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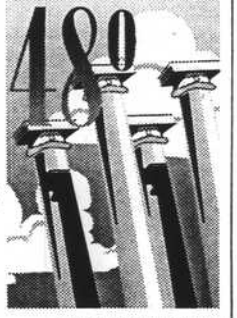
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March 10-12, 1995

Minuses gain support at NU schools

By Brian Sharp
Senior Reporter

When James Ford came to the Academic Senate last year proposing to add minuses to UNL's grading system, critics said he was unorganized in the face of strong opposition.

The proposed 40-point grading scale was never voted on, and after two hours of debate, the idea of a minus system was rejected.

This year, Ford returns with the advantage — momentum.

Academic senates at both the Kearney and Omaha campuses of the University of Nebraska recently passed resolutions in favor of a minus system. Kearney approved the measure March 2. Omaha voted Wednesday to institute the change.

The recent votes have blindsided student government, said Andrew Loudon, ASUN president. Loudon said UNO's and UNK's actions have put considerable pressure on his office to organize those opposed to the minus system.

"We do not have many allies on this issue," Loudon said.

Ford's motion calls for a 12-point grading scale.

Loudon has submitted a bill opposing the motion. The bill, relying on figures gathered by James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, states the following points:

- 64 percent of American and Canadian colleges and universities use nine or fewer grading categories.

- 80 percent of UNL undergraduate and graduate students favor a grading system with 10 or fewer categories.

- A change would create confusion in transcripts, scholarships and would be unfair to students.

The bill also raised the issue that NU students would be subject to different grading systems.

Ford summarized the ASUN position in simple terms.

"It's like saying that switching to Daylight Savings Time makes all the clocks wrong," Ford said. "The answer, of course, is to change all the clocks."

Ford said he had spoken with the UNL registration director and was told the cost of such a change would run close to \$3,000 and

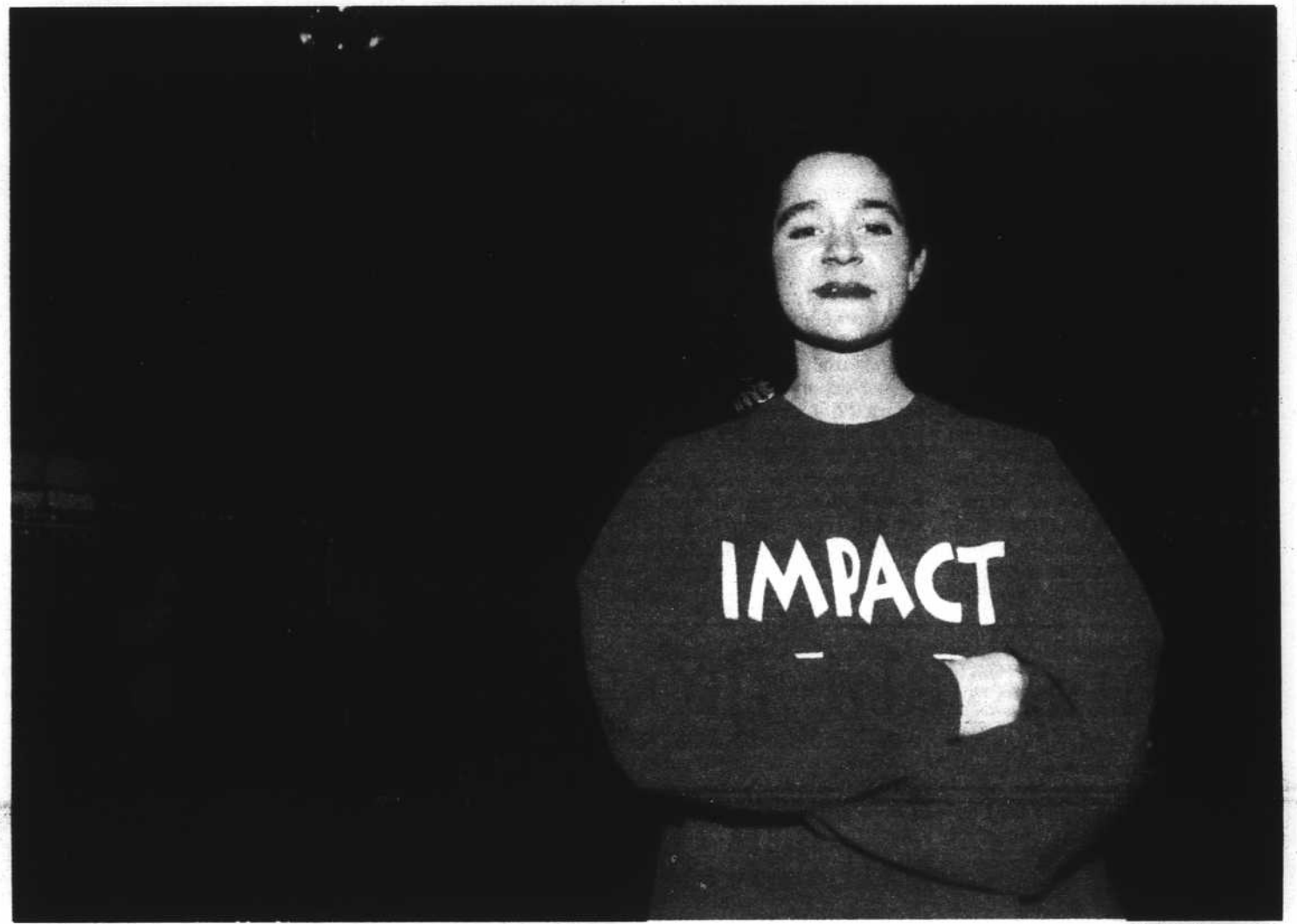
would be easy to accomplish. If the senate approves the measure Tuesday, the earliest practical implementation would be the 1996-97 school year.

