

ASUN seeks student input for UNL's Code of Ethics

By KASEY KERBER
Staff Reporter

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska will soon draft UNL's first Code of Ethics, but ASUN President Eric Marintzer wants more student input first.

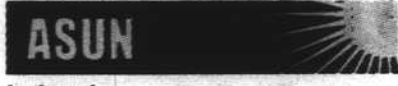
The Code of Ethics was originally a goal of Chancellor James Moeser, who later turned the project over to ASUN.

Intended to be a document conveying goals instead of standards, the Code of Ethics will be drafted by Marintzer for approval by ASUN.

Marintzer said he spent last semester gathering ideas and suggestions for the document.

Marintzer took most information, however, from meetings with administrators and professors.

He now wants students' voices to



be heard. "It's pretty clear that students are not like administrators, and administrators are not like students," Marintzer said. "I need to hear what the students have to say."

Although no areas in the Code of Ethics have been finished, Marintzer said there were certain ideals that would probably be included, such as self-responsibility.

"A lot of times when you go away to college, you're not under your parents' watch any longer," Marintzer said. "This can sometimes cause problems with responsibility."

Marintzer said he didn't know if some ideals, such as religion, would be included in the code.

"We don't want to tell people what to believe," he said.



Former gambler helps others conquer addiction

By JIM GOODWIN
Staff Reporter

“

I was sick and tired of being sick and tired.”

MATT PELCER
former gambling addict

Matt Pelcer, an addict, was on the verge of suicide before deciding he had to deal with the mental friction destroying his life.

With his sense of reality gone, and his family life falling apart, the 51-year-old husband and father of five knew he needed to re-route his life's direction.

"I was sick and tired of being sick and tired," the Omaha resident said. Pelcer voluntarily checked into a rehabilitation clinic, spending the next 37 days locked up and learning to deprogram himself of his pernicious behavior.

His drug of choice wasn't served from a bottle or by pushers in the alley.

"I was once a compulsive gambler," Pelcer, now 63, said.

Pelcer overcame his addiction and is now helping others do the same. He and his wife, Sylvia Pelcer, run a seven-day-a-week compulsive gambling treatment center in Bellevue.

The hot line number, sponsored by the Nebraska Council on Compulsive Gambling, can be reached by dialing 1-800-560-2126.

Matt Pelcer, the executive director, and Sylvia Pelcer, hot line project director of the NCCG, said they handle about 300 calls for help each month, usually from people in situations similar to one the Pelcers found themselves in 12 years ago.

"We answer these phones 24-hours a day, and the story goes on and on. Whatever you want to imagine happens," Matt Pelcer said.

Sylvia Pelcer said a national shortage in funding for organizations like hers explained why they didn't have exact numbers. The lack of money comes from a lack of recognition, she said.

"They didn't recognize compulsive gambling as an addiction when my husband had problems with it," Sylvia Pelcer said. "It hasn't been until lately that the medical profession has."

Ron Felton, addictions counselor and director of First Step Recovery Clinic in Lincoln, said the lack of recognition stems from the idea that gamblers can't overdose on their respective drug.

However, the repercussions of their actions are similar to those faced by the friends and family of alcoholics and drug

Felton said the unusually high suicide rate of the children of compulsive alcoholics — four times that of the general population — best illustrated the chaotic wake left behind by a gambling addiction.

"Life is not very happy in a gambling household," he said.

While most compulsive gamblers are high-energy people with above-average intelligence, an excellent work ethic and the ability to motivate others, they lack the ability to control their actions, Felton said.

That inability and its resultants at the least equate a gambling addiction to substance abuse, he said.

"If you give an alcoholic \$100,000 to feed his addiction, he won't be able to spend it all before killing himself," Felton said. "If you give a compulsive gambler \$100,000, he'll have it spent in 20 minutes. There is no saturation point with a

gambling addiction."

Making change

Nebraska groups — such as the Nebraska Council on Compulsive Gambling and First Step Recovery Clinic — dealing with the effects of the disease, compete for the 1 percent of total lottery revenue allocated for them to provide counseling services for compulsive gamblers. It is a provision of the 1993 state law that enacted the Nebraska Lottery.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1996, the total doled out to such groups was \$204,864. The lottery's remaining revenue, \$81,802,442, was divided among lottery winners and education, environmental and landfill closure funds, according to the Nebraska Lottery's 1996 annual report.

Felton and the Pelcers agree more money is needed to combat the problem to which they've devoted their lives.

A legislative bill introduced by State Sen. Kate Witek of Omaha would increase the amount given to such groups from 1 percent to 5 percent of the lottery revenue.

The legislation would be beneficial to those in his and his family's past situation, Matt Pelcer said.

"I'm not for or against gambling. Society just needs to recognize that if it allows gambling, it must help those who suffer from the problem," Matt Pelcer said.

"We don't know how many kids won't be going to college because Dad gambled away their college funds at the boats."

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According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, 5 to 10 percent of all Americans are compulsive gamblers and as much as 15 percent of casino patrons may have a problem.

End-of-semester evaluations help instructors improve curriculum

EVALUATE from page 3

for more than a popularity trophy to show to their superiors.

Don Lee, professor of agronomy, said he stops whatever he is doing when he receives his evaluation packet.

"When the students take time to write something, I take a lot of stock in it," Lee said. "Their comments are more meaningful to me than to department chairs or deans."

Lee uses the evaluations to gauge which teaching techniques are successful, he said. No one else — neither administrators nor fellow faculty — can judge his performance better than his students, he said.

"My students are my clients, and I pay attention to what they say. I've got to get these comments or I don't

know how I'm doing."

In Lee's genetics course, student comments have led to more hands-on learning, he said. In laboratories, students genetically alter bacteria and create models of a DNA double helix.

Lee also gets comments from students who appreciate the way he simplifies genetics concepts, he said.

"I could be the smartest geneticist. What matters to them is how well I can explain it."

John Flowers, professor of psychology, said he found the open-ended comments more useful than the numerical ratings.

He pays special attention to recurring comments, such as notes that class moves too fast or too slow, he said.

Sometimes, he gets both. "It's frustrating when we get op-

posing comments," he said. "There's not just one way to teach that serves every student."

In that case, Flowers tries to design classes so learning is flexible for different students' needs, he said.

Other evaluations asked for more projects and papers, which Flowers added to his courses, he said. Students then had more chances to improve their grades and to prove what they had learned.

Students in a class Flowers taught at 8 a.m. asked him to motivate them to get out of bed, he said. The following semester, he added unannounced quizzes and reward points for attendance.

When evaluation time came again, most students said they learned more because of Flowers' morning motivation, he said.