

ASUN spells out student court option

By Melanie Brandert
Staff Reporter

ASUN's student court may not have its own courtroom or summon voters for jury duty, but it hears and decides cases like any court.

But some court justices fear students don't realize the court exists.

Chief Justice Andrew Sigerson said the court, which has held hearings in the Nebraska Union, interpreted and enforced the constitution and bylaws of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

The court also interprets the actions of student organizations that may have violated their constitutions.

Sigerson, who is serving his second term as chief justice, said every organization's constitution must meet ASUN's standards.

"If there's a question where they violated their constitution ... we make that interpretation," he said.

When a complaint is filed, Sigerson said, law students usually are assigned to represent each party. The six justices meet before a case is heard. They are required to review ASUN's constitution and bylaws so they understand them, he said.

Robert Schafer, a former associate justice, said the court heard only one case during last year's term. The case involved the International Student Organization.

The court ruled last May that ISO's April 1994 election was invalid because it was not held in accordance

with election rules set by the organization's constitution.

Sigerson said the University Program Council's case against ASUN was filed in the court but was settled the day before the hearing.

UPC and the student government were embroiled in a dispute last fall over a bylaw change the senate passed last spring. The change set up a committee to select UPC's executives and event directors. Both organizations reached a compromise, deciding that the student programming body's executive council would be chosen by a committee of ASUN and UPC members.

Elizabeth Veomett, an associate justice serving her second term, said she thought the court heard so few cases because students didn't know it existed.

"I think the reason is because people don't realize it's an option," she said.

Sigerson said the court was not equipped to settle disputes between students.

Veomett said hearing cases was difficult at times.

"It was difficult to decide who to believe sometimes," she said. "You feel like you never get the whole story."

Schafer, now a College of Law senator for ASUN, disagreed. Justices make decision based on the facts and issues presented, he said.

"(A justice) needs to refrain from making a premature decision until the two sides present the case and go from there," Schafer said.

The state, however, would not reward people who decide to have children in times of financial crisis, Bohlke said.

Sen. John Lindsay of Omaha said the amendment should be passed on principle.

"The issue is are we trying to save money?" he said. "This is not where the money should be saved."

Lindsay said the money saved by capping benefits at two children was money that the Legislature spent with little fanfare on other issues.

The amendment failed on a 17-17 vote.

The other amendment considered by the Legislature struck provisions in LB455 that phased out food stamps in exchange for cash vouchers.

Sen. Ray Janssen of Nickerson, the sponsor of the amendment, said the temptation for people to use the cash for things other than food was too great.

"If they can't be responsible with food stamps, how do you expect them to be responsible with cash?" he said.

Bohlke said the system in place now was a broken system that needed change. She said if senators were not comfortable with the change, they would be rejecting reform.

The amendment passed 33-6, with Bohlke supporting the amendment after lengthy debate.

Legislature

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ing, and many of them were important.

"I think welfare reform is an important enough issue," he said. "Let's take the time to get to the issues."

"There was no delaying tactics. It was a good, thorough debate on the issues by many, many senators."

For a one-house government to work, Bernard-Stevens said, legislators have to be sure that all angles of an issue are examined.

With the bill now on select file, one stage away from a final vote, legislators are going to feel even more of a squeeze to pass the bill quickly, he said.

During debate, lawmakers considered two amendments, passing one and defeating another.

The first amendment of the afternoon retained the current policy of giving additional benefits to welfare mothers who have more than two children. LB455 stops additional welfare payments at two children.

Bohlke, the sponsor of the welfare reform bill, said capping welfare benefits at two children was not as harsh as it sounded. She said the family still received Medicaid, food stamps and assistance for heating their house.

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Smith visited with the Academic Senate, said committee member Gargi Sodowsky, and shared some qualifications he would like UNL's new chancellor to have. Sodowsky is an associate professor of educational psychology.

"He said that we would benefit greatly with a chancellor who has a strong academic background," Sodowsky said, "but also has a very good understanding of the business and fiscal matters of running the university."

Committee member Stephen Baenziger, professor of biotechnology, said he would like the chancellor to make UNL progressive.

"You'd like to have someone a little bit visionary," he said.

The committee will conduct a national advertising campaign for candidates in publications, such as the Chronicle of Higher Education, Rowson said.

Internal candidates will be considered, he said.

Committee members also will use their own contact networks to find candidates, he said.

Other members of the committee are:

•Chairman David Sellmyer, professor of physics and astronomy.

•Linda Pratt, professor of English and former president of the American Association of University Professors.

•Anna Shavers, assistant professor of law.

•John Boyer, partner in Fraser, Stryker, Vaughn, Meusey, Olson, Boyer, Bloch PC, Omaha.

•Thomas Henning, president and CEO of Security Mutual Life, Lincoln.

•Thomas Olson, banking, insurance and ranching executive, Lisco.

•Michele Strickler, secretary at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture Systems.

•Sally Flint, manager of publications and photography.

David Milligan, junior engineering and technology major.

•Scott Berryman, graduate student.

•Cecil Steward, dean of the College of Architecture.

•Irv Omtvedt, vice chancellor for the institute of agriculture and natural resources.

•Robert Fritschen, director of the Northeast Research & Extension Center, Concord.

Czech ministers to visit

From Staff Reports

Two officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the Czech Republic will visit the University of Nebraska-Lincoln today through Sunday.

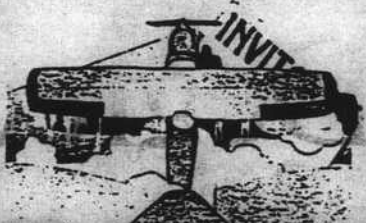
Dasa van den Horst and Vilma Anyzova will present a lecture, "Czech Communities in the World," which will be held from 7 to 9 a.m. in the Nebraska Union. The lecture is sponsored by the European Studies Department, UNL Komensky Czech Club and Department of Modern Languages and Literature.

The officials hope to meet members of the Czech community in Nebraska during the reception that follows the lecture and may visit some Czech communities.

The ministers are responsible for the contacts between the Czech Republic and Czech minorities in other countries. They work with minorities in Ukraine and Russia.

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