

NU debaters arguably top team in Nebraska

From Staff Reports

The UNL speech and debate team beat 11 other Nebraska colleges and universities to claim the state forensics title Sunday.

The Huskers ripped the title away from the Hastings College team — their closest competitor — which won seven of the last eight state speech titles.

The win could help propel the team to a top-five finish at national competition in April, said Tom Workman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln interim director of forensics.

"I'm very much like Tom Osborne," Workman said. "I'm not making any predictions." The students' experience is

Involvement

more important than the national win, he said.

Members of the UNL forensics team have qualified to compete in 24 events at national competition in Flagstaff, Ariz., which begins April 3.

Last year, the team finished 10th at the competition.

In order to attend nationals, forensics team members must qualify in three events.

More students may qualify for nationals during two remaining tournaments. The team next competes in late March at a U.S. district competition at South Dakota State University in Brookings, S.D.

MASA terminates 4-year boycott

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concerns were being addressed. "I'm glad (Multicultural Affairs) has come to the table and has addressed the issues," she said.

MASA temporarily lifted the boycott in June when the office created a new position, the Minority Assistance Program assistant director, as a direct result of the boycott. Chuck van Rossum was appointed to the new position.

Multicultural Affairs offers tutoring and study skills development, counseling, financial aid programs, career services, social events, educational planning, employment opportunities and other services which help qualified students. These services focus on minorities.

One of the requests MASA had was the creation of van Rossum's position to give people working in that area someone to report to.

Bringing van Rossum into the

office also added to the diversification of the office, said Jimmi Smith, director of Multicultural Affairs.

MASA members also will now sit on search and interview committees that deal with the office's hiring practices, Dalton said.

Continual diversity and sensitivity training also has been implemented in the office, Dalton said.

The office also has started to study the numbers and the statistics of the people who use the office, Smith said. Dalton said this had never been done before.

Those who attended the celebration Wednesday were happy the boycott was lifted but wanted evaluation of the office to continue.

"It's most unfortunate it took a concept called a boycott to bring up these concerns," said Marty Ramirez, chairman for the Mexican American Commission.

The length of the boycott was discouraging to some, but Juan

Izaguirre, vice president of MASA, said the years were necessary and challenging.

Eventually, he said, "people started listening. People started acting."

But the struggle is not done. MASA members said the boycott's concerns do not rest with its lift.

"I can tell you that the MASA members are constantly watching the office to see that they are still addressing issues and moving forward in a positive manner," said Chandra Diaz, an assistant grant coordinator in the technology center and former MASA president.

Diaz was MASA's vice president when the boycott began.

"I commend the MASA students for continuing in the struggle," she said.

Moeser agreed it was important to continue to address such issues.

"The important thing is to never attempt to paper over problems and pretend they don't exist."

Students urged to seek difficult classes

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that there isn't already an atmosphere of academic rigor on campus," said Association of Students of the University of Nebraska President Curt Ruwe.

The ball is in the faculty's court when it comes to increased academic rigor at UNL, Ruwe said.

"It has to do with the climate in the community and the climate in the classroom — until those things have vehicles for change, I can't see the academic rigor (administrators) want," Ruwe said. "If students are demanding a more rigorous environment ... faculty will have no choice."

The university also is committed to special programs that go hand in hand with increased academic rigor.

University Foundations classes, which introduce first-year students to campus, summer reading programs for honors students and University Foundations classes; and the freshmen convocation, in which administrators

welcome freshmen to campus, are ways to set the tone that UNL is serious about academics, Griesen said.

Residence hall learning communities may serve as the key to unlocking some of UNL's academic potential.

Doug Zatechka, director of housing, said special interest floors that encourage community among students with a common academic interest will be formed in the residence halls.

The Achievement and Commitment to Excellence program, a pilot for the learning communities, joins students with agricultural and family sciences interests to live on a floor in Burr Hall.

About 47 people participate in ACE, in which first-year students share a common class.

Zatechka said the learning communities will include contact with faculty members, supplemental instruction, shared classes and group studying.

The Honors Program, Zatechka said, also exemplifies a true learning

community because professors and students talk academics in the residence halls.

"My wildest dream would be to have a whole series of halls with a significant number of students — about 100 to 200 — who truly care about the field of study they selected and where they have real strong bonds across classes and careers," Zatechka said.

Administrators also stressed extracurricular learning.

UNL's Essential Experiences program, run by Griesen's office, serves as a guide for students' co-curricular learning.

The voluntary Experiences program requires students to participate in out-of-class activities — including personal skills, career planning, diversity, arts appreciation and others.

Griesen said all members of the campus community should work toward academic rigor ideals.

"That's what a university is all about," he said. "It's the kind of environment we should have."

ASUN candidates stress communication

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little is accomplished. "Six hundred CEOs do not run a corporation," Wiechmann said.

COMMIT second vice presidential candidate Chris Linder said although all student organizations would be invited to join the coalition, some might not. If they did, Linder said, COMMIT had the skills to handle it.

Russell is a two-term senator, and Linder is president of Golden Key National Honor Society, where she heads meetings with more than 100 people.

During the debate, COMMIT announced projects to encourage involvement.

The party said it wanted to start NU Week, a volunteering program, and to increase promotion of services such as the Student Employment and Internship Center, which many international students don't know about.

Russell also suggested sensitivity and diversity classes when asked how the university could be more receptive to diversity.

Wiechmann said, "We already have a diverse university. The key is to get them to interact together."

VISION second vice presidential candidate Eddie Brown said he wanted more efforts at UNL to prevent students from dropping out.

"As a person of color, I have seen many persons of color slip through the

cracks after their freshman year," Brown said.

Candidates also were asked what they thought were the main student concerns with the College of Arts and Sciences.

Marcy Rabe, VISION senatorial candidate, said the large classes were too big for first-year students.

Kara Slaughter, COMMIT senatorial candidate, said more extracurricular class interactions like coffees and speakers would let students and teachers "see each other as human beings."

The next ASUN debate is Wednesday and is sponsored by the Residence Hall Association and the Student Impact Team. It will begin at 8 p.m. in the Neihardt Blue Room.



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