

Mooser says task force will reinforce programs

By JESSICA FARGEN
AND LINDSAY YOUNG
Staff writers

The recently announced Future Nebraska task force is an opportunity to forge new paths in graduate and research studies, not a remedy to any deficiencies in those programs, UNL administrators said this week.

The 29-member task force, which was appointed last week, will be an instrument in the next two years for University of Nebraska-Lincoln to allocate funding in a way that improves the university, Chancellor James Mooser said.

"We don't want to miss the opportunity to make a quantum jump," he said.

"Even our stronger programs could be better."

A share of the Mildred Topp Othmer \$125 million donation was too much opportunity to pass up. That will give the university about \$5.5 million in accrued interest to work with.

Rather than distribute the money over all of the programs or replace state funding, the task force wants to target certain vital programs to boost their funding and bring the university to world pre-eminence in some areas.

Rick Edwards, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, said UNL already ranks high among research universities and is a member of the Association of American Universities, but improvement and evaluation is always welcome.

"We cannot rest on our laurels," Edwards said. "We know that other universities are engaged with very ambitious plans to organize their research and other activities. We have to compete with those universities."

Suzanne Ortega, associate dean of Graduate Studies, said UNL's graduate program was also one of 15 graduate colleges that participates in a Preparing Future Faculty project.

"The graduate program has a lot of dynamic and positive things going on," she said. "This (task force) may help it happen faster and in ways we haven't already seen."

One of the areas the task force may choose to look at is adding more interdisciplinary programs, she said.

For example, instead of having the current gerontology master's program, a program could be created that would combine gerontology with sociology, psychology and biology, which are all vital aspects of studying the process of

growing older.

"It's these sort of niches between our different programs where we could do something interesting and exciting," she said.

But the task force will not pick at problems in specific programs, instead it will evaluate them as a whole, Edwards said.

"It's not just a question of individual programs," he said. "It's a question of what kind of research university do we want to be."

"What kind of institutional culture do we want to create?"

Just as the Preliminary Campus Master Plan may move UNL's exterior forward, the task force will focus on improving the work that goes on inside buildings, Edwards said.

But change often comes with a price tag.

The more than \$155 million donated to UNL this year has provided funds for things such as an honors residence hall, building construction and scholarships, he said. Research is an area that can benefit from more funding, Edwards said.

"I believe the chancellor felt this (research and graduate programs) was the highest priority application for this source of funds," he said.

The task force, which represents several departments and colleges, will decide how to spend some of the endowment money, Edwards said.

Members were not chosen as members of individual departments, Mooser said, but as "citizens of the university."

Along with Edwards and Irv Omtvedt, vice chancellor for extended education and for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mooser said he looked for faculty members who had the ability to see the big picture — what would be best for the university, not just their own departments. Not all of the members were tenured, Mooser said, but the non-tenured, newer faculty will bring the task force vitality and a fresh perspective.

The two community members on the task force are Helen Raikes, a researcher who splits her time working at the Gallup Organization and the federal department of health and human services researching children, youth and families; and John Angle, former CEO of the Guardian Life Insurance Co., in New York. Angle, who lives in Lincoln, was chairman of an NU committee examining expenses and is a past president of the Friends of UNL Libraries.

Protest injunction extended

By ADAM KLINKER
Staff writer

Anti-abortion rights activists will get their day in court after a federal judge extended an injunction against the City of Lincoln on Wednesday.

The initial injunction, granted Sept. 30, disallowed the enforcement of an ordinance against picketing on religious premises.

Wednesday's ruling extends that injunction indefinitely, pending a trial or possible appeals.

For the past 21 months, members of Rescue the Heartland, an Omaha-based anti-abortion rights group, have been picketing outside of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2110 Sheridan Blvd.

They are picketing because Dr. Winston Crabb, an elder at the church, performs abortions.

The Lincoln City Council voted to restrict picketing on religious premises Sept. 14. The ordinance was vetoed by Mayor Mike Johanns but was overturned by the council Sept. 21.

Four members of Rescue the Heartland then filed a suit in U.S. District Court on Sept. 23. They challenged that the ordinance was unconstitutional.

U.S. District Judge Richard Kopf granted the first injunction for 10

days, but while Kopf was out of town, a hearing for an extension was postponed and the primary injunction stood.

On Wednesday, Kopf wrote that the ordinance is indeed unconstitutional and granted a preliminary injunction to replace the temporary order handed down Sept. 30.

The case will be going to trial, but no date has been set.

"The ordinance is not narrowly tailored to serve the government interest that prompted the ordinance," Kopf wrote in his decision.

Under the First Amendment, a law that limits expression must be narrowly tailored, meaning it can target only the problem it seeks to remedy.

Kopf wrote that the same ordinance that stops protesters from frightening children also would limit people from displaying signs that have non-threatening messages.

Therefore, although Kopf said he had concern for the children being exposed to the graphic images of bloody fetuses on the picket signs, the ordinance's language was too broad.

Gene Summerlin, the attorney for the four Rescue the Heartland members, said he was pleased with Kopf's decision and awaited the city's next move.

"The ball is in the city's court now," Summerlin said. "They have a

lot of different options at this point."

Among the city's options is appealing Kopf's decision. The council will meet Monday to discuss that option and also will take into consideration others, which could include settling with Kopf's decision, not enforcing the ordinance and dropping the issue.

Dan Klaus, attorney for the city, said he was unsure what course of action the city would take.

Klaus said he would remain in contact with council members and advise them at pre-council meetings. But ultimately, the decision rests with the council, he said.

Council Chairman Curt Donaldson said he would vote to appeal the injunction, but he was unsure as to the opinions of other council members.

Donaldson said the city will continue to fight for the enforcement of the ordinance.

"It's a very important issue," he said. "The problem is still out there, and we have not yet exhausted the legal process."

Summerlin said an appeal on behalf of the city would not bother him, though it would cost the city time and money.

"We don't care if the city appeals or not," Summerlin said. "Either way, the preliminary injunction stands, and the ordinance cannot be enforced."

CORRECTION

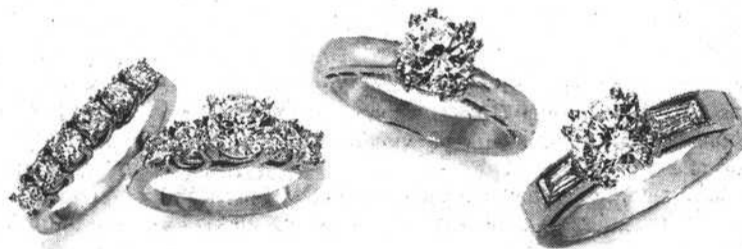
The Daily Nebraskan incorrectly reported Wednesday the results of the race for the District 30 seat in the state Legislature. Dennis Byars won the race with 54 percent of the unofficial final vote over Stan Matzke Jr., who had 46 percent.

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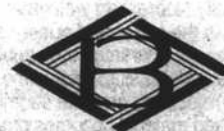


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