

Q & A

ASUN candidates answer for goals

By KIM SWEET
Staff writer

In anticipation of today's election, Focus and Voice executive candidates in the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska took some time to answer several questions regarding their vision for student government.

Polling sites and hours for elections include the following: Nebraska and Nebraska East Union, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Campus Recreation Center, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Neihardt Gold Parlor, noon to 8 p.m.; Harper Food Service, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sandoz Lounge, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

What actions will you take to improve the perception of ASUN?

Andy Schuerman, presidential candidate, Voice party

"What's really going to do it is personal contact. By really getting out and talking to students, attending student organizations, holding town hall meetings and talking to students in classes, we can see what they are really concerned about so they can buy into ASUN and feel like they really have a say in what goes on there.

"One of the things we'd like to try is doing target groups. We want to randomly select students and ask them to participate in a round-table discussion and just talk about some campus issues. I think really ensuring that ASUN is covering pertinent issues is the most effective way of improving the perception of ASUN."

Paul Schreier, presidential candidate, Focus party

"The answer is simple. We will focus on real student issues. By working toward real substantive improvements in our campus and in our edu-

cation, students will understand the importance of taking an active role in their community and their education, and realize ASUN is one of the biggest avenues they can do that through.

"Whether it is improving the educational atmosphere of our campus by building diversity or participating in the statewide discussion on the role our university should play, it will be clear through the Focus party that the students are the most important part of our institution."

What actions will you take to talk to students?

Rachelle Winkle, first vice presidential candidate, Voice party

"I will probably keep doing what I have been doing during the past year and during the election — that is mostly going to student organizations.

"Because I've been a student assistant in the residence halls for 3 years, I really think that one-on-one contact is really important. I plan to do that through randomly chosen round-tables. Also, I think it is important as a student leader that you attend a lot of the events that are going on on campus. Whether they be events sponsored by different organizations that are culturally based or whether they are involvement-type events — those are good times to talk to people.

"We will also be having town hall meetings every Tuesday."

Jon England, first vice-presidential candidate, Focus party

"One way is through the Daily Nebraskan. I thought the (ASUN) Question of the Week was a very efficient way that students could do that. One reason it failed was because of lack of publicity. That would be something I want to bring back.

"There needs to be some way to get students

together to let them know their input is needed. One way is actively going out and talking to them. That means taking initiatives on your own and talking to residence halls and greek houses."

How will you bring students not involved in ASUN into the process?

Vernon Miller, second vice presidential candidate, Voice Party

"Communication is very important to let students who are unaware of what ASUN is to understand.

"My experience being in the greek system, living in the residence halls, living off campus and being an underrepresented student on campus will allow me to understand what it is like to be those students. My experience in ASUN is going to help me to explain what ASUN is and what it does."

Trisha Meuret, second vice presidential candidate, Focus party

"One of the best ways to decrease apathy regarding ASUN is to bring it not from the top down but from the bottom up.

"One way we're looking to do that as the Focus party is by providing increased power to the Student Advisory Boards. Some advisory boards like the (College of Business Administration) Advisory Board and Arts and Sciences Advisory Board have been around for a long time. They provide excellent roles in their colleges, so we want to model some of the advisory boards after them.

"We would like students to feel comfortable approaching the students they've selected to be on advisory boards. When they can feel comfortable approaching those students, that's a great way to bring those ideas to the senator and ultimately to ASUN."

Hopkins' testimony contradicts

By JOSH FUNK
Senior staff writer

Witnesses in Tony Galligo's murder trial Tuesday contradicted the main prosecution witness' account of the 1995 murder of Michael Schmader.

More questions were raised about Timothy Hopkins' story of the murder.

Hopkins, Galligo and Schmader all lived in the same south Lincoln group home in 1995 when Schmader was killed.

On Oct. 18, 1995, Schmader was brutally beaten and stabbed in an Antelope Creek storm-drainage tunnel under 48th Street for stealing two cartons of cigarettes from Hopkins and Galligo.

Schmader's body was discovered Dec. 22, 1995, by two boys digging in the creek bed to build a fort.

The murder went unsolved for almost two years until Hopkins confessed to the murder in September 1997.

But since that confession, Hopkins' story has changed considerably — most notably after he agreed to testify against Galligo as part of a June 1998 plea agreement.

On Tuesday, Hopkins' attorney, Scott Helvie, testified about the details of his meetings with Hopkins leading up to the plea.

On cross examination, Galligo's attorney Kirk Naylor tried to show that Hopkins did not implicate Galligo until after it was rumored that Galligo might have testified against him.

Helvie said that Hopkins first mentioned that Galligo was present during a Jan. 5, 1998, meeting, but Hopkins said Galligo did not do anything.

