

Daily Nebraskan

March 28, 1994

University of Nebraska-Lincoln



SPORTS

Gymnastics gems

The Nebraska men's and women's gymnastics teams laid claim to the Big Eight titles over the weekend.

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Monday

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Today, partly cloudy.

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Decision on college still six months off

By Jeffrey Robb
Senior Editor

A final decision on the question of creating a separate engineering college at the University of Nebraska at Omaha has been postponed.

NU President Dennis Smith announced at Saturday's Board of Regents meeting that a university task force would be formed to devise a strategic plan for the engineering situation in the state. Included in that, Smith said, would be a development plan for an independent engineering college at UNO.

Though none of the task force members has been named, University of Nebraska spokesman Joe Rowson said Sunday outside consultants would be included. The positions will not be paid, he said.

Smith said he would like the group's report within six months, after which he would make his own recommendations on engineering to the regents.

Earlier this month, a group of independent consultants hired by the university to review engineering education in Nebraska released a report recognizing the need for a separate college of engineering at UNO.

The consultants also concluded

Nebraska's investment in engineering education was small, Smith said. The underlying problem, he said, is funding.

"We are going to develop only those programs that are clearly identified educational priorities for our students," he said. "We will have to find funds to meet every legitimate need within our ability to do so."

Although the report addressed a narrower range of issues than he hoped, Smith said he took it seriously. He said the board indicated from the beginning the engineering needs of the entire state had to be met.

But meeting those recognized needs will be hard until release of the final recommendations, Smith said.

Until Smith gets the report, he will allocate \$200,000 from central administration reserves to UNO to address immediate needs of its engineering program.

The Nebraska Legislature approved the expenditure last week.

Smith said he was concerned with the competitive and political aspects of the engineering debate.

Competition should not be the focus of the debate, Smith said. The university should strive only for the goal of creating the highest quality programs for the university.



Ultimate fun

John Lory (above) plays with his son Joshua Sunday afternoon on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus before practicing with the Postmortem Lincoln Ultimate Club. Paul Thygese (left) tries to keep Brian Fornes from making a pass during a scrimmage. The club is preparing for a tournament in Kansas.

Gerik Parmele/DN



Stadium video screens approved by regents

By Jeffrey Robb
Senior Editor

The proposal to add video screens to Memorial Stadium advanced Saturday when the NU Board of Regents approved a bid for the project.

NU REGENTS



Mitsubishi Electronics of America won the project with a bid of more than \$3.6 million to furnish and install screens on towers in the northwest and southeast corners of the stadium.

The project will be fully funded through sponsors. University officials have estimated the project will cost about \$4.5 million.

Regents also approved a \$60,040 bid for services in building a video production studio and control room to accompany the screens. The project has an estimated cost of \$715,000.

Regent Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo questioned how much of the needed funding had been raised. If the athletic department did not find enough sponsoring for the project, she said, the university could be liable for paying the difference.

When told the funding was not all in hand, she requested that the board hold off approval until it was.

But John Goebel, University of Nebraska-Lincoln vice chancellor for business and finance, said the athletic department would make up any shortfall, although that was unlikely to happen.

Moving forward on the project was critical, Goebel said. The schedule already is tight to have the screens in place for the start of the football season, he said, and waiting for approval at another meeting would cause an unnecessary delay.

Goebel said the project, which is slated to be mostly complete by Sept. 1, could not move forward without

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Mental health bill awaits signing

By Matthew Waite
Senior Reporter

A measure that could alleviate problems in Nebraska's mental health care system awaits the signature of Gov. Ben Nelson.

The Scott Baldwin case is an example of the problems with the current system, Sen. Don Wesely of Lincoln said.

Wesely said Sunday he was confident LB498 would get the governor's signature.

The bill would give courts more options in cases where defendants were declared not guilty by reason of insanity.

The current system releases without restrictions a person found to be not harmful to one's self or others. It also allows courts to use only overt

acts and threats to determine whether a person is dangerous.

Baldwin, a former University of Nebraska-Lincoln football player, was arrested for assault in January 1992 and found not guilty for reasons of insanity. He did not take prescribed medication after his release and, following another psychotic episode in

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Bjorklund's life rests with opinion of judge

Bjorklund Case Review

- Sept. 22, 1992 -- Candice Harms disappears.
- Dec. 2, 1992 -- Roger Bjorklund and Scott Barney are arrested for a string of Lincoln robberies.
- Dec. 6, 1992 -- Barney leads police to Harms' body in a field south of Lincoln. Barney implicates himself and Bjorklund in the death.
- Feb. 4, 1993 -- Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey announces he will seek the death penalty for Bjorklund.
- March 3, 1993 -- Bjorklund pleads not guilty to first-degree murder in the Harms case.
- Oct. 25, 1993 -- Bjorklund's first-degree murder trial begins.
- Nov. 17, 1993 -- A 12-member jury from Sidney finds Bjorklund guilty of first-degree murder.
- March 7, 1994 -- Sentencing hearing begins.
- March 24, 1994 -- Bjorklund speaks to the court for the first time at the close of his sentencing hearing.
- May 23, 1994 -- Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott is scheduled to announce if Bjorklund will be sentenced to life in prison or death by execution.



By Jeff Zeleny
Senior Editor

In 56 days, Roger Bjorklund will know his fate.

Friends have called him caring. His mother called him loving. And his sister said Bjorklund always was helpful.

But Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey wondered what adjectives Candi Harms would have used to describe her murderer.

"I don't think they would be 'loving.' I don't think they would be 'caring.' I don't think they would be 'helpful,'" Lacey said.

After a jury conviction in November and three weeks of sentencing hearings, Bjorklund finally will hear the opinion of Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott.

On May 23, Endacott will rule whether Bjorklund will live or be executed.

Last Thursday, Bjorklund appealed to the

mercy of the court, saying others would be affected if he were sentenced to death.

"Should the court choose to impose the death penalty, not only will you affect me," Bjorklund said, "but you will affect the person sitting behind me and a 10-year-old little girl and an 8-year-old little girl who loves her daddy very much."

Bjorklund spoke for more than 30 minutes. Occasionally sniffing and sipping ice water, he said he had tried to put himself in the position of the Harms family, but couldn't.

"It is hard for me to understand what they have gone through," Bjorklund said.

"I'm sorry," he said. "There's no other words in the English vocabulary to describe what I feel."

Bjorklund detailed the problems he faced during childhood. An abusive father caused tension in the Bjorklund household, he said.

"I wish my family could have been different

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