

Diversity a concern

MINORITY from page 1

UNL's recruitment days weren't as effective, Routh said.

Individual colleges are also stepping up efforts to improve minority recruitment and retention, he said.

Other minority group numbers reported Monday were correct.

American Indian students' enrollment has decreased 2.3 percent since 1996, Hispanic students' has decreased 5.8 percent and Asian students' has increased about 0.8 percent.

The white undergraduate student population has decreased about 6.3 percent since 1996. These numbers do not include non-American students.

Harris said the university needed to increase retention in every group on campus, not just black students.

"The bottom line for us is to do our best to keep our students on campus," he said.

"We don't want any student to leave the university for any reason."

Stenberg: Return criminals to jail

BY TODD ANDERSON
Senior staff writer

Criminals convicted of second-degree murder and given shorter sentences by the Nebraska Supreme Court in 1994 may still have to serve their original court sentences, Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg announced Thursday.

Nevertheless, Stenberg said he was disappointed with the Nebraska Supreme Court's decision not to consider the case he requested that would have affected the sentencing of 40 second-degree murder offenders.

In a 1994 second-degree murder case known as the Myers case, the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that malice must be alleged and proven, despite the Legislature's earlier repeal of the requirement.

Consequently, 132 convicts had their sentences reduced, and 21 have been released from prison since then.

In August, the courts overruled the 1994 decision without ruling on whether to restore the original sentences.

Stenberg filed a request in September, asking the court to decide the status of those 21 criminals with reduced sentences.

But the court declined to hold the request until a later time, thereby leaving that question unanswered.

"At least 20 of those second-degree murderers are on the streets right now, and 20 more will be on the streets sooner than under their original convictions unless the courts act to prevent it," Stenberg said.

He said he had hoped the Nebraska Supreme Court would make a quick decision to reinstate the criminals to safeguard public security and to expedite the process.

The request for a decision would have affected the sentence of all 40 of the criminals with reduced sentences.

"Now these various cases will have to be brought in several state district courts across the state of Nebraska, with appeals ultimately back to the Nebraska Supreme Court."

Stenberg said it may take years and cost more money to rule on the criminals' sentences, which may end up in the U.S. Supreme Court. He said his office would assist county attorneys by providing records and materials.

"As far as public safety is concerned, we can only hope and pray that the various murderers who now wander our streets will not commit further crimes of violence while these cases are litigated."

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