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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Friday

WEATHER:

Friday, mostly sunny and cold, high 0 to 5, light northwest winds. Friday night, partly cloudy, low about ten below zero. Saturday, mostly sunny, high in the mid-teens.

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Big Eight figures vary NU is third in dropout survey

By Eve Nations
 Staff Reporter

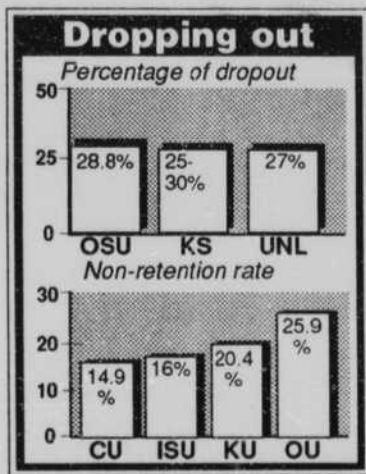
Although the University of Nebraska-Lincoln freshman dropout rate isn't the highest in the Big Eight, according to an Oklahoma State University Official, UNL places in the top three.

According to the survey, Oklahoma State University placed first with a 28.8 percent dropout rate, followed by Kansas State with 25 to 30 percent and UNL with 27 percent.

The University of Colorado claimed the lowest non-retention rate with 14.9 percent followed by Iowa State University with 16 percent, Kansas University with 20.4 percent and the University of Oklahoma with 25.9 percent. Percentages for University of Missouri were unavailable.

Anthony Schkade, assistant director for Registration and Records at UNL, said many things cause freshmen to drop out.

"We know students come to UNL for other purposes than graduation," Schkade said. "Some students, especially those from small towns, come just to meet new people.



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

Others come because their parents want them to go to UNL for a year before they work on the farm."

The variation between the dropout rates in the Big Eight schools are because of the "distinct differences" between the schools, he said.

Other reasons for the dropout rate, according to Schkade, is that many students transfer to another university during or after their first year.

"Some students aren't dropouts,

they are stopouts," he said. "They come to school for a semester and then take a semester off or they go somewhere else."

The dropout rates decrease as the student progresses toward graduation, he said. The closer students are to graduating, the more likely they are to graduate, he said.

Schkade said several avenues are available to freshmen to keep them in school.

A class called University Foundations helps students adjust to life at UNL and helps them feel more comfortable, he said.

Another alternative is the Multi-Cultural Affairs office. Schkade said this office helps minority students adjust to the university.

A third way students receive help is through their advisers, he said.

"A majority of advisers try and help students who are having problems," he said.

The advisers get to know the students, he said, so the students are comfortable in seeking help.

Schkade said there hasn't been a great deal of research done at UNL for retention rates so it is difficult to predict retention patterns.

No suspects in Keller Plan theft Today last day to file Psych 181 incomplete

By Jerry Guenther
 Senior Reporter

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students enrolled in Keller Plan sections of Introductory Psychology 181 prior to the theft of test files during Thanksgiving break have until today to file incompletes.

John Berman, chairman of the psychology department, said students who had not dropped the course when the tests were stolen can either request an incomplete or take a final exam.

Students choosing to take an incomplete in the course will have another opportunity to take the class without being charged tuition again, Berman said.

As of Thursday morning, Berman said, about 20 percent of the more than 600 students in the course had filed requests for incompletes.

Students have until today to take the comprehensive, multiple-choice final exam and can use the best of five test scores to determine their final grade, he said.

Berman said those students who still want to take incompletes should fill out forms in 105 Burnett Hall, the same room that is used for testing.

Initially, students were upset when they found out the tests had been stolen, Berman said. But given the situation, he said, most students have adjusted well.

"As far as I can tell," Berman said, "it's as good as can be expected."

Students enrolled in Keller Plan psychology normally take unit exams at their own pace and cannot advance to the next unit until they earn a passing grade on the previous unit.

Because the tests and files were stolen, psychology officials had no way to determine students' progress in the course.

Investigator Ron Lundy of the UNL Police Department said police are checking on several leads related to the theft, but still have no suspects.

Many UNL students, faculty and staff members have contacted UNL police with information concerning the theft, Lundy said.

"People have been very cooperative," Lundy said.

Ban of live Christmas trees continues in residence halls

By Jana Pedersen
 Senior Reporter

Students who wish to deck their residence halls may have a problem if they want to use live boughs of holly.

Doug Zatechka, director of housing for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said live trees and other live decorations, such as branches, aren't permitted in UNL residence halls.

"If somebody wants a tree, it means going out and buying a small artificial one," Zatechka said. "Live trees are a real fire hazard."

'If somebody wants a tree, it means going out and buying a small artificial one.'

-- Zatechka

He said the residence hall office began to ban live trees several years ago after the trees were blamed for fires in residents' rooms.

"When pine trees burn, they burn very fast and very hot," he said. "But what burns most is paper, and students have . . . tons and tons of paper."

Although past fires generally were confined to a single room, Zatechka said, the smell of smoke penetrated to adjoining rooms as well, inconveniencing more students than just those who put up the tree.

There have been no fires attributed to holiday decorations since the ban was adopted, he said.

Although Deputy State Fire Marshall Steve Schneider said there haven't been any Christmas tree fires in the Lincoln area this season, there already have been two in the Omaha area.

Schneider said that even though having live trees in homes can be dangerous, having them in living units is more dangerous because more people can be injured if there's a fire.

"Live trees are removed from the public basically when they're in the home," Schneider said. "Whereas in a dormitory situation we have a lot of people packed in a small area."

He said fires usually start when live trees are placed near heating units or when humidity levels aren't high enough.

Faulty lighting, candles or cigarettes commonly provide sparks that can start fires, Schneider said.

Alcohol is another, less familiar, common link behind holiday fires, he said.

"Just like drinking and driving, drinking

See LIGHTS on 6

Truck accident causes power outage in two UNL buildings, part of Lincoln

By Jerry Guenther
 Senior Reporter

A power outage Thursday afternoon cut off electricity in a large portion of Lincoln north of O Street, including two University of Nebraska-Lincoln buildings, but had few effects on operations in those buildings, officials said.

Harold Simmons, Lincoln Electrical Systems manager of energy conservation services, said electricity was knocked out at 1:08 p.m. and was restored within 40 minutes in residential areas and UNL, and within an hour and five minutes in all remaining areas.

Richard McDermott, director of the UNL Physical Plant, said the outage hardly affected the university because the subsystem that feeds

electricity to most of UNL was not hampered by the outage.

McDermott said he thinks the only buildings affected by the outage were the UNL Police building and the Watson building, where university maintenance is located.

Simmons said electricity was knocked out when a truck struck a guy wire on Burlington Avenue between 66th and 67th streets.

Guy wires, which are made of steel, are inserted into the ground and connected to utility poles at about 45-degree angles to give the poles support and stability.

Simmons said the guy wire snapped and flipped onto an overline wire, tripping a breaker that eliminated power at five substations.

The substations supply electricity to "a good portion" of Lincoln north of O Street, Simmons said.



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

Mack Beatty, custodian at Sheldon Art Gallery, sweeps Thursday's snow off the steps. Forecasts for the weekend call for rising temperatures but no snow.