

# GLC focuses on safety, renovations

■ The committee is working with the city to improve crosswalks.

BY JESSICA FARGEN  
Assignment Reporter

Speeding cars and backpack-laden pedestrians speeding to class may not be the safest combination on campus.

So city officials are conducting studies this week to figure out ways to fix the situation.

It's just one of two projects the Government Liaison Committee, in conjunction with the city, hopes to see

## ASUN

completed this semester.

John Wiechmann, chairman of the GLC, said city officials will be studying pedestrian activity and car speeds around 14<sup>th</sup> and Vine streets to see if safety measures the committee has proposed in those areas would be feasible.

Wiechmann said he brought safety concerns about the area to Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Manager Rick Haden in November to discuss ways to make the area safer.

Haden said studies will be done

this week to record car and pedestrian traffic in the area.

The studies have been delayed since November while city officials waited for dry pavement and classes, Haden said.

Haden said officials would do a pedestrian count survey to observe how many students use the crosswalk between 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> streets, how much they obey walk signs and general driver behavior.

Lincoln Police also will monitor traffic speed on 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

Wiechmann said something should be put at the crosswalk to alert drivers of the pedestrian traffic while not giving students free reign of the street.

"Flashing lights would alert drivers, but we would not want students to assume that they would automatically be safe," Haden said.

Wiechmann said he would also like to see 14<sup>th</sup> Street's 35-mph speed limit lowered farther north.

Wiechmann said drivers "just fly through that area" and it is dangerous to pedestrians.

After the studies, Wiechmann said, it would be up to the city to decide if any changes would be beneficial.

"We will be looking for (the city) to either support or challenge the results and tell us where they want us to go," Haden said.

Added to the committee's concern for students' safety is the desire to help

them save money.

Wiechmann said a city ordinance prohibiting more than three unrelated people from living together makes it hard for students to cut down on their expenses.

Angie Klein, a sophomore marketing, advertising and broadcasting major, said having a lot of roommates is a popular way for college students to save money, and because Lincoln is a "college town," changing this ordinance makes sense.

Ed Zimmer, from city planning and housing, said he met with Klein to discuss the process of getting an ordinance changed.

Zimmer said the reason for the ordinance was to prevent large amounts of unrelated people taking up parking spaces or causing disturbances.

"It's important to have some kind of definition so people know what to predict," Zimmer said.

Wiechmann agreed, but said some compromise had to be reached.

"We don't want to turn it into an us-vs.-the-system thing," Wiechmann said.

And addressing the system is the job of GLC, Wiechmann said. Whether it be protecting students' money or addressing safety concerns, he said, GLC hopes to lobby for student interests through several outlets this semester.

## Committee will examine 'brain gain' implications

BY JESSICA FARGEN  
Assignment Reporter

The governor is trying to get Nebraska college graduates to stay in the state and work.

An Omaha senator is supporting a bill that would update the buildings that those students learn in.

And UNL's Government Liaison Committee plans to spend a great deal of time lobbying for both of those legislative measures this semester.

John Wiechmann, GLC chairman, said the "brain gain" bill introduced by Omaha Sen. Jon Bruning and supported by Gov. Ben Nelson would be GLC's main focus this semester.

The bill, LB1176, would provide 200 to 300 scholarships to students who agree to stay in Nebraska for three years after graduation and complete an internship with a participating in-state business.

"Anything that provides money for students we're going to support," Wiechmann said.

However, Wiechmann said, GLC won't give its full support to the bill until more specific information is available and certain questions are answered.

"What are the long-term implications?" Wiechmann asked. "What if a student gets transferred because of their job? We don't want them to be penalized by that."

The "brain gain" bill's focus is to keep students in Nebraska, but the GLC realizes that the university must first be able to attract top students to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

And having the top facilities for students to study in is one way to do that.

Sen. Dan Lynch of Omaha has prioritized a deferred maintenance bill that would provide for repair, renovation and construction projects throughout the NU system and the smaller state colleges.


"UNL needs this so that we can continue to get educated in updated facilities," Wiechmann said.

Laurie Weber, a legislative aide for Lynch, said the university would buy \$79 million in bonds for the project, with the Legislature paying the university \$5.5 million a year for up to 10 years to help with repayment.

The university would pay back some of the bond money from its general fund, Weber said.

The bill outlines 13 projects on the campuses at UNL, the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Weber said.

In the works for UNL is the transformation of Lyman and Bancroft halls into one building, renovation of Hamilton and Avery halls and construction of a new facility to replace the Biochemistry Building. The bill would also allocate \$400,000 for state colleges such as Peru State College and Wayne State college for up to 10 years.



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