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Forensics team battles budget overspending

BY DEBI HOFF
Staff Reporter

If members of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln forensics team are willing to pay for their own traveling expenses, they can go to the national forensics competition in Arizona in April.

If not, they won't go.

Because of an accidental overspending of last year's budget, the team started the year short on funds and is paying the consequences this year.

"It is easy to overspend in forensics, but also easy to undercut in budget," Tom Workman, director of UNL's speech and debate team, said. "I would say that currently we are about \$10,000 short of keeping us in a regular competition stance, but it is difficult to fund something that brings no money in."

William Seiler, chairman of the communication studies department, said the current budget for the forensics team is close to \$22,000.

"It is probably close to the lowest end of the major schools," Seiler said. "There are probably other Big 12 schools that get much more, and some that probably get the same."

"I can't envision when there has been an increase in the budget. At times, the dean provides additional money for postseason travel."

So far this year the team has had to cut competitions in order to keep within its current budget.

Involvement

"It is easy to overspend in forensics ..."

TOM WORKMAN
speech and debate director

"We are putting on the brakes now for what tournaments we go to," Workman said. "We have to choose wisely, though, in order to build a name for ourselves and to get exposure to the judges."

Workman thinks the fund shortage is discouraging people from joining the team.

"This university could easily service a team of 40 people, but that would cost more than \$50,000," Workman said.

The team recently received a contribution of \$1,000 from an alumnus, and also received a matching grant. Workman hopes to use this money to start an endowment.

"We often communicate with the dean for extra funds," Seiler said, "and when they are available he gives us what he has."

The shortage in funds to offer for scholarships also may be a reason the college has lost top forensics recruits to other universities, Seiler said.

"I have talked to students who have turned us down because we are limited in scholarship offerings," Seiler said. "If they have a choice between attending UNL or somewhere that will give them a scholarship, although they can attend here for less money, the honor of getting a scholarship often outweighs that benefit."

Workman said it is especially hard for the students to raise the money to pay for travel.

"Over half of the members work full time to pay their way through college," Workman said. "We travel on the weekends and they put a lot of time into practicing and preparing their speeches."

"They get caught in the fund dilemma because they can't make the money."

Workman said the team is ranked one of the top 10 in the nation because of its talent and determination. If it were not for the limited resources, the team could accomplish a lot more, he said.

"We certainly have the talent and coaching needed to win a national title," Workman said. "Funding limits what you can accomplish, though."

"Those are just the realities of a budget," Seiler said. "We have to do with what we have."

Roger Stahl, secretary for the forensics team, said the funding problem is a strike against the department.

"We don't want it to become the primary concern, but it is becoming a large concern."

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Minority recruiting could rise

PLAN from page 1

hiring practices set by the Nebraska Legislature, Moeser denied it resulted from political pressure.

"We were allocating money for diversity long before the gasoline hit the fire in the Unicameral," Moeser said. "The Unicameral was simply ignorant of the discussion on this campus."

During its last session, the Legislature demanded all NU campuses increase the percentage of women and minorities in faculty positions to match or exceed that of its peer institutions within five years. Otherwise, the university would lose 1 percent of its state funding, about \$3.5 million, in the following fiscal year.

The proposal exceeds these minimum requirements, Moeser said.

"This plan is ambitious, but it's

also doable," Moeser said. "We are not setting ourselves up to fail."

Keith Parker, director of African American and African Studies, said UNL would meet the goals through aggressive recruiting of minorities.

The \$130,000 proposed to fund stronger minority graduate recruitment efforts would result in more minority students via the "snowball effect," he said.

"You do good things, then your products go out, and they market what you do," Parker said.

Parker will join Ricardo Garcia, associate dean of graduate studies, in recruiting new minority graduate students. Barbara Carrasco Fechner, assistant director of admissions for minority and community relations, will lead the recruitment of minority undergraduates.

Last month, Moeser appointed Evelyn Jacobson, vice chancellor

for academic affairs, and Bruce Currin, director of human resources, to oversee improvement in gender equity among faculty and staff. Linda Crump, director of affirmative action and diversity programs, joined Jacobson and Currin in drafting a comprehensive campus diversity plan.

The proposal includes requiring the university to sponsor forums and workshops that would support cultural diversity on campus and to support efforts in the Lincoln community to build a stronger diversity support system.

A requirement that the university provide and encourage curricula that emphasize diverse cultures and people also is included.

"This is what we know is right," Moeser said of the proposal. "This is what we believe."

Meningitis scare hits Triangle

From Staff Reports

All members of UNL's Triangle Fraternity who live in the house, their friends and their girlfriends received a preventative dose of antibiotics Tuesday after one member was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis last Monday.

The students were treated at the University Health Center after freshman Matt Bryl of Omaha was diagnosed with the life-threatening infection, Triangle President Chris Thurman said Sunday.

Bryl, who remained in intensive

care for days following his diagnosis, was released from Bergan Mercy Medical Center in Omaha this weekend and was recovering at home Sunday.

Thurman said he was unsure when Bryl would return to school or the fraternity house.

"I'm hoping his teachers are understanding," Thurman said.

Thurman said Bryl became sick last weekend, and fraternity members told him to go to the hospital. Bryl, who refused medical treatment at first, was obviously very sick, Thurman said.

Meningitis swells the meninges membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord, and usually results from infection by a variety of microorganisms.

It can cause a rapidly progressive illness leading to death and can be spread through direct contact with an infected person, such as eating with the same utensils.

Because meningitis is contagious, Thurman said the fraternity urged everyone who had contact with the house around the time of Bryl's diagnosis get the about \$6 preventative prescription from the health center.

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