

Daily Nebraskan

Thursday

WEATHER:

Thursday, cloudy and breezy, high in the mid-to upper-50s, northwest winds 15 to 25 miles per hour. Friday night, partly cloudy, low in the low-30s. Friday, partly sunny and warmer, high in the upper-60s.

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Gregory's testimony continues

Supervisor says Visser was 'insubordinate'

By Jerry Guenther
Senior Reporter
and Victoria Ayotte
Senior Editor

General studies Director Donald Gregory said during testimony Wednesday morning that he believed staff employees thought Mary Jane Visser was "keeping a book on them."

Gregory and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen are named in a lawsuit in which Visser alleges that the university fired her for exercising First Amendment rights of free speech when she told other university employees of athletic department irregularities. The trial completed its seventh day in U.S. District Court Wednesday.

Gregory, Griesen and the NU Board of Regents are named in Visser's suit for alleged sexual discrimination.

Gregory, who was Visser's immediate supervisor at the time of her dismissal Sept. 2, 1988, said Visser kept track of employees' work times and their language.

"It was almost, in effect, as if they

had another supervisor," he said. Gregory said he did not think it was Visser's "prerogative" to keep track of him and other employees since she was not the office manager.

Employees in the general studies office were aware that Visser was watching them, Gregory said.

"It was my perception that everybody believed they were walking on eggs," he said.

Gregory also testified that Visser's work performance undercut the overall performance of the staff.

Visser sometimes would come to work late, leave work early or come back from lunch late, he said.

Students whom Visser advised sometimes had to wait for appointments because she wasn't there or wasn't available to meet with them, Gregory said.

"I was always sensitive to students sitting there waiting," he said.

Although Gregory said other employees also came to work late, left work early or took extended lunch breaks, they did it less often than Visser.

Gregory said the staff needs to be able to interact and work with each

other in day-to-day business.

Gregory said that based on the office calendar from September 1987 to August 1988, Visser was gone 43 hours, more than one week of work time. This figure excluded tardiness and time Visser took off to take a class, Gregory said.

The 43-hour figure included both approved and unapproved absences, he said. Visser's attorney, Thom Cope, asked Gregory if he thought it was fair to penalize Visser for times she left the office on approved absences. Gregory said that although some of the absences were approved, they increased the total hours Visser was unavailable to advise students.

Gregory said that from March 30 to May 17, 1988, Visser was "very cold, very abrupt, often silent and generally filled with tension," which affected the staff's ability to serve students.

He also testified that Visser was insubordinate.

Gregory said he sent a memorandum to Visser on May 31, 1988, and received it back with her response.

Gregory said Visser's response indicated that she was not familiar

with a form that office employees had used for many years.

Visser sometimes acted ignorant of things she should have known about, Gregory said. She was "fighting almost every step of the way of anything that came up."

Another time, Gregory said, a work-study student who had worked in the office for a couple of years quit. Gregory said he and the rest of the staff contributed to buy the student a gift and card that was signed by the staff.

Later, Visser gave the work-study student another gift and card that was signed by everyone but Gregory, he said.

Even with something as trivial as a gift, Gregory said, Visser had to react to him.

Under cross-examination by Cope, Gregory testified that he was out of the office on some occasions because of other commitments, and wasn't always able to determine when Visser arrived or left work.

Gregory also said it was not necessarily inappropriate behavior for an adviser to have a closed-door session when counseling a student.

The adviser has the discretion to close the door on a counseling session for a short time if the session might be overheard by others near the office, he said.

Gregory said that March 18, 1988, -- one of the days he accused Visser of having extended closed sessions -- he didn't actually know how long Visser kept the door closed when she was counseling students.

Gregory testified Wednesday afternoon that he did not put Visser on probation.

Personnel Director Bruce Currin said Gregory came to him in March 1988 for advice. Currin said he gave Gregory a counseling form to give Visser, but Gregory caid and said he was not going to use it.

The counseling form would have been in Visser's permanent personnel file, Currin said, and Gregory wanted to send her a memo "to try to keep it as low-key as he could."

Visser's response to Gregory's March 30 memo was a surprise, Currin said.

In April, Currin said, Gregory

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Environmental activist speaks

Toxic waste a 'people problem'

By Roger Price
Staff Reporter

Dealing with toxic waste is not a technical problem -- it's a people problem, John O'Connor said Wednesday night in a speech titled "Working Solutions to Toxic Pollution."

