

Schwebach sues NU regents

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granted Schwebach the right to sue in October.

Schwebach's lawsuit alleged her harassment began in the fall semester of 1994, when male students made kissing noises and catcalls as she entered the classroom. Students wrote to department administrators about the incident in course evaluations, Schwebach said; however, Forsythe disregarded the information, she said.

In May 1995, Schwebach alleged fliers found by a graduate student were posted throughout the political science floor, which said "Valerie Schwebach is a c-nt."

The postings were brought to the attention of Forsythe, but no action was taken, the lawsuit alleged.

During 1995 and 1996, several political science graduate students reported harassment in the department.

The lawsuit alleged that a female graduate student in the spring of 1995 was sexually harassed by Ivan Volgyes, a then-professor in the political science department who has since been awarded emeritus status.

When the graduate student brought the harassment to Forsythe's attention, the lawsuit alleged, Forsythe said if the harassment was not sex for money or for grades, then it was not sexual harassment.

Other incidents of sexual harassment — or the ignorance of them — the suit alleged occurred:

■ In the spring of 1996, Brian Humes, an associate professor of political science, and Evelyn Fink, an assistant professor of political science, reported to Foster their concerns about harassment in the department, and Forsythe's handling of the matter. The suit alleged that Foster ignored the concerns of Humes and Fink, who are married.

■ In the fall of 1996, one female undergraduate student was referred to as "that blond chick with the really big tits," by a male teaching assistant, the suit alleged. Schwebach reported the incident in 1997 to graduate chairwoman Elizabeth Theiss-Morse and Jeff Spinner-Halev, associate professor of political science, the lawsuit stated.

■ In the spring of 1996, the suit alleged, a female graduate student in the political science department said she was sexually harassed by Associate Professor of Political Science David Rapkin, for whom she was a teaching assistant.

The suit alleged that Rapkin's "sexually aggressive" behavior was so obvious, some undergraduate students in the course referred to the teaching assistant as the "one Rapkin was trying to get on."

The graduate student complained to Forsythe, but did not name Rapkin, the suit alleged. Forsythe, the suit said, did not ask for the name of the allegedly harassing professor. Instead, he told the student she was having trouble adjusting to UNL because she was from out of state.

Upon hearing of the complaints in 1995, Rapkin said he thought they were absurd and that the controversy would pass.

Rapkin, who said he had not heard of the lawsuit until contacted by the Daily Nebraskan late Sunday, said he did not sexually harass the graduate student.

"I categorically deny it," he said. "There is no truth to it. There is no basis for any of those allegations."

Because he was on leave in Japan from 1996 to 1998, Rapkin said he had been unaware of the details of the Schwebach allegations.

The suit said the graduate student Rapkin had allegedly harassed asked current Political Science Department Chairman John Comer to remove her from her teaching assistant position. She was not, the suit alleged, but was increasingly berated by Rapkin in front of the 150-200 students in the class.

Rapkin said he recalled the class, which he said was a freshman introductory level course. He said student evaluations did not indicate the class had an unacceptable environment.

Comer did not return calls from the Daily Nebraskan this weekend.

The lawsuit said Schwebach told the graduate student to take her complaints to the Committee on Departmental Relations, whose members included Political Science

Professor John Hibbing and Theiss-Morse. The committee told the student to confront Rapkin, the suit alleged, and declined to speak with Rapkin about the incident until the student confronted him.

Because of the "treatment she received in the political science department, the suit alleged, the graduate student left UNL before finishing her degree.

She was one of the three graduate students that, by the spring of 1996, had left the department because of the "hostile-working environment (and) sexual harassment," the lawsuit stated.

Theiss-Morse, a political science associate professor, said in an interview with the Daily Nebraskan last May that the department always took a pro-active position with gender issues.

When contacted Saturday, Theiss-Morse would not comment on the lawsuit nor on previous events in the department.

In July 1997, Schwebach filed a complaint with the Academic Senate Rights and Responsibilities Committee that alleged her complaints were not properly addressed.

In spring of 1998, the ARRC found the political science department tolerated a hostile environment to women. The committee recommended placing the department on "receivership," a three-year probation-like period.

However, after the ARRC's report, UNL Chancellor James Moeser appointed an ad hoc committee of three faculty members to look at the department's climate. The committee found no hard evidence to support gender inequity in the department.

"It became very clear to me at that time that nothing was going to be done to solve the problem," Schwebach said. "I no longer wanted to be a part of it."

Schwebach alleged that written, verbal and physical sexual and racial harassment continued until her resignation. Previous sexual harassment, and the department's decision not to improve its climate, forced her to leave, she said.

"(The department) made my work environment intolerable," Schwebach said. "I had to leave."

Schwebach said she hoped the law-

Legislators look to slow I-80 speed limit to 70

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Of the 33 fatalities on rural I-80 in 1998, 15 of them occurred between York and Omaha, said Fred Zwonechek, administrator for the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety. In 1987, when the speed limit was lower, seven of the 15 fatalities on the interstate occurred in that area.

Raising the speed limit had a direct correlation to an increase in accidents, Zwonechek said.

"You don't need to do a lot of research to find the examples of that," Zwonechek said of the relationship. "Every time we have changed or adjusted the speed limit, there have been corresponding relationships in traffic fatalities."

