

# Administrators heed student fee input

By BRAD DAVIS  
Senior Reporter

A year before student fees are set to increase by about 16 percent, \$33, some UNL students might argue fees are too high.

But few can argue that students at peer universities have as much control over their student fees as those at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, administrators said.

Although administrators recently overturned an ASUN decision to continue tobacco sales in the union, they said this is uncommon.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen said administrators take pride that they almost always follow advice from the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska on how to spend more than \$9 million in students' University Program and Facilities fees.

Eleven students are on ASUN's Committee for Fees Allocation, a group that evaluates budgets for organizations and recommends budgets.

CFA makes recommendations to the regents for portions of fees that are rarely overturned, Griesen said.

"That recommendation is regarded very strongly," said CFA Chairman Kendall Swenson. "Basically, what we say goes."

In the 11 years Griesen has been at UNL, administrators have undone what students recommended only once before, Griesen said.

In the 1980s, students denied about \$800 to a UPC-sponsored gay and lesbian programming committee.

Threatened with a discrimination lawsuit, Griesen said administrators reallocated the money into a talks and topics committee fund.

One decision CFA made this year — to keep cigarette sales in the Nebraska

Union — will be overturned.

Swenson said he thought most students wanted cigarette sales, but he was more concerned with the revenue that would be lost from the tobacco ban.

"I just think as far as our decision goes," Swenson said, "we want the (lost) money there, and that's our number one concern."

Griesen said administrators would work to make up the lost money without affecting student fees, which next year will be \$240 per student each semester.

Other UNL peer universities — similarly sized schools in the Midwest — don't give their students as much control of their student fees, Griesen said.

"We're very unique to the extent that we involve students," Griesen said. "They have the responsibility for accepting all of the budget requests for UPFF, and distilling out of that what they think students would be willing to pay."

He said both Fund A and Fund B organizations had to "argue for every dime" they get from UPFF.

William Fierke, registrar at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Champaign, Ill., said undergraduate students there pay about \$446 per semester in student fees.

If students don't have insurance, they must pay an extra \$127 per semester for health coverage, Fierke said.

He said students appointed by the chancellor review budgets.

Though a student fees board is in place, Fierke said a \$36 fee added this year was not approved by the board and was opposed by students.

"The only reason (students) were upset about it was because it got rammed down their throat," Fierke said.

Similarly, UNL's fees committee had no part in approving the \$20 added to student fees next year to pay for renovations to the Nebraska Union.

But, Griesen said, students voted to "tax" themselves for the union by a 1994 referendum vote.

Students at the University of Iowa decide where \$16.02 of their \$76.44 per semester student fee is spent, said Belinda Marner, assistant vice president for student services.

After the student committee makes recommendations, the budget must be approved by the vice presidents of finance and student services, along with the college's president and board of regents.

Allison Miller, president of Iowa's student government, said though students control only \$16.02 of their fees, they are consulted by the administration for most fees decisions.

"I think one of the things that we see on our campus," Miller said, "is that the students are happy with the way their money is spent."

## Muslim woman tries to defy culture barrier

By AMANDA SCHINDLER  
Staff Reporter

As a girl, Mahnaz Afkhami never suspected she would leave her home for a far-off land and a foreign culture.

But her mother felt differently.

The wife of a feudal landlord in Kerman, Iran, Afkhami's mother dreamed of leaving and becoming independent despite women's strict societal limitations.

When Mahnaz was 11, her mother packed up her three children and left her husband and comfortable life. With no English-speaking skills or money, she started anew in San Francisco.

Her daughter would forever admire her for it.

During the fourth annual Women's Studies No Limits Conference Saturday at the Nebraska East Union, Afkhami said fundamentalism and feminism struggle against each other, especially in Muslim societies.

Afkhami said fundamentalists are afraid of changes in the status of women, and many fundamentalist groups have united to fight feminism despite differences in religion.

For example, fundamentalist delegates from the Vatican worked closely with Iranian Muslim delegates at the 1995 Beijing International Women's Conference, she said.

"The boys got together and had no problems," she said. "That's the way it was supposed to have been in some golden time. The fundamentalists unite across cultures and geography and religion to stop the women."

She stressed fundamentalism is a political movement and not a religious one.

"In Islam, there's nothing that says women have to be segregated (from men) or not go to school," she said.

But many women hesitated supporting feminism for fear of sacrificing tradition, she said.

"Either you were feminist or you

were Muslim," she said. "Now women are very strongly asserting that they shouldn't have to choose between culture and religion and feminism."

Afkhami said another deterrent to feminism in Muslim society was the stereotype of the liberated Western woman.

Muslim women have developed their own type of feminism, she said, and stereotypes are fading.

Afkhami urged feminists to unite in the same manner as fundamentalists.

"The most important thing that we share is that we want to mess things up," she said.

Afkhami said she makes "messes" as executive director of the Sisterhood is Global Institute, an organization that works to improve women's rights.

Membership includes women in 70 different countries.

"We all want the same things," she said, but stressed that work in Muslim countries was important because "the crisis seems to be crystallizing there."

Often work is done in countries where feminism has not fully evolved, and Afkhami said governments are more docile than expected.

"A lot of governments are not as smart as you think they would be," she said. "Patriarchal governments don't take women seriously yet — and that's a good thing."

The Declaration of Human Rights is another good thing, she said. In its 50th year, the document has been criticized by Muslim men for being too Western, she said.

She disagreed with their rationale.

"I've looked at the items and articles and have never seen a women saying 'I don't want this right,'" Afkhami said.

Nancy Rosen, director of the Strengthening Neighborhood Partnership program, said she was very impressed with Afkhami's message.

"Rights are not Western, Eastern, Islamic or Christian," Afkhami said. "They are human."

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