


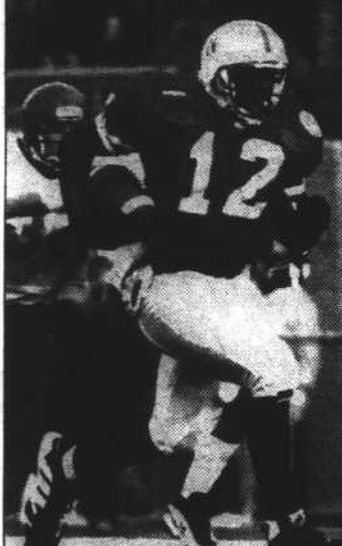
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Midterm evaluations approved

By IEVA AUGSTUMS
Staff writer

Armed with a pen and a sheet of paper, UNL students will have greater input on how their professors teach next semester.

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska unanimously voted Wednesday to pass a bill asking for the implementation of midterm instructor evaluations.

The bill states that evaluations will serve as a "valuable tool in the process of evaluation and improving the educational content of university courses."

ASUN Academic Committee Chairwoman Kara Slaughter said the idea for midterm evaluations was brought to the senate last year. An amendment was passed "tasking the committee to pursue options for midterm evaluations," she said.

"In talking with students and faculty, this is accepted across the board," Slaughter said. "Everyone is agreeing that midterm evaluations would benefit both the students and instructors."

ASUN

Slaughter said some students have said they would like to suggest improvements to classroom instructing as well as recognize instructors' strong points.

"The evaluations do this," she said. "They are a way to suggest positive change."

The evaluations would have questions about effective teaching techniques and needed improvements within the course, Slaughter said.

For example, students will be able to "grade" their instructor's labs, syllabus, assignments, lectures and student discussion opportunities. Another section would allow students to note any other comments, she said.

Teachers College Senator Chelsy Harris said she is concerned about student confidentiality and whether the evaluations would be anonymous and remain that way.

"In my small classes, professors know my handwriting," Harris said. "I'm concerned students will not want

to fill these evaluations out."

Slaughter said confidentiality is a concern. The Academic Committee will look into having handwritten comments typed for professor review, she said.

Slaughter said the evaluations do not replace end-of-semester evaluations that go through departmental chairs.

"These evaluations would have no effect on promotions, tenure or pay raises," Slaughter said. "They are strictly for instructor-student feedback."

Slaughter said students with concerns that they would not like to address in the evaluations can fill out an Instructor/TA Concerns, Complaints or Comments form in the ASUN office. That's an option few students know about, she said.

The Academic Committee will follow up on the form and pursue the necessary actions, she said.

Students who have suggestions on the type of questions that should be asked on the mid-term evaluation form can e-mail the ASUN Academic Committee at 00207838@bigred.unl.edu or submit written comments to the ASUN office, 115 Nebraska Union.

Program guides children to college

By VERONICA DAEHN
Staff writer

Bright, underprivileged students sit hidden away in small, low-income elementary schools.

Children in them often are uninspired or simply ignorant of the opportunities that a quality education can provide.

Those are the types of schools targeted by University of Nebraska-Lincoln students and the McBride Foundation. Both groups work to put those children on a track for college.

The McBride Foundation is a nationwide nonprofit group that donates money to community programs for youths.

The College Bound program, in its inaugural year at UNL, is a nationwide program designed to encourage youths from low-income families to pursue college educations.

Adam Pfeifer, one of three campus coordinators for the program, said it provides an opportunity for UNL students to get involved with curriculum that will ultimately benefit younger children.

The program's motto is "Helping America's children help themselves," and it is sponsored and funded by the McBride Foundation.

Its purpose is to teach low-income, disadvantaged elementary school chil-

dren about the positive effects and benefits of higher education.

Another goal of the program is to make children aware of opportunities they will have as they go through high school and begin to think about their futures.

