

Pride, prejudice making waves across campus

By CHAD LORENZ
Senior Editor

Among the things students saw outside UNL classrooms this academic year were inspiration and accomplishments, tragedy and conflict, and the politics of administering students and faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Right before finals week last semester, students heard about the tragedy of a UNL cheerleader who critically injured her neck during practice. Tracy Jensen, a junior from Lyons, was temporarily paralyzed from the neck down because she fell while practicing a routine tumbling maneuver on Dec. 4.

Jensen has spent the past five months in rehabilitation at Craig Hospital in Englewood, Colo. University students, even those who never met her, supported her through fund-raising benefits to help pay her medical bills. Cheerleaders from across the nation have been at her side to raise her spirits and offer support.

She has recently taken her first steps since the accident and has shown signs of near-complete recovery.

Other big news at the university wasn't as inspirational, but shook the student body even more.

Environmental issues

In January, racial tensions rose because of an off-campus fraternity ritual that involved the burning of a cross.

On Jan. 23, Lancaster County Sheriff's deputies discovered 30 members of Sigma Chi fraternity performing a ceremony that re-enacted the forming of the fraternity. Authorities later found the charred remnants of a 6-foot wooden cross.

The reactions from minority students and administrators brought on a string of forums, talks and negotiations among students, administrators and community leaders.

Administrators have said the cross-burning wasn't necessarily the cause of racial tensions at UNL, rather an episode that uncovered the lack of diversity awareness taught to students. Efforts to soothe UNL's climate for women advanced when a consultant declared the athletic department was not a hostile environment for women-athletes.

Beverly Ledbetter, an attorney for Brown University, was hired by UNL to study the athletic department and interview women athletes. Chancellor Moeser ordered the investigation because a women's task force claimed in 1996 that women-athletes faced harassment from men-athletes and athletic department staff.

She delivered her report last month stating that women felt fellow athletes, coaches and staff supported them like family. Occasional cases of harassment had been true, but were not as common as the public perceived them.

Plugging in

The administration drew criticism from students in December when Information Services decided to pull the plug on the university's computer modem pool.

The modem pool allowed students to dial in from off-campus locations and access Huskernet at no cost.

Administrators told students that the demand for Internet access and rising cost of modem-pool upkeep forced them to shut the system down.

Students now have to pay a local Internet provider to call the UNL computer network.

Students were apparently more receptive to efforts to advance technology services.

In March, Information Services authorized a new technology fee that would add \$2 per credit hour to students' tuition bills for the next academic year. The fee will increase another \$2 in the 1998 fall semester and one more dollar by fall 1999.

Curt Ruwe, president of the Association of Students for the University of Nebraska, said students supported the fee, which would bring much-needed upgrades to UNL's computer labs and classrooms.

Students also will potentially benefit from the new beverage alliance next year. The university is still considering a contract with Coca-Cola or Pepsi Co. for the rights to exclusively sell one of the companies' products on campus.

The contract could mean millions of dollars each year for students in the form of more technology upgrades, funds for Campus Recreation, scholarships and resources for career and internship opportunities.

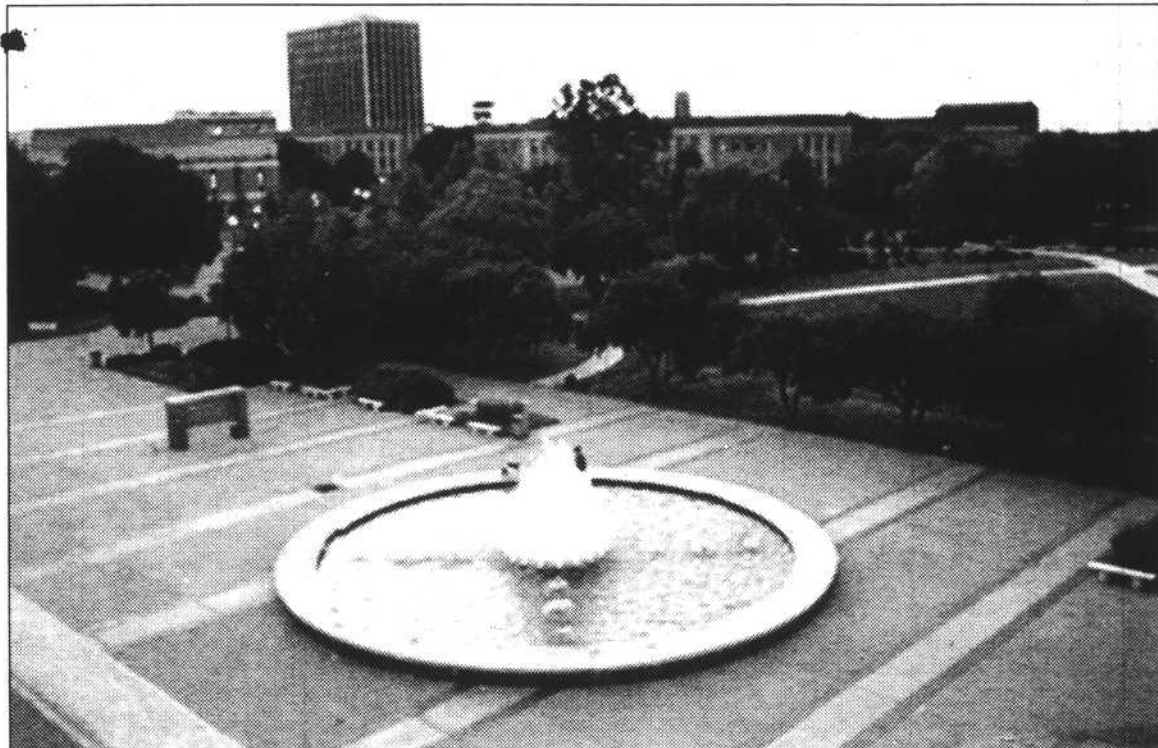
UNL is expected to give the NU Board of Regents a recommendation to vote on this summer. Vending Services employees would immediately start converting UNL to a single-beverage university.

