

Forum examines sexual harassment

By Catherine Blalock
Staff Reporter

A Valentine's Day forum on sexual harassment sparked nearly an hour and a half of discussion among five panelists and an audience of about 20 people in the Nebraska Union.

"Dealing with Sexual Harassment: Sensitive to it? Sick of it?" was the second forum sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Community Conservations Steering Committee. The committee holds two forums about campus issues each semester.

John Harris, monitor of the forum and special assistant to the vice chancellor for student affairs, said the legal definition of sexual harassment was "unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors."

One type of sexual harassment is repeated use of an offensive word, one panelist said.

Linda Crump, associate director of affirmative action and diversity programs, said if a person used a specific word — and continued to use it after being asked to stop — that was considered harassment.

But the definition of harassment can vary. What one person considers harassment one day he/she may not the next, said Larry Doerr, a member of the steering committee.

Sometimes when an incident of sexual harassment occurs at UNL, it is reported but nothing is done about it, according to one panelist.

Kevin Nelson, a UNL on-campus resident, recalled an incident when a female friend came to visit him and was sexually harassed by another resident.

"We reported to the on-duty student assistant and resident director and were guaranteed that something would be done," Nelson said. "About three weeks to a month later, nothing was done."

He said he visited other offices at UNL with his female friend to find help dealing with the problem.

"A couple of people called us liars," he said.

Pam Cary, a senior secondary education major, said she too had encountered sexual harassment on campus.

Last semester, her son was involved in a car accident. When she explained her situation to her instructor, she was told to "make up my mind to be a mother or a student," she said.

After reporting the incident to her instructor's boss, the problem was worked out, she said.

To prevent sexual harassment, people must respect one another, said Lisa Sock, junior advertising major.

"It's simply about respecting a human being," she said.

Grant increase may have little effect on UNL

By Joshua Gillin
Staff Reporter

Although a temporary bill passed by the federal government increases funding for Pell grants, many UNL students may not be affected, an official said.

The temporary spending bill, approved by the U.S. House of Representatives when the government shutdown ended Jan. 26, increases the maximum amount of federal aid that may be given to a Pell grant recipient from \$2,340 to \$2,440.

John Beacon, director of scholarships and financial aid at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said the increase would be welcome, both to students and to universities.

Detectors can offer protection from carbon monoxide threat

By Erin Schulte
Staff Reporter

It's colorless and odorless, but it could be making you sick.

In the past year, the Lincoln Fire Department received about 240 calls about high carbon monoxide levels, said Jim Bopp, a firefighter paramedic.

Because of recent awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, many people have invested in carbon monoxide detectors, Bopp said.

Detectors have become more affordable in recent years, Bopp said. But the lower-priced units often give off false alarms because of the way their gas sensors work.

Bopp said low-priced detectors accumulated the gas in their sensors, and after a time they are set off even if the amount of carbon monoxide in the air is small. More expensive alarms "self-clear" after 18 hours.

During the winter, people are more susceptible to carbon monoxide poisoning because of higher usage of fireplaces, furnaces and stoves, Bopp said.

Carbon monoxide is sometimes emitted from malfunctioning furnaces, stoves, fireplaces or other appliances operated by fossil fuels, Bopp said. In large doses, it can cause nausea, dizziness, exhaustion, headaches, rapid breathing, unconsciousness, brain damage or even death.

Mike Holmquist, an environmental engineer for the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department,

said carbon monoxide poisoning occurred when the gas replaced oxygen in the bloodstream by attaching to red blood cells.

When this happens, the brain, muscles and other body tissues don't get enough oxygen, he said.

Normal blood contains about 1 percent carbon monoxide. At 5 percent to 9 percent, people get sick, and at 10 percent to 30 percent they progress to near-coma stages. Holmquist said 50 percent would prove to be fatal.

People who smoke two packs of cigarettes a day have a steady level of 10 percent carbon monoxide in their blood, he said.

Effects of carbon monoxide poisoning can be reversed, Holmquist said, if the person is not exposed to the gas for 24 to 48 hours.

In the event of high dose concentrations, a victim would be placed in a hyperbaric chamber, which contains high-pressure oxygen, he said.

To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, Bopp said, furnaces should be checked for cracks or malfunctions every year.

When using fireplaces, people should make sure the flue is open. Kerosene space heaters are especially dangerous, he said.

If a detector goes off, Bopp said, someone should call 911, and a truck will be sent out with a sensitive carbon monoxide detector to see if levels are high.

If people in the home feel sick, tired or dizzy when the alarms go off, they should leave immediately, Bopp said.

ASUN

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\$7 million shortfall," Moeser said. "I want to ask for your help to influence our state government."

Moeser said that if the funding were not reallocated, a "stiff increase" in tuition would be forced upon students.

"I want you as students to not only advocate to state legislators, but to your parents as well," Moeser said. "I firmly believe that together, we can win this issue."

Moeser said he also wanted to see the rivalry between the University of Nebraska's Lincoln and Omaha campuses dissolve in favor of increased cooperation, and he briefly advocated an improved, expanded honors program.

In other business, ASUN passed two emergency status bills.

One bill urged Hurtgen, Government Liaison Committee Chairman Eric Marintzer and GLC lobbyists to push for the reinstatement of the \$7 million in lost funds.

The second emergency status bill urged Hurtgen, Marintzer and lobbyists to look into a bill that proposes an Institute of Information Science and Technology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

ASUN also passed four appropriations bills, approving Committee for Fees Allocation budget recommendations for ASUN, the Daily Nebraskan, the University Program Council and the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

But, he said, the bill wouldn't have any lasting effect, even if it passed as a permanent measure.

Beacon said that because the Pell grant program was not an entitlement program, it rarely got all of the money that theoretically was allotted to it. An entitlement program is a federally funded operation, in which all allotted monies are disbursed to the program.

"Congress does not fully fund the Pell grant anyway," he said. "Since 1972, there have only been three years in which the program has been funded to its maximum."

Beacon said the bill was temporary, and the possibility of its being repealed before the 1996-97 academic year was real.

He said President Clinton's promise of a \$1,000, one-time scholarship to high school students in the top 5 percent of their graduating classes was unrealistic.

That money would be better spent making the Pell grant increase a permanent measure, Beacon said.

"The whole thing will cost \$125 million in the end," Beacon said, "and the students who would get the money probably are the ones who don't need it anyway."

About 4,350 UNL students received Pell grant funds during the 1994-95 academic year, bringing \$5.8 million to the university.

But Beacon said even the \$100 increase per student could be beneficial if UNL had students who received the maximum Pell grant amount allowed.

"It's just a drop in the bucket for the federal government, but it's a big deal to us and the students."

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