

# OFFICE takes defeat in stride

*Firestone attributes loss to low student turnout*

By Julie Sobczyk

Senior Reporter

A small gathering of friends at Crane River Brewpub & Cafe on Wednesday night marked the end of a trying campaign for a defeated but not deflated OFFICE party.

Justin Firestone, the OFFICE party's presidential candidate, and his running mates Chuck Isom and Kevin Gregorius ate and drank with the rest of their party as they waited to hear election results.

And when the news came that Firestone had received only 27.4 percent of the vote, he said he wasn't too disappointed.

"I'm fine," Firestone said. "I was ready to be president, and I was ready to be a private individual."

But the small number of voters was upsetting, Firestone said after learning that only 1,867 students voted in the election — an 8.4 percent turnout.

"I was their chance. If students ever have complaints about the student government again, it's their own fault," he said. "They had their chance."

Firestone attributed his loss to the lack of students who voted.

"If 50 percent of the students had voted, we would have won," Firestone said. "Poor turnout hampers parties that don't have political machines behind them."

As he waited for the results, Firestone said he carried no expectations about winning or losing the election.

"We did the best we could," he said. "We know we tried our best, and I learned it's tough to stand up for what you think is right."

Gregorius, second vice-presidential candidate, said the low turnout disappointed him.



Travis Heying/DN  
OFFICE Presidential candidate Justin Firestone calls his parents with election results Wednesday night from Crane River Brewpub & Cafe after finding out that his party has been defeated by ACTION.

"It upsets me that some people at this university don't realize what happened today," Gregorius said. "I'm extremely saddened that so many votes could be bought."

Isom, first vice-presidential candidate, said OFFICE knew that winning the election would be tough, but he thought they tried

hard. Firestone said he thought his campaign was successful because he informed students about a political machine on campus.

"We were honest with people," he said. "We'll be able to sleep tonight because we spoke the truth."

# Student voters value ACTION representation

By Kasey Kerber

Staff Reporter

Representation and publicity seemed to weigh most heavily on the minds of students who voted in Wednesday's ASUN election, according to a Daily Nebraskan exit survey.

One student voter, a former Association of Students of the University of Nebraska president, said he voted for ACTION based on the party's representation.

"They were the only party that represented all parts of campus — dorms, fraternities, sororities and off-campus housing," law student Andrew Sigerson said. "OFFICE did not make the same attempt."

But Ben Wallace, a freshman English major, said he felt differently.

"I think the ACTION party is way too concerned about the Greeks and doesn't give the students in the halls nearly as much consideration," he said.

Students also were affected by each party's publicity.

"I went with ACTION because I'm in a sorority, and ACTION candidates actually visited us and talked about the issues," said Stacey Long, a sophomore arts and sciences major.

More specific issues also led students to make their choices.

Jason Hutchison, a freshman arts and sciences major, voted for the executive officers of the OFFICE party.

"Some of the issues OFFICE took a stand on I agreed with," Hutchison said. "Things like student parking and making this campus more unified when it comes to the students and their student government."

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## Action

Continued from Page 1  
sucs and see where Shawntell is right now," he said.

But Marintzer said task No. 1 for ACTION would be to work to get back \$7 million in university funds that Gov. Ben Nelson didn't include in his proposed budget earlier this year.

"Because that is going to result in a 9 percent increase in tuition," he said. "That's one of the things I want to get done right away."

Opening lines of communication between student organizations was another issue Marintzer said would be

top priority for him.

"I think the students told the truth when they elected the ACTION party today," Marintzer said. "We got 70 percent of the vote. Our voters were out there."

First vice president-elect Jason Bynum said ACTION's diverse ticket paved the way for the landslide victory.

ACTION's slate included 38 women and nine minorities, Marintzer said.

"We represented so many facets of the university," Bynum said. "There isn't one person on this campus who isn't represented by our slate."

## Rout

Continued from Page 1  
memory. Of the 22,270 eligible student voters, only 1,867 cast ballots.

"This is the lowest percentage of students voting that I've seen since 1978," said Marlene Beyke, ASUN's director of development.

Voter turnout in the 1990s was at its high in 1990, when 16.3 percent of eligible students voted. Turnout in the 1995 election was 12.7 percent.

Student voters offered a variety of reasons for the unusually low turnout in this year's election.

"To tell you the truth, I didn't even know it was today," said Andrew Polt, a freshman arts and sciences student.

"Not having enough information out there about the election was the main thing."

Another voter said the low turnout could have stemmed from a belief that the ACTION party was too strong and that additional votes from students would make little difference.

"People lost interest and thought one party was dominating," said Jason Hutchison, a freshman arts and sciences student. "They didn't vote, which in the end only hurt themselves."

## Rader

Continued from Page 1  
cannot make exceptions for certain reasons, such as medical reasons, without making exceptions for spiritual reasons.

"Because they've been granting exceptions for many years, we believe it displays a discriminatory action," Downing said.

John Wiltse, associate general counsel for the university, refused to comment on the case until the trial had ended.

Rader filed for an exception to the university's freshman policy in March 1995.

He requested that UNK allow him

to live at the Christian Student Fellowship facility, which houses 22 students. That request was denied.

The Board of Regents holds that there is no evidence that Rader's religious beliefs stop him from living with people who don't have the same standards of behavior, according to court documents.

Further, the Board claims there was no proof that living in university housing would keep him from practicing or adhering to his own beliefs, the court documents said.

U.S. Magistrate Judge David Piester, who is hearing the case, is expected to issue a quick verdict in the case because the school year ends May 3, Wiltse said.

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