

Calendar changes made

From Staff Reports

UNL students can look forward to two fewer days of class next year because of a decision made by the Calendar Committee on Tuesday.

Earl Hawkey, University of Nebraska-Lincoln registrar, said Chancellor James Moeser and his cabinet have approved schedule changes next year that include a fall break and a

Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The schedule changes also include moving spring break up one week from the 10th week of second semester classes to the ninth week. The Labor Day holiday changes from two days to one.

One of the days taken from Labor Day will go toward the two-day fall break, which is Oct. 26-27. The break is a student holiday, but UNL offices will be open, Hawkey said.

Labs to be upgraded with fee

By JESSICA FARGEN
Assignment Reporter

More than \$1 million will be spent next year on 200 new computers, a 24-hour lab in the Nebraska Union and increased hours for the computer help-line.

And every UNL student is helping pay the bill with the technology fee enacted last year.

Pam Holley-Wilcox, director of information technology support, said about \$1.3 million from the "per credit hour" fee will be spent next year to upgrade technology and keep University of Nebraska-Lincoln students competitive.

This year the fee was \$2 per credit hour; next year the fee will be raised to \$4 per credit hour. It will level off at \$5 per credit hour in 1999-2000. The fee is not charged beyond 15 credit hours.

Holley-Wilcox said 47 computers will be replaced on East Campus, 61 will be replaced at Love Library, 19 new computers will be put in the union and the rest will replace old computers in campus labs. Labs with the heaviest use will receive the best equipment first, she said.

The purpose of the technology fee is to have about 500 UNL computers on a three-year replacement cycle to keep them updated, she said. Computers in administrators' and instructors' office are not part of that



cycle.

Daryl Swanson, director of Nebraska Unions, said the old lab in the union had 15 computers. When the renovated union opens in September, the new lab will have 28 inside and six outside the lab on stand-up counters primarily for students to check e-mail.

Swanson said the new lab probably will not be open 24 hours until October, when the new west entrance is completed.

Whether students are dealing with new or used computers, a new student-friendly help line will be available when problems arise.

Holley-Wilcox said the current help line, run by Information Services, is staffed by professionals and geared toward faculty members, while consultants in labs are meant to help students.

But next fall, the help line may provide a "peer-to-peer experience" with the addition of student staff and later hours, she said. On- and off-campus students, staff and faculty members can call the line with questions about the Internet, viruses, e-mail or any computer problems.

"This is a departure for us to change our philosophy to explicitly create a service geared to student needs," she said.

Paul Schreier, former technology fee advisory board chairman for student government, said his committee and other students have been meeting this year with a group of administrators to decide how to use the fee.

Estimated credit hours and enrollment were used to project spending for next year.

Schreier said the new computers are "very close to the top of the line" and thinks students are getting their money's worth.

"I really think the students are

getting a good deal here," Schreier said.

Students can see the results of their technology fee in several places, he said, such as new computers and a new work station in Love Library.

Last Wednesday several computers paid for by the fee were put on a stand-up counter in the QuiKick, a convenience store in the parking garage near Memorial Stadium, for students to check e-mail as they shop.

Although this surge of updated technology is new to UNL students, it has been going on at other universities for a while.

UNL has been falling behind in technology compared to peer institutions, Holley-Wilcox said. When UNL implemented its fee last year, she said, only two other schools in the Big 12 did not have technology fees. The future \$5 fee was consistent with fees at other schools.

"I think that with the fee we are bringing ourselves into position where we are competitive with a lot of the other Big 12 and peers that we normally compare ourselves to," she said.

And UNL may be twice as competitive next year as fee revenue jumps from \$786,000 to \$1.3 million because the rate per credit hour will double.

Holley-Wilcox said if students have suggestions as to how the fee should be spent, they should contact student government, Information Services or e-mail the help-line at helpdesk@unl.edu.

Schreier said students should let someone know if they are unhappy with use of the fee because access to the latest technology is necessary for students to stay competitive.

"The fee is creating a continual revenue stream to replace those computers to keep our labs and facilities at the forefront of technology."

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