

APU fund-raises MASA could lift boycott with flapjacks

By LINDSAY YOUNG
Staff Reporter

Two UNL student groups are hoping a pancake feast will do more than feed hungry students Friday night.

The Afrikan People's Union and Gamma Phi Beta sorority are sponsoring a pancake feed to raise part of the \$200,000 needed to bring the Big 12 Conference on Black Student Government to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The pancake feed will be from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday at the Culture Center.

The conference, which will be Feb. 19-22, is a first for the Big 12, though the defunct Big Eight held 20 such government conferences.

To bring the conference to UNL, the APU placed a bid to a committee of representatives from Big 12 schools. The bid included APU's plans for the conference and the facilities of the campus that would give support.

Kim Stokes, APU sponsorship chairwoman for the event, said the group wanted to have the conference to benefit supporters as well those who are planning it.

Involvement

"The conference is a good leadership opportunity for people of color on this campus," Stokes said.

About 1,200 students are expected to attend the four-day conference, which will focus on leadership.

Speakers will be brought in from across the country. One speaker will be poet, writer and activist Nikki Giovanni. Other speakers have not been finalized.

Several smaller workshops regarding self-esteem, spiritual uplift and academic organization also will be offered.

APU started planning the conference last spring. Committees were formed to handle aspects such as fundraising and scheduling speakers, Stokes said.

APU is considering a car wash or a formal dance as other ways to raise money for the event, she said, though university funds are also being used.

The pancake feed will cost \$2 in advance and \$3 at the door. For more information, call Lynda Todd at 472-8989.

Rec center opens rock-climbing wall

By LORI ROBISON
Staff Reporter

Campus Recreation administrators have unveiled Nebraska's newest mountain peak. But nature had nothing to do with this geological formation.

Jutting slightly out from the corner of Court 5 inside the Lee and Helene Sapp Recreation Center, dotted with red, green, blue and yellow hand and foot holds, this rock climber's paradise comes complete with fossil impressions on its rocky surface for a touch of realism.

Stan Campbell, director of Campus Recreation, said the rock wall, completed in June, can accommodate eight climbers at a time and measures 40 feet wide and 36 feet high.

The indoor wall is the largest in Nebraska, he said, and one of the largest in the Midwest.

El Dorado Wall Company in Colorado built the wall, which cost \$80,000 and took three years to build, Campbell said. Money for its construction came from the rec center's budget for repair and improvements to the center, which amounts to about \$9 from each student's fees.

Kenda Scheele, assistant director for structured activities, said the summit is actually a steel support frame overlapped with fire retardant material and a textured surface called Dude Tex.

The rock wall, supported by existing rafters in its center and attached to brick walls, blends in with its surroundings, she said, and should not interfere with activities taking place on Court 5.

Campbell said the idea for the wall came mostly from requests from UNL's climbing club. However, requests from other students and a review of the popularity of similar rock climbing peaks at other Big 12 universities also contributed to the Campus Recreation Advisory Council's final decision to begin construction.

Jim Alvarez, a student program assistant at University of Kansas Recreation Services, said demand for

KU's 6-year-old climbing wall has increased dramatically.

Demand was not high at first, he said, but each year the number of people wanting to climb the wall increases.

Campbell said Friday's turnout - 25 to 30 climbers - was a promising indication of the wall's popularity with students.

Bradley Martin, a UNL outdoor adventure graduate student with nine years of climbing experience, says the demand for climbing walls at universities has increased along with an interest in outdoor activities.

For those new to rock climbing, Martin said, a visit to UNL's wall could be a way to learn balance and endurance and improve strength. "This climbing wall is geared for beginners," he said. There will be a lot of supervision provided for climbers, Martin said, and the equipment used in the center is state of the art.

Climbers must complete a \$20 initial training session to learn proper use of equipment as well as climbing skills and techniques, Campbell said.

Any students who want to learn to climb the wall first must complete a 2-hour training session. It costs \$20, but students who complete the session can climb as much as they want, Martin said. Experienced climbers don't have to go through training, but can pay \$20 to get certified, which will give them unlimited access.

Those who aren't sure they want to learn can test climb the wall for \$5 in what is called a walk-up. Climbing instructors will keep the person tied to ropes hanging from the top - called a belay - as the person scales the wall. The walk-up doesn't involve learning the proper knots or advanced techniques, Martin said.

Non-members - students and faculty who haven't paid the semester rec center fee - can climb for \$10 a day, or can pay \$150 for unlimited access.

The rock wall is open by reservation from 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. weekdays. Walk-up climbers can scale the peak from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, and 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday.

MASA could lift boycott

By LINDSAY YOUNG
Staff Reporter

Three years of small steps for the Mexican American Student Association could mean one large lift at the end of December of its boycott of the Multi-Cultural Affairs office.

The boycott severed ties between MCA, which is an arm of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln administration, and MASA, a student-run organization. MASA was no longer to co-sponsor events with MCA, use the office's services or even walk through its doors.

