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WEATHER:

Today - Mostly cloudy and cooler. Northwest wind 15 to 25 mph.

Tonight - Clearing and cooler. Low 25 to 30.



April 3, 1996

Senate endorses benefits for partners

By Julie Sobczyk
Senior Reporter

Domestic partners of faculty members at UNL are one step closer to receiving insurance benefits.

Academic Senate



In a 30-26 vote Tuesday, the Academic Senate approved a motion in support of extending insurance benefits to domestic partners of UNL faculty. The University-Wide Employee Fringe Benefits Committee will formulate the details of the plan.

Domestic partners are individuals in an intimate, long-term, exclusive, committed relationship similar to marriage. Both heterosexuals and homosexuals are included in the definition.

Leo Sartori, professor of physics and astronomy, said he was in full support of the idea, although the concept was controversial.

"We must keep in mind that this is a matter of economic equity," Sartori said.

But Jim Goedert, associate professor of construction systems technology, said the senate would be making a mistake by supporting the domestic partners concept.

"It's time to look for family values," Goedert said. "Let's support that instead. There is no need for heterosexuals living together to have benefits."

Instead, he said, money should be put into making family life better and helping families work out difficulties.

Darryll Pederson, professor of geology, said domestic partners shouldn't be singled out. Others living together, such as siblings or mothers and daughters, don't receive benefits and aren't provided for under the concept.

"I don't think we should look only at the one issue of domestic partners," Pederson said.

Gargi Roysircar Sodowsky, associate professor of educational psychology, said the concept should be thought of in an economic sense, not a moral one.

"I'm confused here," she said during debate. "I didn't know if this was a religious gathering or a group of academic intellectuals."

"I support this on the grounds of economic equity of all communities."

In other business, Chancellor James Moeser told the senate an interim vice chancellor for academic affairs would be chosen within the next few days.

Joan Leitzel, who holds that position, accepted the presidency at the University of New Hampshire in Durham last week. She will leave UNL in June.

The search for her permanent replacement will begin quickly, Moeser said.

The senate also heard annual reports from the graduate council committee and the academic freedom committee. It also voted for the recipient of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award.



Matt Miller/DN

Joan Mendoza-Gorham sits in front of the quilt her students made for her in 1992. Two-thirds of the students that participated in Upward Bound each made a square.

Helping hand

Education specialist receives Tidball award

By Todd Anderson
Staff Reporter

Joan Mendoza-Gorham could not have received a more fitting award.

Through her work with Upward Bound and the Educational Talent Search program, the Sue Tidball Award for Creative Humanity winner says she has followed in the footsteps of the person for which her award is named.

The award is given to students, faculty and staff who contribute extra time to the building of a just

and humane campus.

When Mendoza-Gorham, an education specialist in the office of multicultural affairs, was notified of the award, she said she remembered the time she attended classes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and worked with people who knew Sue Tidball.

"I knew who she was and what she represented," she said. "That meant the most to me. It was a time when changes were happening for students, and I think that's happening again."

Mendoza-Gorham worked as

academic counselor for Upward Bound until August 1995, when the program's funding was cut by the Department of Education.

Because of her experience with students in the Upward Bound program, she then filled the position of educational specialist with the Educational Talent Search program at UNL.

Both programs provide academic assistance to students to help them move on to the next level of school, and then on to college, she

See TIDBALL on 6

Two finalists will vie for arts dean

By Julie Sobczyk
Senior Reporter

After more than a semester, the search for a new dean of the UNL College of Fine and Performing Arts is almost complete.

Cecil Steward, the search committee's chairman, said two finalists from more than 40 applicants had been chosen and would visit campus this month.

"The chancellor would like to have this person by the end of July," Steward said.

The finalists are:
1 Richard Durst, dean of the fine arts

Chancellor wants selection in office by the end of July

school at the University of Minnesota in Duluth. He will visit UNL April 8-10.

1 Sue Ann Martin, dean of arts at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. She will visit April 21-23.

The new dean will replace Larry Lusk, who is retiring this summer.

Steward said the committee was especially looking for someone with experience in a high administrative po-

sition related to fine and performing arts.

"We spent a lot of time talking about the need to find an individual who respects faculty and staff," he said.

Steward said the new dean also should be able to establish a strong relationship between the college and the community.

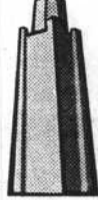
Good fiscal management and fundraising skills are also necessary, he

Property tax relief bills pass

By Ted Taylor
Senior Reporter

Most of the Nebraska Legislature's package of property tax measures survived another round of debate Tuesday, with one bill and a constitutional amendment going on to the final stage of legislation.

Legislature '96



LB1085 and LR29CA cleared the second hurdle on their way to Gov. Ben Nelson's desk. Debate on another bill, LB1114,

was stopped Tuesday evening. Nelson has said he supports the entire package.

Debate during the afternoon centered on an amendment to LR29CA, which would allow the Legislature to provide for the merger or consolidation of local governments and would provide for different tax rates on different classes of property.

Sen. Ed Schrock of Elm Creek tried to add an amendment to LR29CA that said property used for farm or ranch purposes could not be taxed at more than 80 percent of its market value.

The Schrock amendment said taxes on real or commercial property also could not exceed 100 percent of its market value.

Senators initially adopted the amendment, but Speaker Ron Withem of Papillion asked the body to reconsider because he believed the adoption of the Schrock amendment would, in effect, kill the resolution.

Withem also said a "yes" vote for the Schrock amendment "put the entire property tax package in jeopardy."

Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha was outraged that a motion to reconsider was granted.

"It ought to be as we have done it," he said.

Chambers said if some of the rural senators changed their votes, they would be playing into the hands of the majority urban senators.

"We're playing hardball now," he warned senators.

Sen. Don Wesely of Lincoln, who opposed the amendment, said now wasn't the time for senators to be "jockeying for a little advantage."

But senators supporting the amendment said it gave farmers no advantage and would change nothing in the resolution.

"I ask you to consider what you are doing," Stanton Sen. Stan Schellpeper

See PROPERTY on 3