

Lied Center focuses on involving students

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even famous — just inspiring. Since I have been here, there has never been anything that I would die to go see."

Dick Durst, dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, said he thought the Lied Center did an "incredible job" of keeping performances available for students.

"(The Lied Center) is not just plunked down on the campus," Durst said. "It has a central mission to give students access, and a lot of students do take advantage of that."

But Durst added that availability should not be the only focus of the Lied Center.

"The Lied Center is important to us as a college — not just as a performing arts center — but as a resource for students to be able to perform in a world-class facility."

Student shows

And there are plenty of ways that students can take advantage of this "world-class facility."

UPC coordinates specific student-oriented events at the Lied Center; the University Foundations program for incoming freshmen discusses its assets; performers get into the classroom with students to teach master classes; and there are close ties between the College of Fine and Performing Arts and the administration at the Lied Center.

Bethea said the Lied Center stays in close



COURTESY PHOTO

"JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT" was one among several flashier shows brought in by the Lied Center in the past few years.

communication with the members of UPC in order to make sure interesting events for students come to campus and, most importantly, are financially accessible for students.

As part of this ongoing relationship, UPC co-sponsored last semester's presentation of MTV's "Loveline" at the Lied Center.

Bethea granted UPC an open invitation to use the Lied Center as a venue (and even bait) to bring in any entertainment that may be interesting for university students.

Angela Smith, a member of UPC and a student representative on the Lied Advisory Board,

said the biggest event in her time working with the Lied Center was "Loveline."

Smith said UPC plans to bring in more popular events like "Loveline."

"We always try to keep that idea open because the facility is so wonderful, and it was built for students," Smith said. "It all depends on the complications with schedule and budgets."

Smith said the Lied Advisory Board, which is mostly made up of elderly community members and UNL faculty members, has two student voices: herself and Carrie Pierce, a representative from the Association of the Students of the University of Nebraska.

She said the increases in students attending Lied Center events can be attributed to the new interest in students on the Lied Advisory Board.

"A lot of (the programming) is stuff there is no way students would want to go to," she said. "We have a voice, but (the other representatives) don't have the students' interest in mind. Bethea is concerned with getting students involved."

She said she would like to see more events like "Les Miserables" come into the Lied Center.

"We would like to do big things like that more often, but the timing just has to be right," she said.

Each semester, the Lied Center sponsors one student production: either "A Christmas Carol" or, on the off-year, a musical.

Tice Miller, a professor of theater arts and dance, said one of the biggest draws for students is the half-price, and occasionally free, admission.

Miller, who also serves as an instructor for a foundation course, urged his students in the class

to use their tickets, provided free through the class, to see the recent Houston Ballet production of "Dracula."

"For most of the students, it was their first time ever seeing a professional production like that," Miller said. "When programs like that are free, I am very supportive of it."

A major advertiser

According to Bethea, the Lied Center works hard to get the word out to students to let them know what kind of programming is in store for each semester.

"We are continually looking for ways to give students information," he said. "When we do connect with students. That has a good effect."

The Lied Center's marketing department works to appeal to a broad variety of audience members, and Bethea said it works to tailor the ads to both students and the general public.

Lindsay Rogers, a freshman biology major, said she gets most of her information about the Lied Center through this advertising.

"I think those really help to inform students about the shows," Rogers said. "The people I have never heard of don't interest me, but I wish they had more programs directed toward students."

Overall, Bethea said he feels the center is making progress in attracting more students.

"The numbers are up, and that's healthy," he said. "Awareness is growing, and I want to continue to build that. We try to be available to students, and education and information are the most valuable tools to make that connection."

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