

# Daily Nebraskan

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inside **Tuesday**  
News Digest

300 passengers evacuate sinking British ferry, page 2

Arts & Entertainment

Polka band enters its fifth decade, page 12



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## Change in rules would reach student teachers

By J. Christopher Hain  
Senior Reporter

Past behavior may come back to haunt anyone wishing to be a teacher in Nebraska if the State Board of Education gets its way.

The board suggested Saturday that anyone convicted of certain misdemeanors be denied a teaching license.

Currently, conviction of a felony means automatic rejection for a teacher's license. The rule change would add to felonies anyone convicted of a misdemeanor involving abuse, neglect or injury to any person or any crime involving moral turpitude.

Crimes of moral turpitude can be

divided into three categories: fraud, deceit or misrepresentation; theft; or criminal sex acts.

Student teachers also would be affected by the change.

No one convicted of such a crime could become a student teacher in the state.

Prior to entering the Teachers College, students are asked if they ever have been convicted of a felony, said Tom Wandzilak, certification officer for the Teachers College.

Wandzilak said the intent of adding the misdemeanor offenses was good but he didn't know how the rule would be enforced.

About 650 UNL students are par-

ticipating in some kind of classroom teaching in local public schools, he said.

Merely asking a question of them might not be enough of a check, he said; the question needs to be backed up with a background check.

"If they're going to do one, then they've got to do the other," Wandzilak said.

But for the Department of Education to perform a check on someone's criminal history, the Nebraska Legislature must authorize it.

A bill in the Legislature that would have put that approval into law was killed by the Education Committee.

State Board of Education member

Kathleen McCallister of Omaha said that by refusing to approve a background check, the Legislature was participating in any abuse that could be prevented.

"If they have time to spend a week and a half on Micron, then they have time to spend on preventing child abuse," McCallister said.

If Nebraska doesn't check into the backgrounds of its teachers, she said, it will encourage criminals to come to the state.

"Nebraska is a safe haven for these types of people," McCallister said.

Thirty-six states perform background checks for various types of jobs dealing with children, such as teaching or child care. Nebraska

doesn't check for either.

The rule adding misdemeanors needs to be reviewed by the attorney general and the governor before it is approved.

But McCallister said it was a step in the right direction.

Often, she said, some of these serious crimes are plea bargained to misdemeanors to save time and money.

"But they're still as concerning," McCallister said. "We're not looking at little stuff."

She said children in Nebraska had been abused by teachers who would not have been licensed had this rule been in effect.

"This is essentially to protect the kids."

## Campus watch could begin with fall NSE

By Matthew Waite  
Senior Reporter

A UNL campus-watch program, an idea 1 1/2 years in the making, could begin with this year's New Student Enrollment, the program's originator said Monday.

Boon Lee Lim, a 25-year-old graduate engineering student from Malaysia, said the program could be included as part of the UNL Police presentation. He has talked to police about that and is awaiting a response. Lim said he already had worked closely with university police, administrators and students on the project.

Sometime in the future, Lim wants to distribute brochures and posters across campus to get students to report suspicious sightings.

"I just want to see something that is good happen at this university," he said. "This thing has been put off for so long."

"For me, I feel that talking without doing is a waste of everybody's time."

*"I just want to see something good happen at this university."*

**BOON LEE**

Engineering graduate student

A campus-watch program sends a strong message to the community and to the parents of students that the university is serious about campus safety, he said.

The program seeks to raise awareness among students and educate them on crime issues surrounding the university, Lim said. Students also would look out for each other by doing such things as providing escorts at night, Lim said.

The idea originated after the Oct. 17, 1993, beating of Boon Chung Ong, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student from Malaysia, Lim said. Lim said sometimes he was the lone person pushing the idea.

The effect of a crime watch on campus would not be a physical one, where more police patrol the street.

"It is a psychological effect," Lim said. "If you declare this a crime-watch campus, somebody may be more reluctant to commit a crime because somebody may be watching."

Lim said many would argue that with UNL's safe-campus image and decreasing crime numbers, a campus-watch program was not needed. Not so, said Lim.

"This is a safe campus, but we want to make it better," he said. "We will never have enough police on the street to look out for everybody."

"The best thing we can do is educate people ... to look out for each other. Everybody working together on this is going to be the key to this program."

## CHECK YOUR HEAD



Scott Bruhn/DN

Cami Jurgens, a senior elementary education and early childhood major, gets fitted for her graduation cap by E.R. Moore representative Jess Crane. Today is the last day for graduating seniors to be fitted for caps and gowns.

## Plan for stadium parking garage heard

By Matthew Waite  
Senior Reporter

With plans for a parking garage near the Nebraska Union bogged down by site problems and protests from potential neighbors, a new garage plan has sprung from UNL administration.

Paul Carlson, interim vice chancellor for business and finance, said administrators in the athletic department had heard a proposal for a garage near Memorial Stadium.

"They've given no commitment, and we haven't given them any hard numbers," Carlson said.

The structure would be located between 9th and 10th streets and T and U streets, he said. Carlson said it would serve the athletic department, faculty and, "if the price is right," commuter students.

A stadium garage would be a separate from plans for a garage near the union, Carlson said.

"It is a separate issue because it doesn't solve the problems we have over at the union," he said. "It isn't a substitute for solving the visitor need."

Talk about a stadium garage has athletic

department officials interested.

Gary Fouraker, associate athletic director for business and concessions, said the university and the athletic department had talked briefly about a garage near the stadium.

"We're interested in talking to them about it," he said. "It just came up last week."

Fouraker said the Athletic Department was willing to listen, but that was all the further it went.

In early March, the university was considering three sites — east and west of the Nebraska Union and a site in the visitor's lots along R Street.

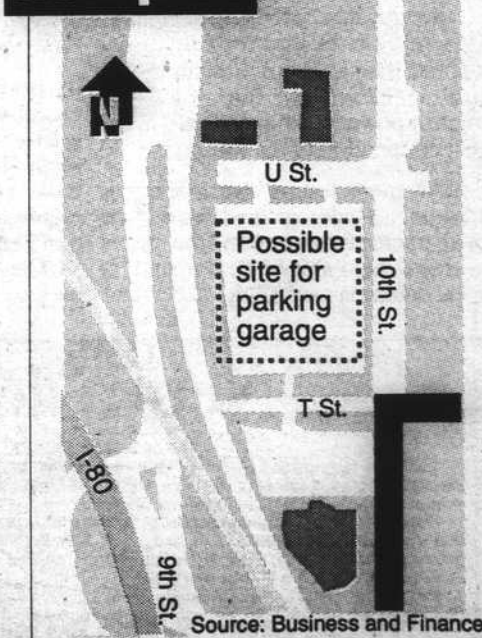
The site east of the union has fallen on hard times, facing opposition from the Alpha Phi Sorority and the Nebraska Historical Society.

The site west of the union faces a load of financial difficulties related to freeing up the area.

A garage near the stadium originally was considered as one of 14 possible sites in a lengthy report commissioned by John Goebel, then-Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance.

As the university narrowed 14 to four, the site was rejected because it was not centrally located to campus, a key criteria in selection.

### New plan



Source: Business and Finance