MCA's services include tutoring, counseling, financial aid programs, career services, social events, educational planning and employment opportunities. Those services primarily focus on minority groups.

During the temporary lift of the boycott, MASA members now can access those services and the group can co-sponsor events. MASA representatives say they hope the boycott will be gone for good, but that will depend on future negotiations.

Gabrielle Dalton, MASA president and a senior agriculture education major, said that if discussion with administrators continues, the boycott could end by Jan. 1.

"It does sound promising," she said.

The boycott reached a turning point for MASA members in June when Chuck van Rossum was appointed as assistant director of the Minority Assistance Program.

Creating that position was one of the requests MASA made three years ago when the boycott began.

After Rossum was hired, MASA met with Chancellor James Moeser and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen to reopen communication with MCA.

Administrators in the Multi-Cultural Affairs office are eager to resolve the conflict so they can resume business as usual.

"Putting the boycott to bed needs to happen for us to turn the corner," Rossum said.

Jimmi Smith, MCA director, agreed and said his office wants to

continue to provide services and support to all students, including MASA members. MCA is used by minority student groups such as the Afrikan People's Union and the Vietnamese Student Association.

Smith said communication was most important and that MCA had tried to keep those lines open during the boycott.

"We have been asking them to stay at the table to work with the issues," Smith said.

Venita Kelley, chairwoman for the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color, said she supported the group in its boycott and was proud of the members for sticking with it so long.

"The boycott needed to be addressed," she said. "We cannot afford to lose Latino students."

Anatomy of a split

MASA started the boycott in February 1994 by pointing out 15 problems it wanted solved. After meeting with the administration, the list was shortened to five.

One was a request for a new position in the Minority Assistance Program. MASA thought the office needed an assistant director to better supervise employees and make its services more equitable. Years later, Rossum was appointed as a direct result of this request.

MASA also requested that its members be allowed to sit on search committees and interview committees that help hire MCA employees.

Chandra Diaz, former MASA president, said all groups were not represented enough in the office.

"There needs to be diversity in diversity," said Diaz, a senior middle-level education major.

Smith, MCA director, said another cause of the boycott was sensitivity problems in the office, but those problems were dealt with first. The office corrected employees who were found to be out of line and continued to monitor them. Those problems might not have caused the boycott, though, if communication was stronger and if they had been reported earlier, he said.

Dalton acknowledged that sensitivity in the office was being addressed.

However, before a permanent lift can be established, Dalton said, MASA has other requests:

■ The creation of a student adviser group to the MCA.

■ The creation of a liaison to keep MASA and other groups informed of what is going on in the MCA office.

■ Continual sensitivity training for all who work in the office.

Moving forward

Kelley, of the chancellor's commission, said she was hopeful that the boycott would end in January. MASA members were able to start resolving the boycott, she said, because they were so persistent with the administrators.

"I am most proud and impressed by the students' character and what it is they did by addressing their concerns on this university," Kelley said.

Tim Alvarez, MASA co-adviser, said he too was optimistic about the end of the boycott. Alvarez said the students did all of the work and that he just mediated.

"What the students asked for was nothing out of the ordinary," he said. "I admire them for standing up for what was right."

Diaz said MASA was not going to back down from its requests.

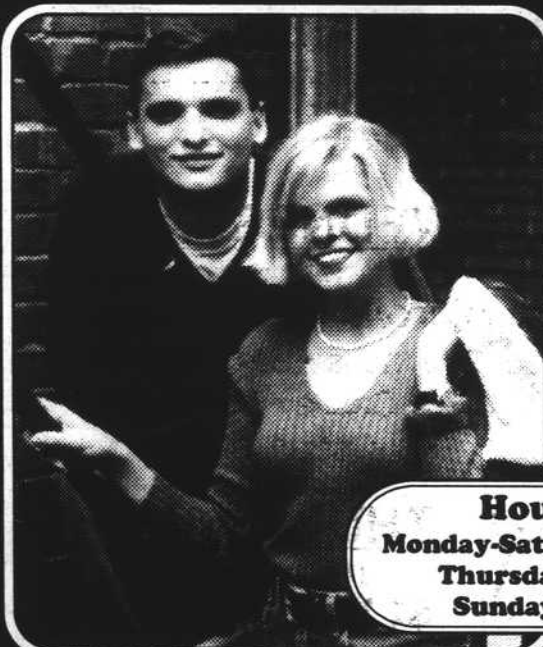
A potential end to the boycott has MCA administrators learning lessons from the conflict.

Smith and Rossum said the boycott caused the office to evaluate itself closer than it had before, which helped it move ahead with its programs. Smith said it was important for students to evaluate the university's services.

Communication with university officials on matters is crucial to avoiding later conflict, he said, and all students should do as MASA did and come forward to say what they think needs to change.

Rossum said, "Sometimes glasses get dirty and just need to be cleaned up."

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