

Developer wants limited items sold in University Bookstore

By Jerry Guenther
Senior Reporter

Lincoln developer David Hunter said Tuesday that he hopes to give the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's two biggest booksellers a run for their money.

Hunter, president of Hardy Building Corp., said he has spoken with representatives from two bookstores and plans to announce within 30 days if a new bookstore will open in the Reunion.

He also said he plans to attend the NU Board of Regents meeting Friday to encourage regents to limit the items the University Bookstore can sell.

According to the university's role as defined by the regents, Hunter said, the University Bookstore is limited to selling collegiate supplies.

Legislation adopted by the regents on Sept. 15, 1951, states "the university owned and operated bookstore shall be permitted to sell classroom and laboratory supplies to students in the University of Nebraska."

On Jan. 10, 1953, the regents adopted legis-

lation that limits the bookstore to selling pencils, pens, ink, erasers, notebooks, paper, glue, index cards, tape, t-squares and about 30 other items related to school usage.

Although Hunter said the list is outdated, he thinks the regents intended to limit the university-operated bookstore to selling textbooks and school supplies.

"They sell everything from bikini pants to baby bibs -- even beer mugs," Hunter said. "I don't consider any of that to be essential to the classroom."

Ray Coffey, UNL business manager of business and finance, said the university can sell any items at the bookstore as long as state law does not prohibit it.

Coffey said a state statute from 1869 when the University of Nebraska was founded mandates that the university must provide textbooks for students at a fair price.

Over the years, NU and UNL administration officials have expanded items that the bookstore can carry to include college supplies and other items that relate to campus life, he said.

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