

NEWS BRIEFS

Vacant staff positions filled

Four staff positions at the University Health Center have been filled in the last month, an official said.

The physical therapy department's new director is Jane Austin, who took over Monday. Austin's arrival will allow the department to offer students full day-long physical therapy services.

David Bower is the health center's new alcohol and drug abuse prevention specialist. His jobs will

include participation in educational programs and peer advising groups.

The Counseling and Psychological Services Department added Gail Lockard to its psychologist roster. Lockard will counsel students on East Campus on Tuesday mornings and will counsel students on the City Campus Monday and Wednesday through Friday.

The health center also added Mary Lutz to its roster of physicians.

Loan exit sessions this week

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students graduating in May and have federal student loans must fulfill exit requirements with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

Students who fail to attend the exit sessions will have a hold placed on their diplomas, academic tran-

scripts and any future registration at UNL.

East Campus sessions will be today at 12:30 and 4 p.m. in the union. Sessions in the Nebraska Union will be Wednesday at 12:30, 2 and 4 p.m., Thursday at 9 a.m., 12:30 and 4 p.m., and Friday at 12:30, 2 and 4 p.m.

Room locations will be posted.



Damon Lee/DN

UNL junior Blake Anderson takes a break from city life at Wilderness Park Saturday. Anderson's job as an Outdoor Adventures leader allows him to experience the wilderness in many parts of the country.

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Challenge yourself

Outdoor leadership breeds personal growth

By Deborah McAdams
Staff Reporter

Money isn't everything to a UNL student leader at Outdoor Adventures.

The university's pay rate for students, around \$5 an hour, provides little incentive for Blake Anderson to climb rocks in Palisades, S.D.

Rock climbing as part of the job is especially difficult for Anderson, who has a fear of heights.

"I think I inherited it from my dad, because he has a real fear of heights," Anderson said.

He said that his father won't climb a ladder to paint the house.

"I'm being forced to overcome it because I like to rock climb."

The basic rock climbing in Palisades is a weekend trip offered up to five times a year by Outdoor Adventures. It's all top-rope climbing.

"Top-rope climbing is when you have an anchor at the top of the rock," Anderson said. "You have another means of getting to the top of the rock, like scrambling up the back."

Palisades is about a 75-foot, vertical climb. It's located near a small river where the water has eroded the land and exposed the rock.

"It gets a lot of use, because there is nothing else around here."

Anderson is reluctant to reveal his most frightening moment on the job.

"We try not to allow ourselves to get in that situation because then we've blown our leadership positions," he said.

During his two years with Outdoor Adventures, Anderson has canoed through rapids, led novice backpackers into the Grand Canyon, bicycled hundreds of miles, climbed up sheer rock faces and crawled around in caves.

"Caving trips are one of the weirdest trips I do," he said. "It's so unnatural, so different. There's no light. It's so surreal."

Caving the Devil's Ice Box in Columbia, Mo., is a weekend trip. Participants spend about seven or eight hours in the cave.

"There's lots of cold water and mud."

A lover of the outdoors, Anderson's experience has developed through his enthusiasm for bicycling.

"I saved all of my money from my paper route to buy my first ten-speed."

Anderson has participated in five Bike Rides Across Nebraska and once in the Cornhusker 500, another ride across the state. Bicycling led to his involvement with Outdoor

Adventures.

"I went on a biking trip as a freshman and it got me interested," he said. "I wondered if I could do it."

The hiring process is pretty competitive, Anderson said. Applicants must put together a resume, gather recommendations, and go through an interview.

Out of 15 to 20 applicants each year, two or three are hired. They are asked to make a two-year commitment with the program. The first year is considered a training period, and the second year reaps the benefits of that training.

Previous experience in outdoor activities is not crucial to being hired.

"I always think about program recognition when I read about the success of sports teams. This program isn't competitive, but the people who complete one of our trips have a feeling of accomplishment."

--Anderson
UNL student

"People aren't necessarily hired on background experience, but on potential."

"We don't necessarily have a lot of specific experience, but a lot of general experience."

Outdoor leaders must have skills beyond physical ability. They have to get along with a variety of people under stressful circumstances. They have to practice "no-impact" traveling (leaving no trace of one's group on the environment). They must be ready to handle emergencies.

In order to prepare himself, Anderson completed Emergency Medical Technician training last December.

"It was one semester, actually two weeks longer than the school semester, for six hours a week," Anderson said. "I planned for a year and a half for when I could take it."

"I don't know if it makes me feel more confident, but I know that I don't feel confident without it," Anderson said of the training.

He spent 16 hours in the Lincoln General Emergency room and 18 hours in an ambulance.

"I'll never forget the first time I

was in the back of the ambulance when they turned on the sirens," he said. "I felt kind of goofy. I wondered what I was doing in there."

Anderson has invested a lot of time and effort into this work with Outdoor Adventures. He chose a mechanical engineering major in order to design bicycles, but he speculates about his future.

"I think about that on a daily basis . . . whether to use my degree or stay in outdoor activities."

Anderson has looked into some outdoor positions. Both the National Outdoor Leadership School and Outward Bound programs encourage people to develop new skills.

Helping people develop skills is important to Anderson. He said that was why many private positions, such as guiding short raft rides, didn't appeal to him.

"It's not usually an activity where participants are allowed to grow," he said. "They just sit there and passively experience it."

"We try to push people into the groan zone. You don't grow unless you groan."

Anderson said growth was a major part of the Outdoor Adventures program.

"Jim says our mission is to put ourselves out of business by teaching people to be able to do these activities on their own."

Jim Fullerton is the coordinator of Outdoor Recreation, and Anderson's boss.

"I really wish more students would take advantage of it," Anderson said. "Looking at the private competition, this is very inexpensive."

"I always think about program recognition when I read about the success of sports teams. This program isn't competitive, but the people who complete one of our trips have a feeling of accomplishment."

Anderson helped nurture that feeling of accomplishment for 10 participants during a recent backpacking journey into the Grand Canyon. He will lead a mountain biking day trip to Indian Caves State Park at the end of April. He's waiting to see where he will go this summer.

"No trip assignments have been made for the summer, but I think I'll be on the mountain bike trip to the Slick Rock trail in Moab, Utah. It is the most famous mountain biking area."

Where he works isn't as important to Anderson as what his work is about.

"My prime focus is the experience; your perceptions of your environment, your body, and your state of mind."

More than one of those experiences will probably be the growing pains that he has on the rocks at Palisades.

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