

Commission stresses information gathering

By Adeana Leftin
Staff Reporter

As the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education prepares to enter uncharted waters, the current commission gave a few suggestions to keep it afloat.

A report submitted by the present commission to the Appropriations and Education committees Monday recommended that the new commission have a means of seeking out information from institutions to be able to review programs and coordinate procedures.

Nebraska voters approved a constitutional amendment in November strengthening the current coordinating commission, which serves only as an advisory body.

Bruce Stahl, executive director of the present commission, said that gathering information for the present commission to analyze programs has been largely the responsibility of Nebraska higher education institutions.

Under present statutes, the commission only can review what information it receives, Stahl said, and that information often has been minimal.

"We're suggesting to governing boards in particular that they take their jobs seriously," he said.

Without enough information from institutions, Stahl said, the new commission won't be able to coordinate decisions.

Because the commission cannot seek out information, he said, it isn't able to analyze what needs to be reviewed.

The report recommended the Legislature develop a review procedure with the aid of the new commission that includes institutional input and reasonable reporting expectations.

It also suggested that senators should not burden the new commission with legal constraints that would interfere with the review process.

Eric Seacrest, chairman of the current commission, said "program assessment is at a turning point."

The new commission, under the implementing legislation proposed by state senators, would have the power to approve programs and would be charged with avoiding duplication of programs among the state's higher education institutions.

"Resolving situations of marginal programs or unnecessary duplication has been a goal of the current process," Seacrest said.

The new commission will be able to deal with those problems more effectively, he said.

The commission recommended to institutional governing boards that degree programs in which only a few students' needs are met be restricted. Stahl offered the example of an English program that is full at the freshman and sophomore levels but has low enrollment of graduate students.

The report also addressed the problem of programs that do not meet a large number of student needs, but are still necessary. The commission suggested that governing boards find creative solutions to aid inefficient programs without hurting quality or access.

Lesbian poet speaks out about love

By Robert Richardson
Senior Reporter

Poet, teacher, activist and lesbian Minnie Bruce Pratt said Monday that her ordeal and troubling family experiences have made it important that she speak out.

"I have seen what happens to people when their love is criminalized and they are hated simply because of how they love," Pratt said. "And I think that's a terrible thing, to hate people and punish them and construct laws simply because of how they love. That's why I do my work. My work is about love, not hate."

Pratt took center stage at the Regency Suite in the Nebraska Union to legitimize her lifestyle in her speech, "Sin, Censorship and Poetry."

"We (lesbians) choose to live this life because it gives us great pleasure," Pratt said.

The Alabama-born lesbian has been widely acclaimed for her writings about

— 66 —
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Pratt
lesbian poet

her life. Her efforts culminated in 1989 when she received the prestigious Lamont Poetry Award from the Academy of American Poets.

Pratt spoke about divorce from her husband and not being allowed to see

her two children because of state sodomy laws that made her lesbian love a felony and made Pratt an unfit mother in the eyes of the courts.

Pratt, now 44, began her writing career, not as a lesbian, but as a married 19-year-old college student. The young Pratt believed she should help her husband, who also was interested in writing poetry. So they agreed that Pratt would get her doctorate in English to help support her husband in his writing pursuits.

Forced to make a tough decision, Pratt eventually divorced her husband and chose to lead a gay lifestyle, which has become one of several themes of her colorful, explicit poetry.

She eventually worked out a deal with her husband for visitation with her children, but the process was long and hard. In the end, Pratt said, her now college-age children didn't hate her or her gay lifestyle.

Lied

Continued from Page 1

revenue are not expected to increase by the end of this budget year, he said. Goebel said he expects that "little

would happen on the revenue side of the budget."

Lied officials have predicted a 43 percent drop in private donations for next year. But Goebel said he anticipates that future private funding will help cover most of the income loss.

He said that despite the projected

income losses, the center will live up to the public's high expectations.

"I'm confident we'll be able to manage it efficiently."

Lied Center Director Robert Chumbley, who took over that position in May 1990, was unavailable for comment.

Religion

Continued from Page 1

The questioning process is essential, said Scott Pixler, campus minister with the College Career Christian Fellowship, 1633 Q St.

