

Accused murderer to get competency re-evaluation

By **JOSH FUNK**
Senior Reporter

Prosecutors will get a third opinion to determine if Gregory Gabel is competent to stand trial for the 1996 murder of UNL freshman Martina McMenamin.

District Court Judge Paul Merritt granted the Lancaster County Attorney's motion for a state-appointed psychiatrist to evaluate Gabel at a hearing Wednesday morning.

This motion follows evaluation by the court-appointed Lincoln Regional Center that last month found Gabel incompetent to stand trial.

The state appointed Dr. Park Dietz and associates of Newport Beach, Calif., to evaluate Gabel.

Defense attorney Scott Helvie did not object to the motion.

Then the defense appointed its own competency expert - Dr. William Logan and associates - without objection from the prosecution.

Most of the hearing concentrated on whether the evaluations done by Logan and the regional center's Dr. Mario Scalora should be shared with Dietz before he evaluates Gabel.

"State experts should make their own evaluation without knowledge of the other evaluations," Helvie said.

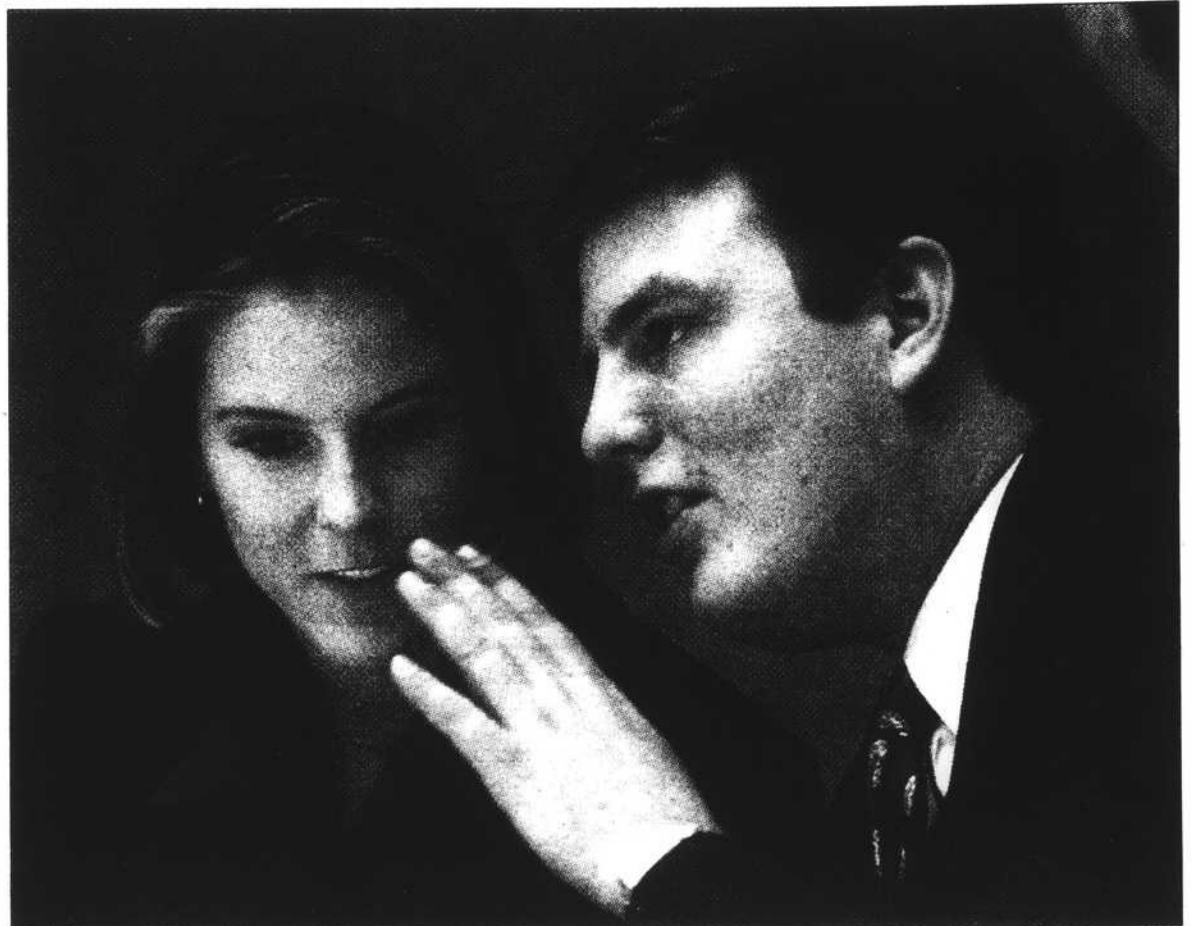
Prosecutors argued that information from the previous evaluations could help Dietz find the truth and move the case along.

"An expert can use all the information to make a better evaluation," Deputy County Attorney John Colburn said.

Helvie said he was concerned that experts were being hired to contest opinions, not make a fair evaluation.

Judge Merritt said he would consider the matter and make a decision by the end of the week.

Gabel's competency hearing was tentatively scheduled for mid-May, but it may be pushed back to June so the evaluations can be completed.



MATT MILLER/DN

OUTGOING ASUN PRESIDENT Curt Ruwe and President-elect Sara Russell talk before Russell's speech at the Wick Alumni Center Wednesday night. All outgoing and incoming presidents and vice presidents spoke, as did Chancellor James Moeser and Vice Chancellor James Griesen.

New ASUN senators sworn in

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"You have started ASUN really moving forward at a rapid pace," she said.

Ruwe told newcomers it was their responsibility to remember ASUN had the responsibility to make sure students were getting what they paid for and were happy.

"Student government is a misleading term," he said. "It is the most complicated form of customer service that exists."

Hoffschneider took the gavel from Amy Rager. Malcolm Kass, outgoing second vice president, stepped down as Brown stepped up.

It was the first inauguration for Brown, but Kass has sat through five

of them.

Kass, who started out on the Committee for Fees Allocation and ended up second vice president, said joining ASUN was the best decision of his life.

Kass urged the new ASUN members to focus on informing more students about how student government works and how to get involved.

Also in attendance at the Wick Alumni Center were Chancellor James Moeser, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs James Griesen and Bill McLaughlin, UNL visiting chemistry instructor, on hand to congratulate ASUN on a successful term.

Moeser said that in his first two years at UNL he has had the opportunity to work with excellent leaders.

ASUN's work in keeping football seats and treatment of incidents such as suspended Assistant English Professor David Hibler's e-mail were to be commended, he said.

"I want to thank students' wisdom for electing such leaders," Moeser said.

McLaughlin, who received the Outstanding Educator Award, also was appreciative of the work UNL students did to get him rehired. In appreciation, McLaughlin gave Ruwe a pin that read, "Silence is the voice of complicity," representing outspoken action of ASUN and UNL students.

"You honor me, you honor your university," McLaughlin said, "and you honor yourselves."

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