

Admissions department targets honor students

By Brian Jensen
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is amidst its busiest recruiting efforts of the season.

Working around the clock, UNL is seeking to attract some great future stars — academically.

Kris Bergmeyer, assistant director of admissions, plays a large role in attracting the best high school students to UNL.

"So far we have had over 750 scholarship applications from students with high ACT scores," Bergmeyer said. "They have to make their final decision by May 1."

"We want the students to have a personal relationship with someone from UNL, so we go out of our way for them," Bergmeyer said.

Mike Dymacek, a counselor at Lincoln East High School, said UNL's efforts had been beneficial.

"They (UNL Admissions) come

out regularly to help us and are always willing to accommodate us whenever we need them," Dymacek said.

Dymacek said about 125 of the 300 seniors at Lincoln East likely would attend UNL. He said the response from honor students had also been positive.

"Of the 22 honor students, I personally know about 15 or 16 will attend," Dymacek said.

Bergmeyer said UNL had already held Distinguished Scholars Day and an Omaha World-Herald dinner, and more functions are planned.

"Every college is doing their own part in attracting students," Bergmeyer said. "We are giving campus tours and arranging it so that students can talk to the professors in their preferred colleges."

The Honors Advisory Board is having two luncheons for students interested in the Honors Program and also are planning an overnight event in February for students.

Speaker calls for gay inclusion

Boston College instructor wants mandatory training

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

University administrators need to create a safe environment for gay and lesbian students through education, dialogue and training, a speaker said Thursday.

Wearing a pink triangle pin on her blazer, Karen Harbeck said people needed to know that universities and colleges across the nation were supporting gays and lesbians.

Harbeck serves as executive director of the National Institute for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns in Education. She also teaches at Boston College in the Graduate School of Education.

She gave a presentation "Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Use" at the Wick Center on Thursday.

She will present "Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Dealing with Gay and Lesbian Issues in the University Setting" today at 1:30 p.m. in Mabel Lee Hall.

Harvard, Stanford and the University of Chicago are implementing gay and lesbian inclusion policies, she said. Even the Jesuit-run Boston College has plans for giving gays and

lesbians the same benefits as heterosexual spouses.

"They know it's inappropriate to discriminate," she said. "They insist on the best and brightest, and they want them to feel free and expressive."

Harbeck commended UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier for his inclusion of gay and lesbian students.

"I'm proud of the stance he's taken in providing a safe environment, equality and support," she said. "...The essence of the American public education system is to work for the welfare of all individuals."

Harbeck said she was well aware of Regent Robert Allen's opposition to Spanier's attention to anti-discrimination policies.

"I can't believe he'd want to dismiss Chancellor Spanier's actions as a 'social agenda,'" she said. "That's a misuse of the concept of education."

"Allen's comments can make people feel unsafe," she said. "When you say something like that, you don't put enough thought into who you are harming."

Gays and lesbians account for one-third of the 5,000 annual suicides of adolescents age 14-24, she said.

In a study by the U.S. Department of Education, the majority of sexual harassment cases were related to gays and lesbians, she said.

An unwelcome environment can force gays and lesbians into living in fear and secrecy, she said, and can

make them more prone to violence.

"Violence and hatred are not American values we want to instill in our children," she said.

To create a safe environment, she said, universities should require mandatory attendance at gay and lesbian information sessions for faculty, staff, social service providers and residence hall directors.

"If it's voluntary, people who really need it won't attend," she said.

The student community should also be informed, she said, because hostility usually stems from misunderstanding.

"We have to try to be compassionate and keep the dialogue going," she said. "The welfare of many individuals may be at risk."

Communication is the key to understanding, she said. People need to realize that homosexuality is not a trait created by the environment, she said; rather, it may be a genetic trait in place by age 5.

"This makes gays as innate as skin color and gender," she said.

Gays and lesbians are an integral part of society that needs to be understood, she said.

"We're everywhere. Eight to 10 million children are in gay-headed households," she said. "We're your parents. We're your pediatrician. We're your brain surgeon. We're your lawyer. We're your first-grade teacher."

Group to help students heal hearts

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

When a long-term relationship breaks up and no flowers appear at the door on Valentine's Day, people need to know they are not alone, two UNL counselors said.

"Mending Broken Hearts," a support group organized through the Women's Center, was designed by counselors Kris Stenberg and Mary Swoboda to help students cope with life after a relationship.

The group, which has not established meeting times yet, is open to both men and women, and all conversations are confidential.

Stenberg said the group members would discuss the healing and grieving stages, and would identify and normalize feelings associated with a break-up.

"There are no right or wrong feelings a person experiences when going through this," she said.

Rebounding and knowing when to start a new relationship will be dis-

cussed near the end of the sessions to help people get on with their lives, she said.

"There's just a great sadness, and it makes it really hard for people to function socially," she said. "People will just want to stay in their rooms or stay by themselves and get depressed."

Without support or counseling, people could experience insomnia, loss of appetite, depression and loss of interest in school and social activities, Swoboda said.

Swoboda, who works as a counselor at University Health Center, said she noticed that people going through a break-up needed to find support in their environment to get over these symptoms.

A lot of people who came out of a long-term relationship were in a state of shock, she said.

"People can get stuck in it, hoping that the relationship will come back to them," she said. "It's hard to give up hope."

The stages of sleeplessness and apathy will pass, she said, but people can also get stuck thinking they'll

"There's just a great sadness, and it makes it really hard for people to function socially. People will just want to stay in their rooms or stay by themselves and get depressed."

KRIS STENBERG
Counselor

never find someone else.

Holidays, such as Valentine's Day, can be difficult and lonely times, she said, especially when a person has fond memories of past years.

"People need to get the support and the idea that you're not alone," she said.

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