

Welfare reform may hurt students

By Angela Jones
Staff Reporter

President Clinton's new welfare reform program could force students to drop out of school, said Matt Schulz, student regent from the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

The President's new program would put a two-year limitation on all welfare benefits. At the end of that two years, if the recipient cannot find a job, the state will help them find a job. If that fails, then the individual will again receive benefits.

The two-year limitation is where students could be affected, Schulz said. "For students receiving welfare

benefits and working their way through school, after two years they will lose their benefits," Schulz said. "For many students this will mean they can no longer afford to stay in school."

This form of limitations is especially hard on non-traditional students, Schulz said. He has spoken with administrators at Chadron State, which has a high percentage of non-traditional students, and they are very concerned about the future of these students. They told Schulz they would probably lobby the Legislature when the amendment came up. Schulz said he was also concerned, and hoped to do the same at UNO.

Schulz believes welfare benefits should be extended four to five years for college students. The students would be required to meet certain guidelines such as maintaining a specific grade point average, and having to keep their classes focused on their field of study, he said.

Welfare reform has been long-awaited, Schulz said. He said that it is something that needs to be dealt with, but the committees need to look at the long-term measures, instead of immediately just cutting people off.

"The long-term plan will help so that people can stay off welfare in the future," Schulz said, "and the best way to do that is to get a college degree."

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