

SUMMER Daily NEBRASKAN

THURSDAY
JULY 30, 1992
VOL. 91
NO. 162
UNIVERSITY OF
NEBRASKA-
LINCOLN

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Bill may help students' checks and balances

By Jeremy Fitzpatrick
Staff Reporter

College students currently paying taxes on scholarships used for non-academic expenses, such as room and board, may no longer have to do so if a bill introduced by Rep. Tom Lewis (R-Fl.) passes through Congress.

Under the 1986 Tax Reform Act, students who use scholarship money to pay for expenses other than tuition, fees, books and supplies must pay taxes on them.

Lewis' bill would repeal the tax. It would also enable any student who has paid the tax since 1986 to receive a refund.

John Beacon, director of scholarships and financial aid at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said all scholarship recipients at UNL are sent a notice informing them of the tax requirement.

But it is not clear to what degree the tax, which Lewis' bill (HR 4418) is designed to repeal, is being collected.

A statement released by Lewis' office said that the tax "has not been a focus of IRS collection efforts to date." The statement said, however, that the Internal Revenue Service has requested scholarship records from Harvard University to determine if collection efforts would be worthwhile.

Beacon said the IRS has not made a similar request for UNL's scholarship records.

James Manuszak, public affairs officer at the IRS district office in Wichita, Kan., said enforcing the tax was not currently a high priority for the IRS.

"It's on the books and it's the law, and I believe our efforts at this time

are concentrated at educating students on the provisions of the law rather than enforcement," Manuszak said.

Manuszak said he could not comment further on the IRS' enforcement efforts.

Student-athletes at UNL would apparently be most helped by HR 4418 if it passes. Estimates provided by Beacon show that about \$5,117,000 in University of Nebraska Foundation and university scholarships are awarded to about 1,852 students at UNL each year.

About \$3,630,000 of that money goes to about 796 student-athletes, for an average of \$4,560 per student. About \$1,487,000 is awarded in academic achievement awards to about 1,056 students, for an average of \$1,400 per student.

Lauren Drees, a research associate in the office of institutional research and planning, said that tuition and fees for a student taking 15 hours during the 1992-1993 academic year at UNL would be about \$2,358. Any scholarship money used to pay for other expenses, except for books or equipment, is taxable under the 1986 law.

Andrew Cherry, a legislative assistant to Lewis, said he was optimistic that the bill, which now has 23 co-sponsors, would be passed by Congress. He said it was not likely the bill would be acted on until January, however.

"I would be very confident of passage if we could get it on to the floor," Cherry said.

The main challenge to the bill, he said, is finding a source of revenue to offset its cost. He said the Congressional Joint Tax Committee had estimated that the bill would cost \$800 million over five years.



Staci McKee/DN

Jason T. Davis, guitarist for the Lincoln band Souled Out, steps off stage to play a song among the crowd. Souled Out performed Friday afternoon at the July Jamm in downtown Lincoln

Program lets seniors RUN with students

By Sam S. Kepfield
Staff Reporter

"I discovered that when you have a lot of extra time on your hands, it can either be very fun or very dangerous," said Bob VanNeste, a volunteer with the Retirees of the University of Nebraska, or RUN.

RUN, housed in the Wick Alumni Center, is the creation of Clarice Orr, herself a retired UNL employee. After working for UNL for 25 years in clerical and secretarial positions, Orr received her B.A. in Home Economics and an M.A. in gerontology.

The program grew out of a term paper Orr wrote for a gerontology class, designing a "dream project" for senior citizens. Her professor suggested she discuss the proposal with then-Chancellor Martin Massengale.

However, other projects such as the Lied Center took priority at the time, and the RUN proposal received no funding. Orr persisted, and was finally given funding by Chancellor Graham Spanier. RUN began its official operations in mid-January.

Orr said that RUN's mission was singular — to act as a clearinghouse for retired UNL employees, whether they be administrators, faculty emeritus or support staff. It fulfilled that mission by placing its volunteers in a wide variety of roles.

One current project involves volunteers with the agronomy department collecting seeds and samples from endangered species in Nebraska. The samples are then transplanted in the arboretum on the East Campus.

VanNeste said he was coordinating an oral history program through Love Library. Volunteers fan across the state to interview Nebraskans who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, and he currently has five enrolled in the project.

Another potentially valuable role Orr said she saw for RUN would be to have its volunteers acting as counselors through the Career Placement Office as well as in the Employment and Internship Office.

The retirees, with their years or decades of experience in various careers and industries, would "act as a bridge between the students and the companies."

Students would receive advice in resume writing, cover letters and interviewing skills from RUN volunteers.

Beyond basic skills, the volunteers would help students develop networks through the volunteers' business con-

Lack of funds delay necessary maintenance

By DeDra Janssen
Staff Reporter

Consensus opinion at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is that Richards Hall is an eyesore.

Like several other buildings and facilities on campus, Richards Hall falls into the category of deferred maintenance. In fact, Rich McDermott, director of Facilities Management, said it was at the top of the list.

He said deferred maintenance is maintenance on University of Nebraska properties that should be done today, but isn't because of lack of funds.

"It's deferred until tomorrow," McDermott said. "Like the budget of

Richards Hall among numerous projects needing money to fix urgent UNL repairs

the Federal Government."

And like the national deficit, Goebel said, deferred maintenance is a very serious problem for UNL. In fact, he said, costs have reached in excess of approximately \$100 million.

John Goebel, vice chancellor for business and finance at UNL, said that the problem has been hard to see on campus.

"Facilities management and landscape people have done a magnificent job in getting a great deal done with very little money, but you have to look beyond what they've done to see

the nature of the problem," Goebel said.

"The problem's not what we see, it's what we don't see," Goebel said. "Deteriorating steam tunnels aren't very exciting to talk about, but they are absolutely critical in the life of the campus."

Items high on the agenda for UNL are maintenance of Richards Hall, removal of asbestos from Burnett Hall, improvement of a number of classrooms, greenhouses and steam tunnels, and replacement of old boilers and chillers.

"The average life of a boiler is

around 20 years," Goebel said. "And we have far exceeded that."

One boiler, part of the reliable utility base on UNL city campus, is vintage 1920.

"If we lose that in mid-January, we'll be in big trouble," McDermott said.

Goebel said that ongoing efforts to keep facilities in good repair are essential for the future of UNL.

The power outage on campus that occurred earlier this summer was an example, he said.

"If we had the kind of preventative maintenance program necessary to avoid substantial difficulties, that outage would not have occurred,"

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