

Daily Nebraskan

February 17, 1993

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 92 No. 105

New directors begin working with community

Attorneys hope to combine talents, skills to produce achieving UNL environment

By Michelle Leary
Senior Reporter

Two attorneys have been hired as associate directors of the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity Programs at UNL.

Linda R. Crump of Lincoln and Ronald O. Ross of Omaha started their jobs Monday at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"Our goal is to create an environment where students can achieve, where they feel welcome and where they can perform to their best ability," Crump said.

Crump and Ross said among their duties in the affirmative action office would be coordination of community diversity programs and liaison work with community groups.

They will be conducting investigations for affirmative action issues, conducting educational seminars, assisting in developing reports and responding to Office of Civil Rights investigations.

"It's vital that we become infused with the university," Crump said. "We have to be in tune with the people (students, faculty and staff) here . . . their concerns, their needs and their wants."

"We want to educate people about diversity, which is a subject that needs to be addressed," Ross said. "Hopefully in the near future everyone will have a positive attitude towards diversity."

"Affirmative action offices, sometimes, are places people fear," Crump said. "But people need to know we're here to help make sure they know the proper way to do things."

Eric Jolly, director of the Affirmative Action and Diversity Office, said he was convinced that the two would do things properly.

"I'm so delighted to have this breadth of talent and depth of skill," Jolly said.

"They'll be able to do things to positively impact the community."

"They come from a background that shows a real ability to understand the community's, as well as the university's missions and goals," he said.

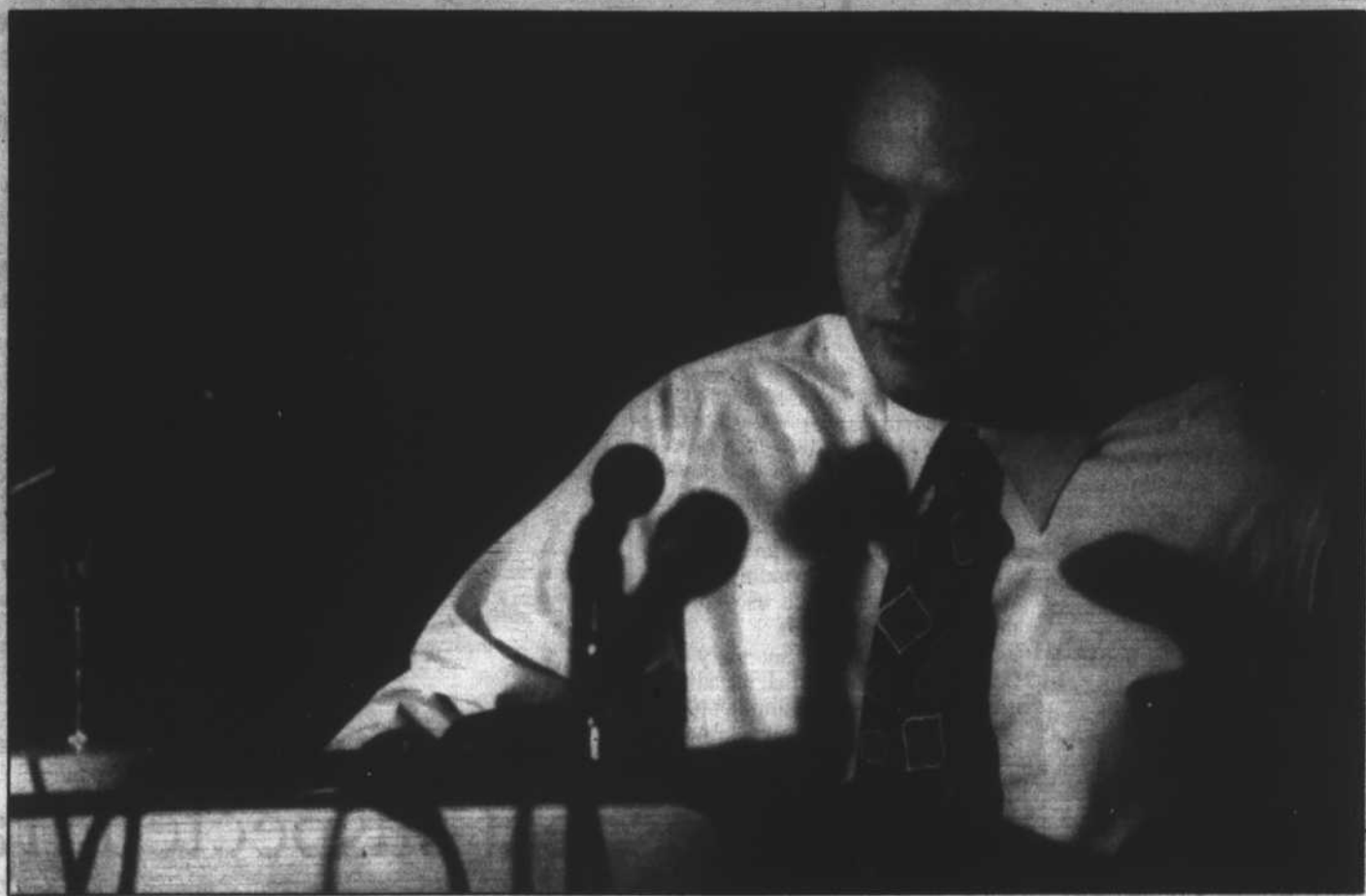
Jolly said there were more than 200 qualified applicants for the position of associate director.