O'Connor, director of the National Toxics Campaign, told the audience of about 40 in the Commonsplace that there are serious environmental problems that need to be dealt with today.

These problems include toxic chemicals and heavy metals in water supplies, a hole in the ozone layer larger than the continental United States and global warming.

The transformation of industry during World War II, O'Connor said, is to blame for today's environmental problems.

'...we could make a smog-free car in a couple of years.'
--O'Connor

During that era, O'Connor said, shortages caused by the war forced American industry to look for alternatives to rubber, cotton and wool. The results of this search led to the development of synthetic rubber and fibers as an alternative, he said.

"These blessings have turned to plagues," O'Connor said.

O'Connor said that since this transformation, the cancer rate in the United States has doubled from one in six people to one in three, and the birth-defect rate has doubled.

O'Connor said the government has not helped solve these problems because it "is not challenging what is produced or how it is produced," but simply transferring toxins from one form to another.

As an alternative, O'Connor said, government should force industries to look for other means of production that do not produce toxic waste.



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

John O'Connor

O'Connor said Americans should consider the hydrogen-powered automobile being developed by several German automakers as one alternative.

"If we decide to do this as a nation -- we could make a smog-free car within a couple of years," O'Connor said.

Chemical users such as farmers also should be targeted for change,

he said.

O'Connor said a study done by the National Academy of the Sciences found that farmers who did not use chemicals did as well financially as those who did.

Government regulations requiring the overuse of chemicals to be eligible for farm subsidy programs add to environmental problems, he said.

ASUN resolution addresses faculty shortage problems

By Jana Pedersen
Senior Reporter

Asking university officials to draft an initiative to increase the number of instructors, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska passed a resolution Wednesday that named faculty shortages as a problem at UNL.

Engineering senator Michael Ho said he introduced the resolution to emphasize the need for more instructors in certain areas at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The resolution names the colleges of journalism, engineering and business administration as just three of "many areas" in which faculty shortages exist.

Last year, the UNL Faculty Senate lobbied for increased salaries for instructors, Ho said, which helped to increase morale.

But working conditions also are important for retaining faculty, he said.

If instructors feel they have too big

a workload because of faculty shortages, he said, they won't be satisfied with their jobs.

"The faculty shortage aspect has kind of gotten pushed to the side," he said. "I think priorities need to be shifted."

The resolution names department chairpersons "taking on a greater teaching load than is acceptable, given the additional demands of their positions" and courses "being taught by graduate teaching assistants rather than faculty members" as examples of faculty shortages.

Ho said he hopes the resolution will bring attention to the shortage at UNL and let students know that they should be concerned about it.

"Students should be looking at it -- maybe not being outraged, but being alarmed -- and they're not right now," he said.

If students take a leading role on the faculty shortage issue, he said, something can be done about it.

ASUN passed the resolution 23-1. One senator abstained.

Service walks students to cars, residence halls

By Jennifer O'Ciika
Staff Reporter

After breezing through a one-month trial period, the Cather/Pound Escort Service for students walking on campus at night seems bound for success and expansion, according to the service's founders.

Tanya Christiansen and Kirk Carpenter, who started the service Oct. 9, said the number of students using the service has increased while more escorts have been signing up.

The number of women using the service has increased to about five each night, Carpenter said.

Only two or three women used the service the first week, he said. No men have requested escorts yet.

Christiansen said the increase in use is partly because it is getting dark earlier.

To better serve students during these hours, the escort service changed its hours from 7 p.m. to midnight to 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Publicity also helped increase usage, she said. Student assistants throughout the complex have talked about the escort service at floor meetings, and posters were put up, Christiansen said.

Carpenter said the Cather/Pound/Neihardt student government has yet to approve funding for an advertisement on business cards.

If approved, these cards will include the service's phone number and will be distributed to all complex residents, Carpenter said.

Christiansen said posters also help attract escorts. Many students have called asking how they can become escorts, she said.

Before the service opened, 75 to 100 students attended an informational meeting for escorts.

"I was surprised and impressed by the number of people that volunteered," Carpenter said.

Sixty-five Cather/Pound residents currently work as escorts, Carpenter

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