

Officials: Regents' plan may aid gender equity, UNL status of women

By Jeremy Fitzpatrick
Senior Reporter

A plan completed by an NU Board of Regents committee could significantly improve the status of women at UNL, two officials said.

The gender equity committee Thursday submitted a plan to establish seven general goals and 32 specific strategies designed to improve gender equity throughout the University of Nebraska.

If approved by the Board of Regents during its September meeting, university administrators will be responsible for implementing the goals and strategies, which range from achieving gender representation to maintaining a safer campus environment.

The plan completes a process that began with a regent's hearing on the status of women in April.

Following the hearing, regents Chairman Don Blank appointed the committee to evaluate NU's gender policies and devise a plan on how they can be improved.

Regent Charles Wilson of Lincoln, chairman of the committee, said he was "optimistic that the board will be receptive" to the completed plan. "There's a sense something needs to be done," he said.

Mary Beck, chairman of the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women, and Brad Munn, UNL Affirmative Action officer, both agreed that the plan was a positive step.

"All of those things (in the plan) are things we and various groups have asked for repeatedly," Beck said. "As long as they (the regents) require that

public statements of progress on the issue be made, it should be a strong incentive to make progress."

Munn said he thought the committee had done an "outstanding" job in composing the plan.

"I don't think that anyone who represents the university could state they were against it," he said. "We were consulted in the process. Much of what you see in this document is what we have pushed for."

Beck said she believed accountability was the key to improving the status of women.

"As long as the university administration realizes the regents really and truly are concerned, it is not going to go away," she said. "That is the bottom line. If the regents demand accountability, the rest will fall into place."

Munn also stressed accountability.

"It seems to me what the regents are trying to say to the four campuses is that there is going to be more accountability in affirmative action and equal opportunity at all levels of the university," he said.

He praised the plan's goal of making gender equity a Board of Regents item each year.

"Annually, we're going to say, 'here's where we were and here's where we are today,'" he said.

Beck said the plan was a sign that conditions for women are beginning to improve.

"Since the forum in April, I have seen small signs that people are beginning to pay attention to the issue," she said.

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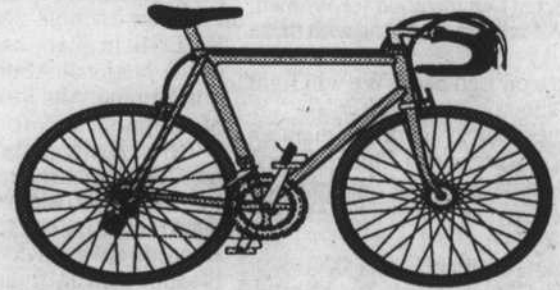
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