"God has no grandchildren," Pixler said. "Kids have to have a personal relationship with God that's not based on their parents' beliefs."

Brian Kollar, a staff worker for Campus Crusade for Christ, said many students are so busy trying to find fulfillment in other aspects of their lives, such as drinking, sex or pursuing a career, that they don't have time to consider spiritual aspects.

Other students realize that a relationship with Christ is more significant than anything or anyone else, he said. Those students seek spiritual fulfillment, peace and assurance that they will go to heaven, Kollar said.

John Hatfield, area representative for Navigators, said students are flocking from mainline denomination churches and the old, traditional structures.

But Kollar said most students are looking for a worship service in a progressive church with upbeat music and lessons that are application-oriented, not stiff and liturgical.

Pixler agreed, saying, "The thing I resist most is ritual because it puts everyone in neutral."

To attract students, he said, a worship service should be spontaneous with participation from the congregation.

Pixler said he reaches students by featuring contemporary music instead of traditional hymns and using illustrations in sermons to better relate to students' everyday experiences.

Randall said he tries to encourage students to look at the Christian tradition without turning it into traditionalism. He said traditionalism is when the past is emphasized more than the

present.

"Don't read the scriptures to become like first century Christians, but (to become like) 20th Century Christians," he said.

Larry Meyer, campus pastor at the Lutheran Student Center, 535 N. 16th St., said that for some students the familiar, traditional service is a comfort.

When a freshman enters UNL, everything is new, different and radical, he said. One way students can regain stability is through church, Meyer said.

Fundamentalism becomes a popular alternative, he said, because it provides black-and-white answers to Christianity.

Hanway said fundamentalism is attractive because it feels safer to be told what to do rather than to exercise independent thinking.

Pixler said he thinks fundamentalism is rising because it's correct.

To be a fundamentalist is to believe in the fundamentals of Christianity, he said. That includes the idea that the Bible was inspired by God and that Jesus was born of a virgin, crucified and raised from the dead, he said.

"Fundamentalists believe in objective truth," Pixler said. "The Bible is not a moral myth but historical fact."

Hatfield said attendance at off-campus evangelical churches is rising in the UNL population, while mainline denominational churches are losing members.

Randall said attendance figures are tough to gauge because many students come and go irregularly. A small committed core attends regularly, he said.

Hanway and Meyer said their congregations have grown in the last year or two.

Meyer said Protestants don't place as much importance on going to church as Catholics do. The Catholic Student Center declined to comment.

Students may come and go, but

Official: UNL won't establish substance-free dormitories

By Michelle Wing
Staff Reporter

Substance-free residence halls that prohibit alcohol, drugs and smoking are available at other universities but are not planned for UNL because they may imply a green light for substance use in other areas, the housing director said.

In recognizing substance-free halls, Doug Zatechka said, UNL might appear to sanction the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco by students not under the substance-free contract.

At the University of Michigan, students in the substance-free program pledge in their housing contracts not to drink alcohol, smoke or use drugs in their rooms or elsewhere in the residence halls, according to an article in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Students requesting substance-free housing then are placed on floors or halls separate from those

who didn't request the substance-free option.

Zatechka said he wouldn't want students who didn't sign a contract to think they could use alcohol or drugs in the residence halls.

"I have minor trouble with the implication that others can use these substances" if they don't sign the substance-free contract, he said.

Besides, Zatechka said, substance-free housing already has "been happening for years" at UNL, because UNL policy prohibits the use of drugs or alcohol in the residence halls and on campus.

UNL has not yet received any requests for substance-free housing, Zatechka said, although he expects to get some requests for tobacco-free floors.

Zatechka said that although the substance-free program is not planned at UNL, the idea has merit.

"It could make some positive impacts (at UNL), particularly dealing with tobacco," he said.

POLICE REPORT

Beginning midnight Sunday, April 14

12:58 a.m. — Bicycle stolen, Smith Residence Hall, \$30.

1:18 a.m. — Auto windshield smashed, 1410 W. Dawes Ave.,

\$450.

3:28 a.m. — Outside police assistance, Connections, 926 P St.

10:42 a.m. — Water leak, Lyman Hall, \$6.

1:51 p.m. — Stereo stolen from auto, 17th and Y streets, \$749.



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