

Program trains foreign teachers

Classroom culture taught by institute

By Sarah Scalet
Staff Reporter

Before foreign teaching assistants can be recommended for teaching assignments at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, they must undergo an intensive training program, an official said.

Mindy Brooks, instructional consultant for teaching assistant programs, said successful completion of a training course through the International Teaching Assistant Institute became a UNL requirement in 1990.

The institute was founded in 1988. Teaching skills of those who completed the program improved, she said, which prompted UNL to adopt the policy.

Students who choose not to spend three intensive weeks in the institute can attend a fall session, Brooks said.

For this session, the credit hours are spread over the semester.

Participants learn about UNL, U.S. classroom culture and basic teaching skills. They also have daily language lessons.

Programs about affirmative action and sexual harassment are included, Brooks said.

At the end of program, participants fill out an anonymous survey. Although most of the comments are positive, Brooks said, "I think there are a lot of misunderstandings about the institute."

One misconception is that the institute aims to turn the foreign teaching assistants into Americans, Brooks said. However, the goal is to make them understandable teachers, not Americans, she said.

To be admitted to the institute, teaching assistants must pass spoken English requirements and be recommended by their department, Brooks said.

Seventy-one percent of the students who participated in last summer's program were recommended for teaching assignments, Brooks said.

Recommendation is determined by a rigorous panel process, she said. The student makes a presentation to a panel and then answers their questions.

The five panel members make their decisions in a "slow, thoughtful process," Brooks said. They ask themselves, "Could I learn . . . from this person?"

Students become eligible for teaching if at least four panel members recommend them, Brooks said.

Those students who are not recommended can repeat the panel process at the end of the next session although they do not have to repeat the program, she said.

"It really is a good program . . . but it does require hard work and giving up some summer," Brooks said.



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Overcrowding, alcohol East Stadium problems

By Tom Mainelli
Staff Reporter

Overcrowding and alcohol-related problems in Memorial Stadium's east side has become a serious concern, university officials said Friday.

"It's a growing problem, with more people sitting in sections than there should be," said Don Bryant, assistant athletic director.

About 15 university officials, including Ken Cauble, chief of the UNL Police Department, Jim Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, and Butch Hug, assistant ticket manager of the athletic ticket office, met Tuesday to devise a plan to alleviate the problem.

The plan, which will be used at Nebraska's next home game Oct. 19th, calls for increased security to monitor fan movement into and within the overcrowded East Stadium.

To pass through gates that close off the area directly behind the players' bench, fans must have the proper ticket. Tickets also will be checked before people are allowed up various ramps that lead to sections in the East Stadium.

Hug said he will hire an additional 12 to 16 security personnel, most likely from Guardsman Security Services of Lincoln.

Hug said checking tickets is time-consuming, but increasing the amount of personnel should "keep things moving."

The overcrowding problem became most apparent during Nebraska's game against Washington Sept. 21, Cauble said.

"The Washington game was packed," Cauble said. "It got so bad they (the fans) were pushing into the band. Students were standing sideways."

Cauble said the overcrowding is dangerous and inconvenient because it prompts fans to stand on seats and in the aisles, making it difficult for people behind them to see.

Cauble also said that overcrowding often turns the game into "more of a party atmosphere than a sporting event."

From that party atmosphere more problems emerge, such as excessive drinking, he said.

Cauble said alcohol isn't supposed to be brought into the stadium, but it's hard for ticket checkers to detect, especially as it gets colder and bulkier clothing is worn.

"It's real difficult to keep it out if people really want to get it in," Cauble said.

Cauble said police confiscate a considerable amount of alcohol during the game, not just from students, but from older fans as well.

"We don't feel like we've got a bunch of rowdies," Cauble said, "but 50 out of 5,000 makes them all look bad. It doesn't help our image."

Bryant spoke similarly, "(Our) fans have got a good reputation, and we want to keep it."

It's that reputation, and more importantly fan safety, that officials hope to protect with the new plan.

"This may or may not work," Cauble said, "but we have to try something before someone gets hurt."

Notes

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"We show students good note-taking techniques and some things they might have missed in their own notes," he said.

Donlan said that he tries to contact professors by mail or by telephone before classes begin but that it's sometimes difficult to do over the summer.

Jon's Notes are promoted as a study aid, he said, not as a substitute to attending class or taking individual notes.

"Jon's Notes alone won't do anything," Donlan said.

To promote proper use of the notes, Jon's Notes will begin to supply subscribers with instruction packets on how to take advantage of the notes next semester, Donlan said.

Donlan agreed that the notes can be abused. But generally, he said, the notes are perceived as a study aid by both students and professors.

Since his company began in 1984, Donlan said only three professors, including Burnett, have been disappointed with and canceled use of his notes.

Of the professors he contacts, Donlan said roughly 75 percent agree to allow the notes in their classes.

John Janovy, professor of biological sciences, said he has not had any problems allowing Jon's Notes in his general biology class. He said he uses them to ensure that material he puts on his tests has been covered in class.

Before Jon's Notes, Janovy photocopied one of his student's notes for the same purpose, he said.

"I use Jon's notes now because I get them for free and I don't have to spend time or money photocopying notes," Janovy said.

Janovy said his main concern is having a quality note-taker for his classes. He personally chooses the note-taker for his class, he said.

Janovy said he was only dissatisfied with the quality of notes one semester.


But Bill Glider, teaching lab coordinator for the School of Biological Sciences, said he thought Jon's Notes could be harmful.

"My personal feeling is that they (Jon's Notes) are a real crutch," Glider said.

Biology classes already offer free supplemental instruction sessions to help students fill gaps in their notes, he said.

Donlan said he plans to meet with Burnett at the end of the semester to discuss the possibility of using Jon's Notes in her classes in the future.

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