

# Adviser dedicates career to students

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College, Alvarez plays a bigger role in the university.

He is adviser of the Mexican American Student Association. He also is adviser of the Future Educators of Color and the new historically Latino nonexclusive fraternity, Sigma Lambda Beta.

He is involved with the Teachers College Equity Committee and the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color.

Despite his busy schedule, Alvarez said his priority is students. "I could go to meetings all day and never advise, but that's the bad part because I like spending time with students."

## The heart of it all

Alvarez, 40, is using his love of working with students to help the Teachers College attain its goal of creating a "teaching force that looks like America," said Ellen Weissinger, associate dean of the college.

"He's the heart of it, he really is," she said.

Weissinger said Alvarez has brought to the Teachers College not only a combination of talents, but integrity, a warm personality and a genuine passion for helping students.

"You don't get that package very often," she said. "He's made a real difference with our students."

Freshman Shanita Rice said her friends are jealous she has Alvarez as an adviser.

Rice, a secondary education major from Omaha, said Alvarez dispelled the stereotypes she had of advisers when she first arrived in the fall.

"My preconception was that he really wouldn't care," Rice said.

But her mind changed quickly. And she now sees Alvarez nearly every week.

"Anyone would be lucky to have him as an adviser," she said.

Alvarez said he was not a very good student in high school, and because of this he has empathy for the students he advises.

"I wish I would have had someone when I was younger," he said.

When advising, Alvarez focuses on guiding the students who are unsure of their futures.

"You can have them change one thing and try something and persevere. That's worth it," he said.

Rice said that along with showing her he cared about her success as a student, Alvarez got her involved with the Future Educators of Color, making her the secretary.

Alvarez started Future Educators of Color in the fall for students to show them there was opportunity in education and because minorities in the college needed a student group for support.

Weissinger said Alvarez has had a lasting impact on the college.

"I think that Tim has been an

extraordinary force in helping us make progress in supporting students of color in the college."

But he doesn't confine his mentoring and advising to the Teachers College.

Keith Zimmer, associate director of academic programs in the NU Athletic Department, said Alvarez advises many student athletes.

"He's knowledgeable in what sports they play and uses that as a way to build some rapport with his advisees."

## Taking a detour

Alvarez's success as an academic adviser is due to his own struggles in the academic world.

"I've had failures," he said. "I think I've done pretty well compared to where I've been."

After receiving his associate's degree at Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, he took a route away from education and worked in retail for Nash Finch Co., a grocery firm, for 12 years. He spent five of those 12 years as a manager.

"I did that for 12 years and then I thought, 'Boy this really sucks,'" he said.

He left retail so he could spend more time with his wife, Lori, and his three children - Josh, now 10; Jason, 9; and Tiffany, 5.

He went on to complete his bachelor of science in human resource management at Bellevue University in one year and received his master's degree in developmental counseling in 1993 while at Eastern Wyoming Community College.

While working at the college, he was invited by his friend, Marty Ramirez, who now works at the University Health Center, to look at a UNL job.

A position opened up in Admissions, Alvarez applied, and he soon became the assistant director.

He will complete his doctorate in educational administration in December.

"I think everybody in this world should have to struggle at one time because it gives you a better appreciation for what it takes to do good and to do the right thing."

## Supporting the minority

If he has the time to give to students, he'll give it.

That is what Alvarez said about his work with MASA, Future Educators of Color and Sigma Lambda Beta.

He knows it is difficult for students sometimes to find someone to support their cause.

Alvarez also knows that it is difficult for minorities to receive the support they need in a large university setting.

"I was just kind of lucky that I ended up getting where I am," he said. "It's not because I'm really smart."

"It's just that I had perseverance and wasn't willing to quit."

# Republicans talk tax relief

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tax, and that's Mike Johanns," he said.

The candidates were asked to rate Nelson's performance on a scale of one to 10, 10 being the best.

Breslow rated Nelson a five, saying his efforts to control spending merited the lowest score - one - and noting state spending has risen 120 percent in 10 years.

Johanns rated Nelson a six, and Christensen rated him a six and a half.

Candidates also differed on which state programs could be conducted more efficiently.

Johanns said he would reduce state spending by encouraging more people to leave the welfare rolls and go to work.

Breslow said \$12 million to \$15 million per year could be saved by privatizing the \$74 million prison approved by the 1997 Legislature.

Christensen said better efficiency could be reached by privatizing some operations of the Department of Roads.

Despite the 1998 Legislature's passage of sales-, property-, and income-tax relief, all candidates agreed their plans for lower state spending had not been pre-empted.

"Pure and simple, no tax-cut plan is going to be made permanent if we don't cut spending," Johanns said.

Breslow said the Legislature's approval of a 12 percent growth in state spending this year was "outrageous." He said his proposed property-tax reductions would be supported by a 5 percent reduction in annual spending and the natural growth of the economy.

Christensen said he would make permanent a one-year, 10 percent sales-tax cut approved by the Legislature this year. A 5 percent income-tax cut made permanent by this year's Legislature should be dou-

bled, he said, and increases in property valuations should be accompanied by proportional reductions in mill levies to prevent increases in property taxes.

Christensen said the state should support the levy lids but continue to allow local overrides. Improved efficiencies in city and county governments also must be achieved, he said.

Switching topics, Breslow and Johanns indicated a person's homosexuality would not preclude their being appointed to public office, but Christensen said he would not appoint a homosexual to such a position.

"If I knew that a person was a homosexual, I would not appoint that person to a position of leadership," he said. "The people who surround me are going to reflect my values and beliefs."

The forum, sponsored by the Omaha World-Herald and KPTM-TV (Fox 42), was broadcast statewide on KPTM.



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