

ASUN puts vote to students

March vote will decide whether senate composition will change

By KIM SWEET
Staff writer

Four hours of emotional debate Wednesday ended in a vote to put a proposed constitutional amendment that would change the face of student government on the March student election ballot.

After many appeals by senators and a handful of students, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska voted 18-9 to let students decide whether senate composition should change.

Under the amendment, the composition would be changed so that 25 of the elected members would be voted on by college, 10 by place of residence. Five at-large members also would be elected to seats allocated specifically for underrepresented groups.

Speaker Matt Boyd said he was pleased the amendment passed and would be left up to student vote.

"I feel we made the correct decision tonight," he said. "I feel giving more people an opportunity to have their voices heard is great."

If two-thirds of the student body votes for the amendment in March, ASUN's constitution would be changed, and the senate composition would reflect the change in the 2000-2001 school year.

Graduate student senator Jeff

Woodford, who voted against putting the proposed amendment on the ballot, said leaving five at-large seats open to underrepresented groups jeopardized representation and would lead to discrimination.

"It's a sad day for the senate," Woodford said. "Tonight we voted for state-sponsored, government-enabled discrimination and did it under the guise of representation."

Arts and Sciences senator Kara Slaughter, who also voted against the amendment, said she was happy despite the amendment's success.

"Regardless of one position or another, I think this was a really important discussion to have," she said. "I think it shows student government has really come into an era of not being afraid to take on the most difficult issues."

Earlier in the night, Slaughter expressed her discontent on changing the constitution, something she said was permanent.

Instead of changing the constitution, Slaughter said, the senators had to make the body more representative by going out and working to serve all students — not by making the students come to ASUN.

President Sara Russell, who brought forth the amendment she has been working on since the summer, pleaded with the senate during the debate to accept it.

ASUN Question of the Week

If the senate were to add five special seats for underrepresented groups, which groups should receive these seats and how should they be chosen?

ASUN can govern better with your responses.
Respond to: asun1@unl.edu

Russell shared her experience as a senator two years ago when ASUN was dealing with the aftermath of a cross-burning by Sigma Chi Fraternity.

Unable to understand the impact of the effect a cross-burning had on the black community, the senate did not act as effectively as it could have if it were a more-diverse, representative body, Russell said.

"The senate took action, but I don't think we represented students right."

Russell said a more representative senate would help deal with sensitive issues, such as the cross-burning, more effectively.

The next step senators will take is to convince the student body of the pros and cons of the amendment, something that both sides will likely take on as passionately as Wednesday night's debate, Woodford said.

"I'm sure there will be a group of senators campaigning hard to pass it, and a group of senators campaigning hard to defeat it."

Court denies Lamms' plea; lawyer to appeal

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been heard.

"If victims support the prosecution, then the law supports you," Hutchinson said.

Brown said that Hutchinson's claim is not a legal issue.

"I'm not surprised that Paula takes that position, but I don't have a comment on that," Brown said. "I am neither involved in, nor privy to the (Pardons) Board's decision on those matters."

Cheuvront cited three other points of law in his decision:

■ The district court does not have jurisdiction in this matter.

■ The Pardons Board decision whether to hold a clemency hearing is not subject to this kind of court order.

■ There is no provision in Nebraska's constitution for implementing the provisions of the victim's bill of rights.

Many of the points in the court's decision came directly from Brown's arguments against the motion.

Reeves was scheduled to die in Nebraska's electric chair Jan. 14, but the state Supreme Court stayed the execution Jan. 12 to allow time to consider this motion and another appeal in Reeves' case.

The other appeal under consid-

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PAULA HUTCHINSON
attorney

eration by the Nebraska Supreme Court argues that, among other things, Reeves was discriminated against during the process that sentenced him to death.

This appeal is based upon the equal protection clause that Nebraskans voted into the constitution in November.

Hutchinson argued that the wording of the state's equal protection clause would allow the use of overall statistics to prove discrimination in the death penalty — something the U.S. Supreme Court has not allowed.

Brown said last week that the provision should not be retroactive.

The equal protection appeal also argues that the electric chair constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

UNL student races to biking victories

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California with Fellin and perfect their craft.

Now he's back in school and has to carefully plan his schedule around racing.

That means no Friday classes, he said, and coping with unsympathetic professors, who can't understand why somebody would go to California just for a bicycle race.

As for staying caught up with his studies, Richard said, "I try to get all my homework done on the plane. I'd get too much crap if I'd try to do it at the track."

Bringing out the troops

On the national circuit, Richard is known by his nickname, "The Ripper," and he and Fellin have developed a reputation for both their racing abilities and their knack for having an entourage of strippers cheer them on at all the big races. At every major race, at least five strippers show up.

Richard calls the arrival of this quirky fan base "bringing out the

troops."

"We just know a lot of strippers," he said. "People get bummed that we do it, but we're just out to have a good time."

"I just want to make a dent in the sport."

During the 1998 season, Richard's win at the World Cup in June put him in contention to reach his ultimate goal — a national championship.

Two months later, he suffered an Evel Knievel-style injury — a torn anterior cruciate ligament and a fibula that was cracked in 10 different places. One bad jump had obliterated his goal and knocked him out for the rest of the racing season, which runs January through Thanksgiving each year.

Now, after surgery to repair the torn ligament and months of intense physical therapy, Richard can compete again. So far, he has spent the off-season regaining strength in his injured leg.

When he makes his professional

"Don't let your kids grow up to play lame sports like football or baseball. Let them do something that's cool and be extreme athletes."

ROBBIE RICHARDS
bicycle racing champion

debut this year, strippers and other distractions aside, Richard's focus in BMX will be to increase the sport's exposure. He wants to see Nebraska known for more than corn and football among racers nationwide.

He also has a message for parents: "Don't let your kids grow up to play lame sports like football or baseball. Let them do something that's cool and be extreme athletes."

When he graduates next December, Richard plans to move out to California, a state that's more his style and one in which he's a known celebrity, and race until his body says

no.

After that, he plans on putting his business knowledge to use by starting a clothing company.

As for his chances of being the first pro BMX racer to come from Nebraska since 1982, gOrk, editor of *BMXer Magazine* said, "If Robbie's serious about doing the time and putting in the effort, he could be up there. He's definitely proven he's got the determination."

And yes, according to gOrk, Richard and Fellin are indeed "famous for having the rad blondes in the pits."

Stenberg announces 2000 Senate candidacy

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motivation for running.

"I wasn't expecting it this early," Boyle said. "I thought he would at least get the ink dry on his oath of office before he decided to run for U.S. Senate."

Boyle said Stenberg has not shown a real commitment to his current office of attorney general, into which 68 percent of voters elected him in November.

"After barely being sworn in two weeks ago, now he's announcing he will run for another office," Boyle said. "He doesn't seem to want to stay where he is."

"I don't know why he ran for re-election."

This is not Stenberg's first attempt at the Senate. He lost the Republican Senate primary in 1996

to Chuck Hagel, who eventually defeated then-Gov. Ben Nelson, a Democrat.

Hagel said he was pleased with Stenberg's announcement.

"I'm glad Don's going to do it," he said. "He's going to make a very credible and strong candidate. Nebraska knows him; there's no guessing about Don. He's smart and tough."

Nelson's name is another that has been tossed around as a possible Senate contender, but Boyle did not think Nelson would run.

Boyle said Nelson, who now works for an Omaha law firm, recently told her he was enjoying private life. She said Nelson, rumored to be considering a switch to the Republican Party, is not interested in running against Kerrey in the Democratic primary.

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(Stop by and check out the new pad.)

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