"Crump and Ross were the top candidates," Jolly said. "So I worked to creatively construct a way to hire both of them."

Recent job restructuring in the office had eliminated one position, Jolly said. A part-time position was created to head up UNL's efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Chancellor Graham Spanier had allocated one full-time position for an associate director.

"The position was originally created for one person," Jolly said, "but by working with other departments I was able to hire them both."

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Travis Heying/DN

ASUN President Andrew Sigerson listens to reporters' questions during a press conference at the Capitol Tuesday morning.

Battle-ax

Sigerson says NU students can't take brunt of budget cuts

By Jeff Zeleny
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska cannot survive any more budget cuts, and students won't stand around and let more take place, ASUN president Andrew Sigerson said at a Tuesday news conference in the state Capitol.

"After year after year of budget cuts, the students say, 'No more,'" Sigerson said. "We will no longer be the chicken in the eyes of the Legislature's fox."

Sigerson and other UNL student government officials protested the proposed \$13.98 million cut to the university system. The cut represents 5 percent of the total NU budget.

The cut would have devastating effects on UNL, Sigerson said. About \$7 million of the proposed cuts would be from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln budget.

The measure would mean possible cuts in degree-granting programs, starting with the College of Arts and Sciences, Sigerson said.

Maintenance projects also would be delayed, putting buildings such as Burnett Hall and the Love Library Archives in even further danger, he said.

As a last resort to save the university, Sigerson said, the NU Board of Regents would be forced to raise tuition to fund

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— Sigerson
UNL student regent

— 99 —
salary increases needed to keep professors from leaving.

Students would be more willing to pay higher tuition, Sigerson said, if the money was earmarked to benefit specific student programs, not just put in the university's coffers.

Sen. Scott Moore of Seward, chairman of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, said that although the cuts were extensive, they weren't proposed to ruin the university.

"We treated the university the same as any other state institution," Moore said. "The fact is, the university dollar is so big."

Moore said he hoped the \$14 million amount would be lowered as the session progressed, but he said taxes would have to

be raised to solve the budget problem.

ASUN leaders are advocating no budget cuts, but they don't want to see tax increases either, Moore said.

"I informed them when students come down," he said, (that) "if you don't want me to cut (the budget), they have to remember the responsible thing is to raise taxes."

"If you want credibility with me, you need to offer a tax increase."

Moore criticized Sigerson and ASUN for offering no alternative cuts.

But Sigerson said it was not his job to take a position on tax increases, and he added that he didn't appreciate Moore's personal attacks.

Moore said he realized the cuts to the university would be harmful, but that the Appropriations Committee had no choice.

"If we cut deeper at the university, we are jeopardizing things," Moore said. "I fully understand that."

Another Appropriations Committee member, Sen. La Von Crosby of Lincoln, said she thought the committee could look past the university to solve the state's budget problems.

"Taking a hit like that on the university (is devastating)," Crosby said. "When you

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Moment of silence to remain at graduations

Committee to stop discussing prayer, chairman says

By Karen Okamoto
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Commencement Committee unanimously voted Tuesday to preserve the moment of silence at graduation ceremonies.

Chancellor Graham Spanier, who has remained neutral on the prayer issue, first invoked a moment of silence rather than a spoken prayer at commencement exercises last December.

The chancellor's action was in response to the Commencement Committee's November decision to eliminate the invocation and benediction from the ceremonies.

Committee Chairman Jeff Keown said five members of the commencement committee, including the two ASUN representatives on the committee, would meet with the chancellor next month to draft a speech that would begin the moment of silence.

Spanier will be the one to deliver that speech, Keown said.

The two ASUN representatives are to be included in the drafting process so that students have some input, he said.

The committee made its decision to eliminate an organized, spoken prayer after Herb Howe, associate to

the chancellor, raised the issue following a Supreme Court decision banning prayer in public schools.

Although the decision did not apply to postsecondary institutions, Howe and others pointed to the wide diversity of religious beliefs among graduating seniors as a reason to follow in the spirit of the ruling.

On Dec. 3, the committee reaffirmed its November decision after the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska passed a resolution calling for the reinstatement of prayers.

In January, ASUN began a student petition to bring back prayer at the ceremony.

Keown said Tuesday's meeting, however, was the last time the committee would address the issue of prayer at graduation.

— 66 —
A moment of silence is common to all cultures and religions.

—Keown
Commencement Committee chairman

— 99 —
"We felt it was a logical compromise," he said, "because a moment of silence is common to all cultures and religions."

"It gives everyone a chance to pray in their own way or to reflect upon their years at the university or where they plan to be in the future."

The Commencement Committee also had been asked by two other groups to reconsider its November decision. The NU Board of Regents requested on Dec. 12 that prayer be

reinstated, and the UNL Academic Senate passed a similar resolution on Jan. 19.

ASUN President Andrew Sigerson said he still believed prayer should be allowed at graduation in a "fair" manner, whereby different religions are ensured representation.

"It's unfortunate that the committee went with that method," he said, "but it's better than nothing."

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