Diane Podolske, who shares coordinator responsibilities with Pfeifer and Ray McCalla, said any UNL student can participate. She hopes to get enough volunteers to assign two or three people to each classroom.

College Bound hopes to visit about 15 classrooms in one or two Lincoln schools, she said.

"It's really wonderful," she said. "The McBride Foundation comes in and they train us on what material to present. The curriculum is all laid out for us."

Podolske stressed that the College Bound program is not a large time commitment.

Volunteers are held responsible for 20 hours of work that is spread out over the school year, she said.

Some UNL students already have shown an interest in volunteering. Brett Dangler, a freshman secondary education major, said he feels it's a quality program because of the young age of the targeted audience.

"High schools seem to wait until the junior or senior year and then they rush everything in," Dangler said. "This way, we will be able to give kids an idea

of what's ahead of them now and give them something to work for."

Pfeifer said College Bound consists of six visits.

The first five visits are in-classroom presentations where different aspects of higher education are discussed. Topics include financial aid, student organizations, planning a class schedule and different areas of study.

The sixth visit is an actual UNL campus tour for the grade school children, he said.

Podolske said she hoped the program would make the future seem more comfortable for children.

"This program is geared to answering even basic questions," Podolske said.

"We make things seem very normal to them and that's a goal for everyone. This is a chance for UNL students to make a difference in the lives of a younger student."

Students interested in becoming part of College Bound should attend a meeting today in the Student Involvement office during one of the following times: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., or 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The meetings are informative, and those attending will not be obligated to volunteer.

Pfeifer said, "We're looking for anybody who wants to make a commitment."

Americans needed to break barriers

By AIMEE GREEN
Staff writer

More international students than ever are looking for Americans to chat with as part of a UNL program.

Now the program needs Americans to talk back.

The International Affairs Office is seeking 35 American students to pair with international students in the English Conversation Partners program.

Although the number of participants has reached an all-time high of 215 applications, more Americans are always needed.

English Conversation Partners is an informal way for American and international students to meet and learn about each other's culture, history and traditions. Partners meet for at least an hour each week to talk.

Piotrek Juskiewicz, a graduate assistant coordinating the program, said the program was well advertised; fliers were posted around campus and an advertisement ran in the Daily Nebraskan.

But despite the exposure, he said, not enough American students signed up.

Nickette Nakama, a graduate stu-

dent participating in the program and an employee for International Affairs, said some students may have been nervous about the first step in making contact.

Another possibility is students just weren't interested or thought they wouldn't have time, Juskiewicz said.

With the minimum requirement of only one hour a week, Juskiewicz said, students should be able to balance the program with their weekly schedules. He said it is worth one hour a week.

The program matches American students and international students — from Asia, Europe, South America and Africa — by their interests.

After the initial meeting, participants are free to have their conversations anywhere they like, whenever they want.

Sometimes the program will sponsor events for all participants such as a brunch, a pot luck, bowling or a movie night. Meanwhile, participants have the opportunity to learn about other cultures and languages while having fun and making new friends.

"It's just one of the easiest, most entertaining ways to learn about other cultures," said Sarah Richter, a senior marketing and French major.

Richter participated in the program for two years and requested three part-

ners this year. She said talking to the international students was a good way to learn first-hand about their countries.

"A lot of times, being conversation partners has prompted me to visit where that person is from," Richter said. "I can go in knowing a little more about what to expect."

The program also helped international students practice their conversational English.

Richter said that though some students may be taking classes where they hear English, they often are living with people who speak only their native language.

The program can make a big difference, she said, by giving international students a chance to practice English with Americans.

The program is strictly volunteer. Students don't have to pay anything to participate, nor do they make money from it, Nakama said.

"I think what you get out of it is priceless."

Students interested in signing up for the program can go to International Affairs and fill out an application.

Applications are also available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.iafairs.unl.edu/forms/ecpform.htm>. For more information, call (402) 472-5358.