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**Design program awarded
Department ranked in continental Top 10**

BY ERIN GIBSON
Senior Reporter

When the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's interior design program was recently ranked among the top 10 such programs in North America, program director Betsy Gabb said she felt "pleasantly surprised."

About 350 such programs exist at universities in the United States and Canada, she said. She knew fierce competition existed for the first-ever rankings of interior design programs.

Plus, UNL's program started in the College of Architecture only five years ago, making it a baby compared with other, well-known programs, she said.

It seemed the odds were against UNL's receiving a top ranking.

But faculty knew the program had made great strides in its short lifetime, Gabb said.

And, after receiving the unexpected award, getting used to being named one of the 10 best didn't take program participants long, she said.

"Now I understand why the football team gets so excited," Gabb said.

The top 10 title was handed out for the first time this fall by a group of the nation's leading interior design firms, which ranked design programs by how well their curricula met the needs and expectations of professionals in the field.

The professional group, called the International Interior Design Association's Large Firm

“
Now I understand why the football team gets so excited.”

BETSY GABB
interior design program director

Roundtable, began studying interior design programs after corporate leaders in the field voiced displeasure with the falling quality of interior design programs and their graduates.

Upon completing its study, the group found the opposite true of the 150 students and five faculty members who comprise UNL's interior design program.

Gabb said good faculty and students and the support of the administration have contributed to the program's success here at the university during the past five years.

Gabb cited another strength of the program as the College of Architecture's bringing worldwide interior design experts to UNL and having them teach and talk with students.

The program also benefits from a competitive entrance requirement, Gabb said. Before students' junior year in the four-year program, they must present a portfolio of their work to the faculty and prove they have

maintained a grade point average of 2.6 or higher.

The best 30 students then are chosen to advance in the program, Gabb said. The program retains most of its upperclass students, and about 28 students graduate from the program each year, she said.

The top 10 ranking will "be very important for those students who graduate, because this is where employers are going to come looking," Gabb said.

The list of top-ranking programs is part of a larger study of design programs to be released by the roundtable next year.

Universities other than UNL included in the top 10 included Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz., the Pratt Institute in New York, Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y., the University of Cincinnati in Ohio, Washington State University at Fullman, Wash., and the University of Manitoba in Canada.

RHA plans for university test bank

BY SARAH BAKER
Assignment Reporter



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Residence Hall Association has introduced new plans concerning a universitywide test bank.

Harper Hall Sen. Brandon Arnold said two weeks ago he, along with RHA President Ben Wallace, took the idea to James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, to see if it was feasible.

"Dr. Griesen took our idea to the next level, and wants to help us put it on the Internet," Arnold said. "We will be able to put the test bank on the UNL Web site, and Vice

Chancellor Griesen is going to help us get an academic research grant to pay for it."

Arnold said this expansion of the idea opens many possibilities for the test bank.

"The test bank will be constantly updated, and it will be accessible to anyone who wants to see it, from anywhere in the world," he said.

Arnold said if the idea comes through, Griesen said he will prepare a memo signed by all the UNL chancellors to be sent out to professors.

The memo will inform the faculty of the test bank and tell them they have the opportunity to have their class materials in the bank.

In other RHA news, the senate appointed a new speaker, Burr Hall Sen. Kelly Meyer.

They also appointed Arnold the new campus escort chairman, and appointed Cather Hall resident Alexa Roberts the social action team chairwoman.

The senators also chose an artist to help them develop their new logo.

Vice President Alan Nietfeldt said the senate was looking for something versatile.

"We want a logo that is going to last."

Study: Senate pays minorities less

WASHINGTON (AP) — Minority staff members in the Senate are paid less than their white counterparts, according to a congressional study released Sunday.

The average pay for black staff members dropped in 1997. A report by the Congressional Management Foundation, a nonpartisan group funded by corporations, found that black Senate employees earned 76 cents for every dollar earned by their white counterparts. In 1993, they made 83 cents per dollar.

The average pay for Hispanic staff workers increased this year, but was still considerably lower than white members. Hispanics earned 85 cents for every dollar whites earned in 1997; they earned 75 cents per dollar in 1993.

Asians and American Indians, who were grouped collectively in the report, made up less than 2.8 percent of minority staff members who

worked in the Senate. They made 93 cents for every dollar earned by white workers.

The study attributed the pay disparity to an overrepresentation of minorities in lower paying jobs and an underrepresentation in positions that paid more. Ethnic minorities comprise 13.6 percent of Senate staff, but they hold only 4.6 percent of the five top-paying positions in Senate personal offices.

The report emphasized that the salary disparities do not reflect a different pay scale for employees who have similar experiences and qualifications — even if they are of different races.

Jackie Parker, a senior legislative assistant who has worked for Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., since 1979, said the current system of hiring often depends on internal contacts.

"Such informal networks can have the same devastating effects as

an explicit discriminatory system, since blacks are disproportionately out of the loop," she said.

Parker said she finds it amazing that many Senate officials can't see the political value of hiring and promoting more minority staff members.

"There should be a more concerted effort to include more qualified minority applicants in the resume pool," she said. "I don't want to get into quotas, I don't want to get into looking for blacks — I'm just saying the pool ought to be diverse, just as this country is diverse. The staff up here should look like America."

Democratic offices tend to employ more minorities than Republican offices, according to the report.

There is only one black elected member of the Senate. The House has 39.

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