Nebraska Department of Roads Director John Craig said a correlation between the speed motorists drive and the degree of risk could also be drawn.

"The faster you drive, the less reaction time you've got," Craig said. "Clearly, you are safer if you are driving slower rather than faster."

"You smack into a wall and you stand a lot better chance of surviving if you are driving 15 mph instead of 75 mph."

According to the Highway Safety Office, the chances of death or serious injury double for every 10 mph over 50 mph a vehicle travels.

Zwonechek said speeding also

becomes more dangerous as traffic gets more congested, which occurs heavily on I-80 between Lincoln and Omaha, and when a large disparity exists between the slow and fast drivers.

Sen. George Coorsen of Hebron is taking a different approach to slowing people by boosting fines for speeding on the interstate but not highways. The fines would range from \$50 for speeding 1 to 5 mph over the limit to \$300 for speeding 21 mph over the limit. Current fines range from \$10 to \$200.

Although fines and reduced speeds look good on paper, Craig doubted the effectiveness of those approaches.

"The fact that you change a sign, in my mind, is not going to make a difference," Craig said. "It's just the reality of our culture."

The speeding dilemma is one that lawmakers need to take a stand on, Zwonechek said.

"It really is a decision that policymakers are going to have to make between providing the resources to enforce the existing limit, or look at alternatives in the short term," he said.

When asked what an ideal speed limit was, Zwonechek said he did not have a specific number, just a philosophy.

"If everybody was going the same speed, it would be safe."

MIS students expected to find ample job market

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either.

"We have leading-edge courses in the leading-edge software," Lee said.

A number of companies recruit students from UNL to take on MIS positions. Lincoln and Omaha companies such as Sandhill Publishing, the Gallup Organization, USWest and Inacom all come back looking for UNL graduates to staff their offices.

Sandhill Publishing's manager of computer systems department Kim Mehring said his company has hired several MIS graduates from UNL.

Mehring said that his company does not always use the graduates in the same way as other companies do, and consequently they have to introduce them to programming, a skill the UNL graduates he has hired have not

been fluent in.

"Once they make it through (programming training), they have a much better understanding of our company," Mehring said.

Lee said companies who have hired UNL graduates in the past have been impressed. Cargill, Inc., one of those companies, uses UNL as their largest recruiting base.

Lee said the company had been so impressed with the students that it was giving money to the department to buy computers.

The number of people needed for MIS positions will continue to increase nationwide and worldwide as information technology permeates the business world, Lee said.

"This is an exciting profession," he said, "not only for the money, but for the challenging and exciting career."

Transfusions unaffected by low blood bank supply

BY JOSH KNAUB
Staff writer

Despite a near-critical blood supply dip in early January, officials at Lincoln's Community Blood Bank are confident that area patients will not have to wait for a transfusion.

"At this point, the situation is not critical, but we are concerned," said Marj McKinty, director of donor resources.

McKinty said that both local and national blood supplies usually experience a drop during the holidays because of a decrease in donors and an increase in accidents.

This year's dip was worsened by winter storms across the Midwest and the eastern seaboard, she said.

Melissa McMillian, associate director of public relations at America's Blood Centers, said shortages this year have been more severe than usual.

McMillian said blood banks in the Pittsburgh and New York areas advised hospitals to postpone non-emergency surgeries.

This year was unusual, she said,

because the blood supply appeared to be in good shape prior to the shortage.

"Blood centers reported that they were well supplied prior to Christmas," McMillian said.

Both local and national officials cited an increased use of blood products in the past year. Locally, the increase began with a 30 percent jump in blood use during July 1997.

McKinty speculated the increase could have been caused by more surgeries being performed locally rather than in Omaha, but could not give a specific reason.

Donors also increased last year, but at a lower rate than blood usage.

"We had to issue three critical appeals for blood in 1998," McKinty said. "That's the most ever."

McKinty encouraged university students to give blood, and said the Community Blood Bank uses mobile locations to arrange convenient times and locations for students.

Any healthy person who is at least 17 years old and weighs 110 pounds or more can donate blood every eight weeks. To make an appointment, students can call (402) 474-1781.

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Preoccupied with food, weight, body image or dieting?
Talk with us. We can help.

Eating Issues Support Group
Weekly on Wednesdays, beginning Jan. 20
Women's Center, Nebraska Union 338
4:00 - 5:00 pm
Call Tricia, 472-2597

Accepting Our Bodies... Accepting Ourselves
I. Tuesdays, Feb. 2 - Mar. 9
7:00 - 8:00 p.m., Nebraska Union 213
II. Mar. 23 - Apr. 27
Time and Place TBA
Must register, call Norma, 472-7450
\$40 fee

Making Peace with Food
Wednesdays, Feb. 10 - Apr. 7
3:30 - 4:45 pm
University Health Center, Room D
Must register, call Sue, 472-7450
or Karen, 472-7478

Improving Body Image
Tuesdays, Feb. 9 - Apr. 6
3:00 - 4:30 pm
Women's Center, Nebraska Union 338
Must register, call Sue, 472-7450

Call Counseling & Psychological Services
for more information at 472-7450.

UNL is a non-discriminatory institution.