The UNL plan supports a breakdown by thirds. UNK has advanced a similar model, while UNO noted the thirds plan as well as a quarter plan. The latter idea grants a half-point to letter grades and a quarter-point for plus and minuses.

While the actions of the other two campuses came as a surprise, Ford said there had already been some discussion of coordinating a uni-

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Dream come true



Jay Calderon/DN

Shawntell Hurtgen says every one of her goals as the new president of ASUN is attainable.

Hurtgen ready to take on new ASUN position

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Shawntell Hurtgen never ran for student government when she was in high school at home in Sioux Falls, S.D.

She waited until she came to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to tackle student government — and she won.

"My philosophy was, 'I get one chance to do this — one chance — and I'm done,'" she said.

Now, Hurtgen has one year to reach the goals she told students her party would.

"I think everything is attainable."

When Hurtgen called her parents Wednesday night to tell them she was the new president, her brother Tommy didn't recognize her voice — what little voice she had left.

"He kept saying, 'You have the wrong

number. I'm sorry,'" Hurtgen said in a raspy, barely-audible voice.

Hurtgen's parents set her apart from the rest since the day she was born. The rest of her family had "boring" names, but not Shawntell Nevada Hurtgen.

"Nevada made me the oddball," she said. "My mother always thought I'd live someplace cold, so she named me after someplace warm."

"It could have been worse, a lot worse — like New Hampshire."

But Hurtgen chose the middle road of hot and cold — Nebraska — because she said the campus was beautiful and going to Nebraska was a "big deal" for someone from South Dakota.

"I love going to school down here. I couldn't be happier anyplace else," she said.

Hurtgen's happiness sank in last night after she received a phone call about the election results.

Since then, friends, reporters and classmates have swamped Hurtgen with phone calls. When she woke up to a phone call Thursday morning, she said her own and her IMPACT party's victory "almost seemed like a dream."

Shawntell Nevada Hurtgen

■ Hurtgen is a junior finance major from Sioux Falls, S.D. As a freshman, she was the senate representative for the Division of General Studies, a member of the Committee for Fees Allocation and the five-year protection committee.

■ She became CFA chairwoman during her senate term and moved on to become Government Liaison Committee chairwoman.

It's a dream she developed last fall when she sat down and wrote 10 reasons why she would run for president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

"I knew I could get more student involvement and be more aggressive in going out to students," she said. "I knew I was running for the right reasons."

Hurtgen, a junior finance major, was no stranger to ASUN. She got involved her freshman year as the senate representative for the Division of General Studies, a member of the Committee for Fees Allocation and the five-year protection committee.

See HURTGEN on 6

Student voter apathy common at Big Eight universities

Low student interest contributes to poor turnout, senators say

By J. Christopher Hain
Senior Reporter

Chuck Lee was one of the LETUCE party's few successes in Wednesday night's ASUN elections.

He received only three votes, but that was enough to give him a majority of the five votes cast by Criminal Justice students for the department's ASUN senator.

A total of 339 criminal justice students were eligible to vote.

But Lee, who ran unopposed, said he wouldn't lose any sleep over his lack of support.

"I got in," he said. "That's what matters most."

Overall, voter turnout among University of Nebraska-Lincoln students, at 12.7 percent, was slightly higher than last year's 11.5 percent.

Lee said criminal justice majors might feel detached from the rest of the student body because their degree program was administered through the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"A lot of criminal justice majors couldn't care less about what ASUN does or what I do," Lee said.

Ryan Horner, who was elected College of Architecture senator as an independent, said he wanted to increase interest in ASUN among students in the college.

Horner won with only 19 votes. He said many architecture students probably weren't interested in ASUN because they felt student government couldn't do much for them.

"ASUN needs to have more of an influence on the student body," he said.

This year's turnout places UNL

near the middle in rankings the number of student voters among several other Big Eight schools.

Kansas State University has had a turnout of around 13 to 15 percent the last two years, said Chad Schneider, elections chairman for the Student Governing Association at Kansas State.

Iowa State University has had a turnout of around eight to 10 percent the last two years, said Steve Elliot, who was elections chairman last year for the Government of the Student Body of ISU and currently is treasurer.

In its election last year, Oklahoma University had a 12.8 percent turnout, said Craig Hayes, chairman of Student Congress at OU.

Hayes said voter apathy was a concern on the OU campus, particularly among those involved in student government.

"There's not much broad-based involvement in student government," Hayes said.

But Hayes said lack of student involvement on campus could be applied outside of student government.

"There's a general apathy toward involvement in any student activity."