

# For the students

# ASUN's focus: diversity

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## News Analysis

ASUN attempted to please all students this year through diverse programming, student surveys and even street signs.

Some attempts turned into accomplishments, some are still being attempted by new ASUN senators and some were failures.

While voter turnout in the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska election didn't skyrocket, it did increase. This may mean that more students have been made aware of their student government's action this year.

Among ASUN's successes this year are the lowered speed limits and more pedestrian-friendly signs in the 14th and Vine streets area.

Student groups can apply for funds from the University Program Council every two years instead of every four.

And an advising policy study will be passed out to colleges thanks to ASUN efforts.

Last semester, ASUN also worked to increase diversity programming and communication with the campus community.

ASUN and student organizations brought speakers to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln such as Coretta Scott King, diversity speaker Marlon Smith and speakers for Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 19.

N. Omar Valentine, a member of Afrikan People's Union, said former ASUN President Curt Ruwe and he met about working together on King Day activities.

Carrie Pierce, Student Impact Chairwoman, also came to an APU meeting and informed them about the Academic Senate's upcoming vote to cancel classes on the holiday.

"We as the Afrikan People's

Union are truly pleased by the actions taken by ASUN and its members," Valentine said, and cited ASUN attention to the King holiday and the incident involving Assistant English Professor David Hibler's alleged racist e-mail.

ASUN also conducted a survey and found 90 percent of the students wanted a fall break and no classes on the holiday. (The Academic Senate voted against the fall break.)

A 1999 Coordinating Commission, of which both Valentine and Russell are members, is now meeting regularly to plan events for next year's Martin Luther King Day holiday.

ASUN also passed a bill protesting the anti-homosexual chalkings on UNL sidewalks last semester and sponsored a forum to discuss Hibler's e-mail with the word "nigga" and the assistant professor's following suspension.

Last semester, ASUN pledged to improve interaction with student groups such as the Residence Hall Association. Last year, RHA and ASUN cleaned up the campus together after October's winter storm. This year they worked to encourage UNL to rehire chemistry instructor Bill McLaughlin.

ASUN also wanted to create a more integrated campus community through the implementation of the Student Impact Team, which now has 300 members. SIT plans to raise money for trees to plant on campus to replace ones lost in the storm.

ASUN set goals to research midterm and standard evaluations and a parking education class. Though they are not yet accomplished, ASUN did look into them.

Erik Hoegemeyer, former chair-

man of the Academic Committee, said although written course evaluations haven't changed, people are now more aware thanks to ASUN.

James Ford, president of the Academic Senate, said Ruwe came to a meeting with ideas on changing the evaluation process.

Ford said it was his understanding that ASUN was going to do more research and talk to some experts because "this is not the kind of thing you can do without expert help."

Ruwe said ASUN failed to reconstruct the Outstanding Educator Award because incidents such as the ASUN elections and the Hibler e-mail incident took priority.

Another goal ASUN failed to meet was the successful implementation of a University Leadership Community, which tried to have regular meetings with members of student organizations.

Mike Hostetler, a senior computer science major, said the group was not effective.

Hostetler, president of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, said the group met twice last year and those meetings had low attendance.

Some students were more likely to attend the ASUN-sponsored forums, such as the one to discuss the Hibler incident. They also attended the Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities.

However much they appreciated the success of these two events, they saw other goals ASUN should include.

Molly Klinedinst, a junior English and communication studies major, said more focus needed to be on women's issues.

As a member of the women's issues subcommittee, she said they should reach out more to groups such as the Women's Center and the Women's Leadership Conference.

Thanh Nguyen, a sophomore mechanical engineering major, said he did not follow ASUN because he thought it was greek-based and not for the average student.

Even though he realizes that all students do not follow ASUN, Ruwe said student government did attract more participants this year.

"That's the biggest benefit to ASUN and what we do," he said. "That reaches a ton of our goals."

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