

Test-review companies bicker

Organizations say false claims inflate results

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Two of the nation's leading test-preparation companies continue to accuse each other of using false score-improvement claims and flawed methods to gather results.

Kaplan Education Centers, which has centers in Lincoln and Omaha, and The Princeton Review, which will open a Lincoln center in the fall, offer preparation courses for SAT, LSAT, MCAT, GMAT and GRE tests. The two companies brought their dispute to an arbitration panel, which convened last Thursday.

The panel recommended that The Princeton Review change its method for finding out how effective its program is, but company officials said the panel approved its new results.

John Katzman, president of The Princeton Review, said his company's former result-gathering method,

which involved sending postcards to all its 70,000 students, saw about a 25 percent response.

The postcard method showed that students who took the SAT had a 123 point improvement, he said.

The new method, which is used by Kaplan, involved random calling of about 100 students, he said, and showed a 127 point improvement on the SAT.

Kaplan representatives said The Princeton Review "blatantly made false claims."

Melissa Mack, spokesman for Kaplan, said The Princeton Review had no proof to back up its improvement claims.

"The Princeton Review has a history of using unsubstantiated claims," she said. "They misconstrue information."

"The Princeton Review is not an ethical company."

Mack said Kaplan came to The Princeton Review in June of 1993 and threatened to sue if the company did not sign an agreement to stop false advertising and bring their improvement scores to arbitration review.

Katzman said The Princeton Review brought a lawsuit against Kaplan for a false advertisement in "US News

and World Report" and then decided to settle the dispute by arbitration instead of tying it up in the courts.

Kaplan serves about 150,000 students per year, Mack said, and wants to enforce high ethical standards across the industry.

"Our primary concern is the student. That's who we serve," Mack said. "It's very difficult for students to make well-informed decisions if the marketing information out there is misleading."

Kaplan's sole interest is in advertising and public relations because it is losing its SAT market to The Princeton Review, Katzman said.

"It's apples and apples," he said. "Look at all of their kids and all of ours. Whatever your improvement, it's your improvement."

"If you want it to be higher, run a better course."

Katzman said Kaplan lost about \$15 million trying to match The Princeton Review's growth.

"We're doing our best not to talk about how corrupt and pathetic Kaplan is, because it's not our style to badmouth the competition," Katzman said. "The reason we've grown so fast is because we run a better course."

ASUN opposes proposed code of conduct change

By Melanie Brandert
Staff Reporter

ASUN senators voted Wednesday to oppose a proposed change to the student code of conduct regarding the storage of firearms and other weapons on campus.



The change would have required UNL students, faculty and staff to store and clean their weapons at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department.

The current policy forbids the use and storage of weapons in unauthorized locations on campus, including vehicles parked in university parking lots and on-campus living units. However, students are allowed to store their weapons with residence hall directors and greek house directors and presidents.

Residence Hall Association executive officers spoke to senators in open forum about the proposal. They said RHA senators voted to oppose the change earlier this week, even though RHA President Andrea Casart vetoed the decision. RHA senators later overturned Casart's veto.

Association of Students of the University of Nebraska senators expressed concerns about the proposed change.

Mark Clift, senator for the College of Arts and Sciences, said if the bill was passed, students who hunted might not want to drive out of their way to the police department to pick up or return their weapons.

"We might have a lot more guns in the halls or out in vehicles," he said.

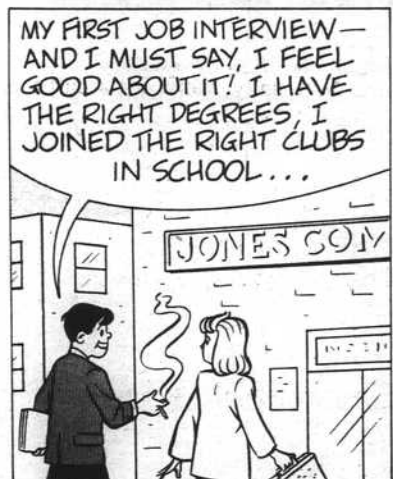
Bill Anderson, also a senator for the College of Arts and Sciences, suggested that students could register their weapons with the police department but not be required to store them there.

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