

# Admissions recruiter works to retain minority students

By KIM SWEET  
Staff writer

The purpose of Cynthia Gooch's job a year ago was to work to retain students of color at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

But the former education specialist in Multicultural Affairs ran into one problem: There weren't many students to retain.

So Gooch decided to take matters into her own hands when a position for minority recruitment opened up in Admissions.

Now, the new assistant director for minority recruitment is seeing things from the other side of the fence and using her experiences from her old job in her new one.

"I thought that if someone recruited more effectively, we would have a better chance of retaining minority students," Gooch said.

After starting her job in the spring, Gooch began efforts to do that.

She spent the summer touring universities comparable to UNL to find out how they ran their minority recruitment programs.

One of the universities she collaborated with was University of Kansas in Lawrence, which increased the number of minorities on its campus by 35 percent after increasing its recruitment efforts, Gooch said.

KU wasn't the only school that increased its numbers dramatically, she said.

After attending a conference on minority recruitment where schools with large and small enrollments were represented, Gooch found out UNL had a lot of work to do.

"We're behind. Way behind," she

said.

One of the things Gooch is planning that will help UNL compete with other Midwestern schools that attract Nebraska's students of color is Multicultural Senior Days.

"They will be set up very much like Red Letter Days," Gooch said. "Except they will be very colorful."

Latino Senior Day, African-American Senior Day and Native-American Senior Day will allow prospective students to tour the campus, talk with faculty members and hear from different cultural organizations on campus.

Typically, Gooch said, only a handful of students of color come to each Red Letter Day.

She thinks bringing students of the same background together will make them feel more comfortable while touring campus.

"You want to be able to identify with someone else," Gooch said.

Gooch also hopes to start promoting UNL to younger students of color. She is planning a day in the spring to bring high school sophomores and juniors from across the state to campus.

A multicultural recognition night for top Nebraska seniors also is in the works. Activities like those will help UNL's recruiting efforts, Gooch said.

"We're trying to hit Nebraska really hard," she said. "We need to recruit in our own back yard."

Interim Director of Admissions Larry Ruth agrees with Gooch's theory that bringing more students of color to campus will increase the number who decide to come to UNL in the fall.

"That is one of our prime strategies," Ruth said.

"We need to recruit in our own back yard."

CYNTHIA GOOCH  
minority recruiter

Ruth said he couldn't think of anyone better than Gooch to carry out the recruiting efforts.

Though the new assistant director knows bringing students to campus is important to recruiting, she said a campus that lacks diversity also can use other tactics to increase minority representation.

Scholarships, such as the Davis Scholarship, are available for racial minority undergraduate students.

Because of a lawsuit at the University of Maryland, state-supported scholarships aimed at specific minorities are illegal, Gooch said.

But private scholarships can fill in the gap, she said.

"I think the university needs to be more aggressive in finding those funds," Gooch said.

She said she hoped UNL Chancellor James Moeser and his cabinet would act on their commitment to making the campus more diverse by finding such private sources.

Gooch said she is confident the efforts she is putting into her new job will benefit everyone on campus, not just minority students.

"A diverse campus benefits everyone," she said. "It makes you a more rounded person."

# Protests can continue

Johanns vetoes plan targeting church picketers

By JOSH FUNK  
Senior staff writer

City Council

Protesters can continue to demonstrate outside Lincoln churches after Wednesday's mayoral veto.

Mayor Mike Johanns kept his promise to veto a proposed city ordinance that would have restricted protesting during religious activities on the grounds that it unconstitutionally restricted the protesters' rights to free speech.

The ordinance was approved by the Lincoln City Council 4-3 Monday in response to the anti-abortion protesters who have been demonstrating outside of Westminster Presbyterian Church, 210 Sheridan Blvd., during the last 20 months.

Rescue the Heartland has been protesting against Dr. Winston Crabb, a church elder who performs abortions in Lincoln and Omaha.

Supporters of the ordinance on the City Council and associated with the church all echoed the sentiment that they were disappointed, but not surprised, at the mayor's action.

Several supporters said the courts should decide constitutionality.

"It's not up to any one of us to decide if it is unconstitutional," said Councilwoman Colleen Seng, who voted for the ordinance.

Larry Donlan, director of Rescue the Heartland, also said he expected the veto, but was pleased with the action.

"The Westminster tower of babbling lies did not win out," Donlan said. Donlan also promised his group would continue to picket at Westminster. "We'll keep exposing that evil," he said.

One of the major objections to the group's protests has been the use of giant-sized pictures of aborted fetuses.

Churchgoers raised concerns about their children witnessing the graphic demonstration.

Johanns said he was appalled by the demonstrators' tactics, but he could not approve the restriction.

"This is an obnoxious exercise of free speech," Johanns said. "I will do what I can to help."

Now supporters of the measure will consider other options to restrict the protests.

With five votes, the City Council can override Johanns' veto, but that means one of the three dissenters must change his or her vote.

Then the council will look to other solutions.

"We will consider other options to restrict the protesters including sign size and content restrictions," Councilwoman Cindy Johnson, who voted against the ordinance, said.

There ought to be something the common citizen can do about the protests, Councilman Dale Young said.

"There should be some grounds for decency," said Young, who supported the ordinance.

But should City Council measures fail to affect the protesters, Westminster officials are prepared to take the issue to the ballot, Carl Horton, associate pastor, said.

"We are entirely confident we can get the signatures for a ballot initiative," Horton said. "There is enormous community support."

Johanns emphasized he wants to resolve this issue for the health of the community.

"I am more than willing to try to work through the situation for a solution," he said.

But Seng and other supporters of the bill remain disappointed in the city's actions.

"We kind of turned our backs on them," Seng said, "and that's too bad."

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