Making connections

UNL administration and faculty got into a couple tangles this year over decisions about a proposed post-tenure review policy and a new university-wide e-mail system.

The original post-tenure review proposal stated that tenured professors could be subject to review every six years.

Please see **CAMPUS** on 13



MARNI SPECK/DN

STUDENTS saw the last of Broyhill Fountain as renovation started on the Nebraska Union this year.

Controversy cramps unicameral

Like passion eventually faded by the tedious day-to-dayness of marriage, so has gone another year of the Nebraska Legislature.

I started covering the Legislature two years ago, and I was happy to sit in on emotional public hearings (Nebraska is one of the only states that holds a public hearing for every bill), while a more experienced reporter endured monotonous floor debate. I recorded all the drama of testimony concerning same-sex marriage and abortions in the Judiciary Committee. I got juicy quotes about sex and religion. The other reporter was forced to comprehend book-length bills on tax reform.

At the beginning of this year's 90-day session, there was a plethora of the soap opera-like hearings, once again on the same controversial issues: abortion, same-sex marriage, the death penalty.

People who felt strongly about the issues packed the hearing rooms to make sure they got a few minutes to add their proverbial 2 cents to the discussion. I began to realize, however, that most of the bills people felt so strongly about would never make it out of committee.

The bills that did make it out of the hearing room were not the



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ones drafted according to a religious belief or a moral code, not the ones that cause gut-wrenching controversy.

The bills that have dominated floor debate instead were those involving intricate property tax laws, school consolidation and state aid formulas. Yea! Let me tell you, there weren't as many passionate protestors or staunch supporters clamoring for attention at the Capitol when these bills came up.

But these bills — the tax bills, the consolidation bills (sometimes, for me, the boring bills) — are the legislation that will affect more Nebraskans than all those wanting to marry a gay partner or get an abortion or who are awaiting execution put together. Like Tom Cruise said when he presented the FBI with overbilling charges in "The Firm," "It ain't sexy, but it's got teeth."

LB806, for example, proposes that the state reduce its number of school districts from 656 to 289. This means possible closing, consolidation or merger for hundreds of Nebraska's rural schools. Balconies in the Legislative chambers have been full as of late with people curious to see how the school consolidation issue will unfold and wanting to talk to their senators.

Legislators proposed more than 40 amendments to LB806, and much of debate time has been eaten up by trying to unravel the tangled lines of words in the lengthy bill and its committee amendments. The death of Sen. Jerome Warner will no doubt add to the discord: he was known as a rift-fixer, a problem-solver, the genius of Nebraska tax law. As lawmakers inch ahead with their tax laws, memories of theatrical, heartfelt testimony during committee hearings have faded into the black and white of the endless stream of amendments and motions. And whoever said you couldn't legislate morality was right — at least for this session of the Nebraska Legislature.

Schulte is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior editor.

Times...
They are a-changin!



As the semester quickly draws to a close, remember the University Health Center professionals are here to serve your healthcare needs throughout the summer.

University Health Center Summer Hours

May 12- August 15

Monday - Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturdays & Holidays: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

(closed Sundays)

Good luck on finals & have a great summer!

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