

## Finishing well

The Nebraska men's and women's gymnastics teams both finished on high notes and look to build for a good year next season. PAGE 10

## Retro house

The Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater will play host to a collection of eight educational films from the '50s and '60s tonight. PAGE 12

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## Admission standards rise

Requirements to attract successful students, Griesen says

By ERIN GIBSON  
Senior Reporter

The 1997 freshman class may be the most elite class ever to enter the University of Nebraska-Lincoln because of new, higher admissions standards.

Lisa Schmidt, UNL director of admissions, said the "the strongest freshman class (UNL has) ever admitted" will be brighter and better prepared for college work than its predecessors.

Between 200 and 300 prospective freshmen will be denied admission, Schmidt said. A total of 64 freshmen applicants were denied admission last fall, she said.

James Griesen, UNL vice chancellor for student affairs, said the new standards mean students who come to the university will be prepared to succeed.

"I don't have any question that this will make us a better university,"

Griesen said. "The student is always at an advantage going into an environment with the greatest chance for success."

Those students not admitted will be encouraged to first attend a Nebraska community college and then reapply to UNL when their chance for success here is greater, Griesen said.

Chancellor James Moeser said UNL's old "open admissions" policy has resulted in 25 percent of freshmen now dropping out before their sophomore year. Not all of those students flunk, he said, but many struggle to meet minimum course requirements.

"We've admitted many students who are not prepared to succeed at a university like this," Moeser said.

In the past, he said, the university's goal was to enroll a large number of students, not just those with a chance for success.

"Our goal is changing," Moeser said.

Griesen said it was unfair for the university to admit students who have little chance of success. The new standards will change that current, unjust practice, he said.

The new admissions standards, adopted by the NU Board of Regents in 1993, went into effect for the first time this spring for prospective UNL students applying for fall 1997 admission.

To be automatically admitted, students now must take stricter courses in high school, and either be ranked in the top half of their high school class, score 20 or higher on the ACT or score 950 or higher on the SAT.

Applicants who do not meet the requirements are placed under individual review. Many of those students are later admitted with deficiencies, and will have to take UNL courses to make up for high school courses they did not

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## Out with the old...

Prospective University of Nebraska-Lincoln undergraduates now must meet tougher, new general admission requirements in order to be automatically admitted. Starting this fall, students must complete additional high school units of mathematics, social sciences, natural sciences and foreign language. Students will also have to score at least 950 on the SAT, score 20 or higher on the ACT or be in the top half of their graduating class. Applicants not meeting all requirements will be individually reviewed for admission.

### UNL Admission Requirements

1996-97 Category	Units	1997-98 Category	Units
English	4	English	4
Mathematics	2	Mathematics	4
Social Sciences	2	Social Sciences	3
Natural Sciences	2	Natural Sciences	3
		Foreign Language	2



SOURCE: UNL OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

AARON STECKELBERG/DN

## Do you know the way?



MATT MILLER/DN

NU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACH Angela Beck is off to San Jose to coach in the American Basketball League. Please see story on page 10.

## School-aid bill could alter fund distribution

By ERIN SCHULTE  
Senior Reporter

### Legislature

Debate began Tuesday on some of the 40 amendments to a bill promising to be the session's most tediously debated.

LB806 would change how state school aid is distributed — considering factors such as population sparsity, number of non-English speaking students and poverty rate — and cut the Nebraska public school systems from 656 to 289.

"This bill will impact more communities in this state than any other piece of legislation this session," Sen. Elaine Stuhr of Bradshaw said.

The bill was drafted in an attempt to counter last year's passage of LB1114, which would limit the amount of property taxes levied by local governments. Schools will be receiving less of the property tax revenue.

Opponents say the bill will force many small schools across the state to

close. Under the bill, elementary school-only districts would merge with a single high school system in order to continue to receive state aid.

The elementary school board would be a subdistrict and would continue to make hiring and firing decisions, but its budget would be determined by the high school board. Residents of subdistricts could vote and run for high school board positions.

Those in favor of the bill say it will force schools to spend more efficiently. The bill establishes a \$4,110 average per-student spending value, which does not include costs for transportation or special education. Schools spending less than the average should be helped by the bill; those spending more may be hurt.

Some critics say that urban schools in Lincoln in Omaha will receive too

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### FOLLOW THE MONEY

## Donors use legal loopholes to back candidates

By MATTHEW WAITE  
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Almost one-third of all money flowing from individuals into the coffers of Nebraska political candidates spills through loopholes abused by donors, records from the last campaigns show.

But images of smoke-filled, back-room political dealings don't hold — the donors are mostly husbands, wives and children donating in blocks.

During the last month, the Daily Nebraskan took a look at the people giving to Nebraska election campaigns. Some large donors kept their money in one party. Others spread their money between ideologies.

But one thing was clear throughout — the same group of people make the rain fall in Nebraska politics.

In each election, the same donors' names appeared, and the top donors rarely changed. In each race, and through each legal campaign finance

loophole, they donated.

The loopholes were bundling and soft money. Bundling is where blocks of associated people donate at the same time to make a bigger impact. They can be families or they can be businessmen and women from the same company, giving as individuals.

Soft money is money from companies and wealthy individuals that goes directly to the national parties. The national parties then turn around and funnel that money back into state party

coffers.

A cross section of the people who used those loopholes to donate the most includes:

■ Terrance Watanabe, the chairman and CEO of the Oriental Trading Co., a mail order house in Omaha. Mother Jones magazine listed him as the 22nd largest donor in the nation, mostly because of his more than \$250,000 in soft money donations.

■ Con Agra Corp., the state's largest agriculture-based company. The

corporation's political action committee was one of the most generous, and they were the largest soft money donor in the state.

■ Vinod Gupta, chairman and CEO of American Business Co., a business database company in Omaha. Gupta — along with his family members — were near the top of the house, senate and soft money donor lists for Nebraska givers. Mother Jones listed

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