

Fees launch UNL into future of technolo-

By **KIM SWEET**
Staff writer

UNL students are reaping the benefits of an ever-increasing technology fee tacked onto their tuition bills, administrators said.

The opening of a computer lab and the addition of computers in the Nebraska Union and Nebraska East Union are just a couple of the most visible places the fee is at work, said Pam Holley-Wilcox, director of information technology support.

More than 20 new computers in

Love Library, the replacement of more than 40 general-use computers on East Campus and a new, more helpful peer help line are some of the other additions to technological support at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The fee, which was raised to \$4 per credit hour this year, was responsible for the opening of the computer lab in the Nebraska Union. Since it opened Feb. 8, Nebraska Unions Director Daryl Swanson said the lab and the six stand-up computers outside the lab have had a constant flow of traffic.

Some days, students have waited in line to sit down at the 28 new PCs and Power Macintoshes, said Linda Roos, manager of user education at information technology support.

"The third day it was open in the morning, there was a line," Roos said. "It seems students have figured it out already where it is at."

Swanson said the quick popularity of the lab was impressive because the Monday morning opening was unannounced.

While the computer lab is open during the regular operating hours of the Union, Swanson said he is setting the grand opening of the lab at April 5.

By that date, Swanson said, he expected the new west entry to be complete, which will make the lab accessible 24 hours a day.

Once the entry is finished, students will swipe their UNL identification cards to enter the stair tower outside of the union. They will be required to swipe their ID once again to enter the lab.

Opening by April 5 would make the lab available for end-of-semester tests and projects, Swanson said.

The addition of the lab, along with computers to check e-mail in the

"The third day (the Nebraska Union computer lab) was open in the morning, there was a line."

LINDA ROOS
Information Technology Support manager

Nebraska and Nebraska East Union, are cooperative efforts of Information Services and the Nebraska Unions, Swanson said.

Along with access to new computers, students now have access to extended help hours for dealing with computer problems, thanks to the technology fee.

Last semester, the student help desk extended its hours Monday through Thursday until 11 p.m., Holley-Wilcox said.

Holley-Wilcox said the later hours would help the large number of students who did computer work at night instead of during the day.

The help desk, which can be accessed by calling (402) 472-3970, is staffed by employees who can guide students through software

packages and help students with computer problems.

Along with providing help during the evening hours, Holley-Wilcox said information technology support was looking into providing tutoring for students to get one-on-one assistance.

With the completion of these projects, another slate of projects will be proposed to spend next year's \$5-per-credit-hour technology fee.

The fee will increase a dollar for the third consecutive school year, and will remain the same from then on, Holley-Wilcox said.

What the fee will fund will be decided in part by the student government's technology fee advisory board, she said.

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Gang-related felonies

Gang members who commit felonies would face stiffer penalties than unaffiliated citizens under a bill heard by the Judiciary Committee Friday.

Omaha Sen. Jon Bruning testified Friday in support of LB159, which bumps up penalties one classification level for gang-related offenses.

The bill defines a "gang" as a group of five or more people who commit or conspire to commit felonies, the crime of possession of a controlled substance, or violence or intent to use violence.

"Gang activity" occurs when someone participates in a gang knowing that the gang commits felonies.

"These folks must know that their gang continually commits felony offenses," Bruning said.

Bruning offered an amendment that would exempt crimes that are a 1B felony or higher because that would make the violator eligible for the death penalty. Seventeen states have similar legislation.

Omaha Sen. Kermit Brashear, who is chairman of the Judiciary Committee, wondered how prosecutors would prove gang membership.

Hearsay and circumstantial evidence would be used to prove gang membership, Bruning said. That is the biggest obstacle for attorneys, but was a small price to pay for safer communities, he said.

"To me, society's interest is served in giving attorneys this tool," Bruning said.

Attorney General Don Stenberg, who testified in support of the bill, said a 1997 interim study showed a general consensus for this type of legislation. Hastings Police Chief Larry Thoren also testified in support of the bill.

Legislative Notebook

Mike Kelley, a lobbyist for the Nebraska Criminal Defense Attorneys Association, was opposed to the bill because the bill's definition of "gang" was subjective.

"It could mean different things to different prosecutors," he said.

Fireworks

Party revelers celebrating New Year's Eve this year would be able to add some spark to their soirees under a bill sponsored by Gering Sen. Adrian Smith.

LB621 would allow vendors to sell fireworks between Dec. 28, 1999, and Jan. 1, 2000. Twenty-six senators have signed onto the bill.

Smith, who testified in front of the Judiciary Committee on Friday, said he introduced the bill so people could legally buy fireworks to bring in the new century with a bang. Instead of going across state borders to get fireworks, the bill would keep money in the state, he said.

"I think it will keep some tax dollars in the state and generate some revenue instead of spend it," Smith said.

Money generated from sales tax revenue from fireworks would be put in the state's Fire Insurance Tax Fund. That money is used for fire prevention activities.

The committee took no action on the bill Friday.

Computer crimes

People who commit crimes via the Internet such as credit card fraud or transmitting child pornography would face stiffer penalties than people who commit those crimes sans computer under a bill sponsored by Bruning.

LB79 would bump up the penalty

classification one level if the crime is committed using a computer. If the crime is already a Class 1B felony or higher, the law would not apply because that would make the person eligible for the death penalty.

Crimes committed with a computer are increasing as technology advances, Bruning said, and those crimes carry more severe consequences.

"With a computer, you can proliferate the crime," Bruning said. "You can commit the crime with the push of a button."

Senators half-jokingly, half-seriously pointed out that the bill would increase the penalty for actually using a lap-top computer to physically harm someone.

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony from Stenberg in support of the bill. Kelley testified in opposition.

Eighteen states have similar computer-felony laws.

Stenberg said capability for criminal activity is increased with a computer because of difficulty in finding violators. The effects are multiplied on the Internet, he said.

A pornographic picture of a child broadcast over the Internet is more damaging than if the picture was circulated on the street, he said. Credit card fraud and stalking also are crimes that, if done over the Internet, can be more detrimental.

But Kelley pointed out what he saw as holes in the bill.

"If you did it 80 times, you could have 80 counts of the same thing," he said.

The committee took no action on the bill.

Compiled by senior staff writer Jessica Fargen

Daily Nebraskan Editor

The 1999-2000 editor in chief will formulate editorial policies, determine guidelines for the daily operation of the newsroom, hire the senior editorial staff, help determine the content of the newspaper and prepare the editorial wage budget. Applicants must have one year of newspaper experience, preferably at the Daily Nebraskan. The position begins Aug. 1, 1999 and lasts until May 5, 2000.

The editor earns \$1000/month (except in December, March and May) and reports to the UNL Publications Board. The editor must be enrolled in at least six credit hours during each of the two 1999-00 semesters, maintain a 2.0 minimum G.P.A., and not be on academic probation. Applications are available at the Daily Nebraskan office, basement of the Nebraska Union, and must be returned with up to five clips by noon Feb. 22.

