

Smoking ban fails legislative test

From The Associated Press

A proposal (LB121) to ban smoking in state buildings and vehicles failed to pass its first major legislative test. A motion to advance the measure failed 21-14, four votes short of the 25 needed.

Minutes later, lawmakers denied first-round approval to a bill (LB216) that would protect workers in the private sector from being fired for smoking when on their own time and away from the job.

Omaha Senator's bill would give jail time to first-time offenders

From The Associated Press

Drivers who get behind the wheel after their driver's licenses have been suspended, revoked or impounded would face jail time under a plan reviewed Tuesday by the Transporta-

tion Committee.

Omaha Sen. Dan Lynch's bill (LB518) would require first-time offenders who are placed on probation to receive sentences that include 48 hours in the city or county jail. An offender placed on probation for a second or subsequent offense would have to serve 30 days in the county jail.

Law enforcement officials have long complained that many repeat offenders, especially drunken drivers, get behind the wheel even after their licenses have been taken away.

The Lynch bill also would require forfeiture of a vehicle to the county where the owner is convicted of driving on a suspended, revoked or impounded license.

Forfeited vehicles would be auctioned off with proceeds going to cover liens on the vehicle, towing costs and costs to the county. Left-over money would go to the permanent school fund.

Amendment would increase governor's control over education

From The Associated Press

Putting the state Department of Education under the governor's control would give Nebraskans more say in the day-to-day operation of their public schools, Gov. Ben Nelson said Tuesday.

Nelson testified before the Legislature's Education Committee in support of a proposed constitutional amendment (LR47CA) to give future governors more control over the department.

Nelson said the plan also would streamline government by allowing the governor to appoint the eight-member state Board of Education subject to legislative approval.

Max Larsen, a state Education Board member, opposed the measure, saying future governors may use the power against education.

Backers say scale will help

Minus grades a plus for students, professors say

By John Fulwider
Staff Reporter

Supporters of a proposal to add minuses to UNL's grading scale say the change will not harm students' grade point averages.

Instead, they say such a change would make University of Nebraska-Lincoln students more competitive with students from other universities that already use scales similar to the one proposed.

"I think our students are as good as any students in the country, and they can compete just as well nationally," said Denis Erickson, a professor of veterinary and biomedical sciences.

"I don't think this grading system will hurt them," he said.

The proposed change would add grades of A minus, B minus, C minus and D minus to the scale and eliminate the grade of A plus.

Under the new system, a plus would add only .33 grade points to a base-level A, B, C or D grade. A minus would subtract .33 grade points. Under the current system, a plus is worth .5 grade points.

For example, a B plus currently is worth 3.5 points, but after the change, it would be worth 3.33 points.

Erickson said UNL students' grades might appear artificially inflated, and that would put students at a disadvantage in competing with students from other universities.

He said that though students might see a no-minus system as an advantage, it didn't accurately reflect their academic performance.

"They may appear more competitive on paper, but I think our students

would want to be competing from a position of strength," he said. "And I think this is a way for them to demonstrate that they are."

Dennis Muchisky, a UNL English professor, said the new system would give him more grading options.

"It allows me to record more accurately the student's performance in the class," he said.

Students also would benefit from a more accurate reflection of their performances, he said.

Christina Brantner, a professor of modern languages, said students in her classes with borderline grades would definitely benefit from the change.

Muchisky said he understood students' concerns about grades being worth less. He said debating the value of each grade was an option, but adding minuses was needed.

"I do want to see the system balanced out by putting the minuses in," he said.

ASUN to vote on revised grading scale resolution

By Angie Schendt and Melanie Brandert
Staff Reporters

ASUN senators tonight will vote on a resolution to oppose a revised grading scale change at UNL.

The change, proposed last week by six faculty members, would add minuses to the grading scale at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Under the revised plan, a minus would subtract .33 points from base-point values given for grades of A, B, C and D. A plus would add .33 points to the base level.

The proposal would remove the grade of A plus entirely.

The resolution was drafted by Andrew Loudon, president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

Loudon said the proposed grading scale, which must be approved by the Academic Senate, would not benefit students.

He said a survey taken last year by the Academic Senate found that the majority of students and faculty agreed with him.

A similar grading proposal last year prompted the survey. That proposal was opposed by about 80 percent of UNL students and a majority of the professors, the survey found.

"The survey reflected that the majority of the people think that the eight points are adequate," Loudon said.

Loudon said his resolution also would emphasize what one public school district in Nebraska had done to remove minuses from its grading system.

Lexington Public Schools removed minuses this year because they had a negative impact on students, Loudon said.

"The survey reflected that the majority of the people think that the eight points are adequate."

ANDREW LOUDON

ASUN president

The new grading scale at UNL could lower students' grade point averages, he said.

For example, he said, a student with straight A's might have some grades that translated to 91 percent. If a minus system had been used, that student could have a GPA as low as a 3.8 instead of a 4.0.

A misleading part of the new system is the addition of the grade of C minus, Loudon said.

"When you implement a C minus into the equation, a student thinks that they are passing, but they get a 1.67, which is academic probation," Loudon said.

In addition, Loudon said, the new scale would be different than those used at the three other NU campuses.

"It will make it hard to transfer grades between schools," Loudon said.

Loudon said if tonight's resolution passed, members of college advisory boards and ASUN senators would start lobbying Academic Senate members this week to vote against the proposal.



There are no small victories in the fight against heart disease.

Plates

Continued from Page 9

Brashear said that without a special design for Cornhusker plates, the appeal would be diluted, and so would sales.

"It gives Nebraska Cornhusker plates no specialness whatsoever," Brashear said.

Cynthia Bowsman, Department of Motor Vehicles legal counsel, said specialty plates were a good idea, but her department would prefer to see them implemented through LB465.

Bowsman said law enforcement officials, the Department of Roads and the Department of Corrections all had problems with plates of

special design.

Law enforcement officials wanted to keep the white reflective background, she said, and the Department of Corrections had a problem with the special printing of Cornhusker plates.

Bowsman said LB465 also would allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue specialty plates at any time without getting statutory authorization, as is needed now.

Brashear said other states, including Iowa and Florida, had issued specially designed spirit plates for their universities.

"Why should we have to do this differently and fail?" Brashear asked.

Budget

Continued from Page 1

reductions became essential once the whole budget became clearer, he said.

He also said the preliminary


recommendation included new funds for library acquisitions, a 2 percent inflation increase and a 3 percent salary increase.

"I think we've treated the university pretty well, at least since I've been here," Wehrbein said.



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