

# Professor claims discrimination

By Shane Tucker  
Staff Reporter

A University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor is suing the school for \$25,000 for discrimination on the basis of his disabilities, according to a case filed at the U.S. District Court in Lincoln.

Paul Gessaman, professor of agricultural economics, says in the lawsuit that UNL deprived him of increases in compensation and caused him emotional and physical harm.

The university's actions, Gessaman alleges in the suit, are in conflict with the Rehabilitation Act of 1970, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the public policy of the State of Nebraska.

Gessaman, a 13-year employee of the Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources, suffered a series of light strokes in 1980-81, in 1987, and again in 1993. The strokes caused memory loss, partial loss of motor

functions, some temporary paralysis, loss of coherent speech, loss of balance and emotional instability.

Although he can adequately perform his duties, the strokes have reduced his ability to deal with confrontational situations, the lawsuit says. In certain situations Gessaman is unable to maintain his composure and to avoid weeping.

Sam Cordes, head of the department of agricultural economics, told Gessaman in 1991 that he had the strongest annual evaluation among all of Cordes' employees, the lawsuit says.

According to the lawsuit, Gessaman received no increase in compensation in 1991, as is common within the department for positive evaluations, and at least two other employees did.

In meeting with Cordes and other supervisors to alleviate the problem, Gessaman says he was placed in confrontational situations that he was incapable of dealing with because of his

disability.

Gessaman said he offered alternative methods of resolving the dispute. The lawsuit says these methods were rejected by Irvin Omtvedt, vice chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Kenneth Bolen, director of Cooperative Extension.

This rejection and the conflict caused by it allegedly led Gessaman to be "castigated and negatively evaluated" in 1992, the lawsuit says.

Besides monetary compensation for lost wages, Gessaman wants to be transferred to a different job with a similar salary where he will no longer be under the supervision of Cordes. He also is seeking a jury trial and additional compensation for attorney's fees and medical expenses due to emotional distress.

Cordes and Gessaman could not be reached for information regarding the case.

# Benes says improvements await ASUN

By Angie Brunkow  
Senior Editor

For ASUN President Keith Benes, summer was a time to recuperate from the spring semester and make plans for the fall.



"Summer was a chance to get a bit of a breather," Benes said.

Benes said that after a hectic spring of student government election campaigning

and the senate reorganizing that followed, he needed the time to plan and re-evaluate his goals for the senate.

As a result, Benes said he would approach the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska with three main resolutions during the next month of senate meetings.

Benes said he would bring a revision of the senate's bylaws before the whole body at its first meeting Wednesday night.

The old bylaws were organized in the order they were passed and new

amendments weren't arranged logically.

"We tried to revise it into a more manageable form," he said.

The bylaws now are divided into chapters and sections, where duties of committees and officers are outlined clearly.

"Hopefully this will make it easier for senators to understand," he said.

Benes said he also added sections to the bylaws to clear up procedural questions in senate operation.

"We know how (the procedures) were done, but we didn't have it written in the bylaws," he said.

Most changes were technical and uncontroversial, Benes said, but he would not elaborate on them before the senate convened for the fall.

Benes said he also planned to bring another bylaw change before the senate. In an effort to bring the student body and senate closer together, Benes

said he wanted to strike senators' mandatory constituent meetings from the bylaws.

Senators are required to meet with constituents once a month, he said.

They usually choose a time and place and advertise the meeting in the Daily Nebraskan. Benes said few students attended the meetings, making it a waste of time for the senators.

Instead, Benes said he would require senators to visit meetings of campus organizations.

Senators would be required to visit with students only for the first 15 minutes of the meeting, he said, so it would not be a bigger time commitment.

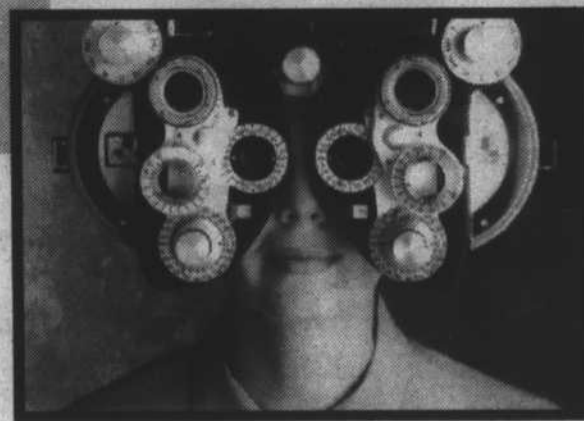
"Even if it does take more time, there would be a greater number of students and more variety," he said.

Benes also spent his summer working on plans for a Big Eight student government conference, which would be hosted at UNL.

With many Big Eight universities facing similar problems, such as budget cuts and multicultural issues, Benes said the conference would allow student leaders to kick around a few ideas about dealing with them.

The first conference, he said, would be an organizational one to plan for the future of the event.

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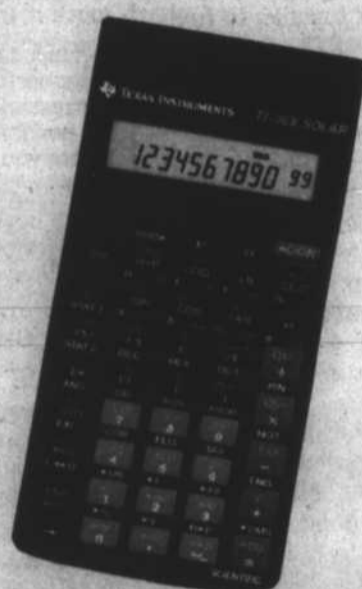
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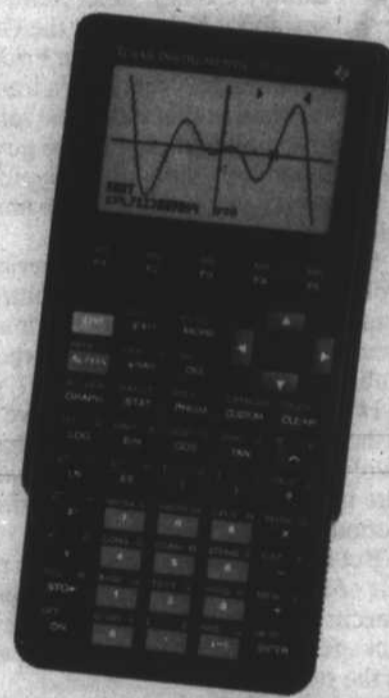
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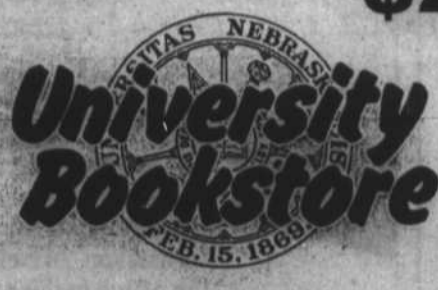
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