In February 1999, Helvie said he told Hopkins that Galligo may come forward to testify, but Hopkins still did not want a plea.

It was not until after Galligo was arrested in Omaha on unrelated charges in April 1998 and was interviewed by Lincoln Police that Hopkins told Helvie to pursue a plea agreement.

On May 1, 1998, Hopkins changed his story to implicate Galligo.

Then Helvie arranged a plea agreement without letting prosecutors interview Hopkins.

After Hopkins signed the plea agreement on June 24, 1998, he told the story of a premeditated murder that he carefully planned and carried out. Galligo played only a minor role.

"What my client did was first degree murder," Helvie said.

A provision of the plea agreement stated Hopkins must tell the truth or face a charge of first degree murder.

The jury also heard from Joshua Chrastil, another group home resident at the time of the murder.

In Hopkins' story he said on Oct. 18, 1995, Hopkins and Galligo talked to Chrastil at a convenience store, Chrastil told them that he got his cigarettes from Schmader.

But Chrastil testified that the cigarette theft actually took place several days before the murder and the conversation took place in the group home.

Chrastil said that Hopkins was talking about doing something to Schmader for stealing the cigarettes.

Former Regional Center teacher Karen Brown testified that she knew Hopkins had "profound psychological problems" and was "capable of violence" when she started having sex with him in July 1996.

Brown had a sexual relationship with Hopkins for more than a year and smoked marijuana with Hopkins and Galligo on several occasions.

Today the state is expected to call the chief investigator in the case, Lincoln Police Detective Greg Sorenson before resting its case. The trial is expected to conclude Thursday.

Staff writer Josh Knaub contributed to this and Tuesday's report.

Candidates make final cases at debate

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up of people who reside on East Campus and who will make it a point to bridge the gap will also make a difference, she said.

Second vice presidential candidates Trisha Meuret and Vernon Miller faced off on the issue of professors and research.

Stressing the importance of professor's research at a Carnegie Research One institution, Miller, the Voice candidate, said research needed to be recognized as an important facet of the university.

Focus candidate Meuret said she endorsed hiring professors specifically for teaching and others specifically for research.

Asked to identify the major issues that ASUN will continue to face, Meuret said issues of communication and campus unity would continue to be present.

"I think communication and getting everyone to work together is one of the main ways to make for a better campus overall."

Pursuing the issue of football tickets will make strides toward organizing events that will unite students.

Miller said combating apathy and encouraging communication were two of the most important issues.

Curing apathy comes partly by letting students know what ASUN can do for them, Miller said.

Through roundtable discussions, executives will be able to find out what is important to students, he said.

When asked what element of their campaign they were most proud of, Schreier said he was most excited about the ideas the party came up with.

"We worked on real concrete issues that students on this campus care about," Schreier said.

Voice presidential candidate Andy Schuerman said he was proud of the integrity the Voice

party has maintained during their campaign.

Schuerman pointed to the decision not to provide alcohol at work parties and other campaign events as one example.

The decision was important, since many of the issues being looked at involved binge drinking and related issues, Schuerman said.

"When considering things such as binge drinking, we knew we could not go to the bar afterward and have alcohol for even (people over 21)," he said.

Both candidates talked about the changes in the election rules, one of which will be the absence of party names on election ballots.

Schuerman said the absence of the names was helpful in forcing students to get their own names out rather than relying strictly on party affiliation on election day.

But the Voice presidential candidate said the lack of party names could hurt underrepresented students who could have fared better with the support of the party name on the ballot.

Schreier said he thought the absence of names on the ballot would not affect the results.

Students are aware of which students are affiliated with the Focus party and what they stand for, he said.

The presidential candidates each made one last comment before the debate closed.

"Our issues are not old ones," Schreier said. "They are things the student body has been looking for and asking for.

"There will be tangible work done, seen and felt by the student body when we are done," he said.

Schuerman complimented his party for the goals they have accomplished and will continue to if elected.

"The candidates who have come together in the Voice party have purpose and they have heart," Schuerman said.

Switch to nonprofit may put aid at risk

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create a public charity and is in effect owned by all of us," he said.

Participants said they wanted to be more involved in formulating the foundation's mission, determining who gets the scholarships and whether they are need-based or merit-based.

Currently, the FEF board of directors makes these decisions.

"The public has to say, 'We want to be sitting at the table when the foundation decides what its priorities are,'" he said.

Originally, the foundation disqualified UNL students from the scholarships, because the University of Nebraska-Lincoln participates in the federal Direct Student Loan Program.

That was an example of a decision made with little public scrutiny or involvement, Gardner said.

Recently, the foundation donated \$50,000 for scholarships for participants in Tom Osborne's Teammates mentoring program who attend college at one of the NU campuses. If all that money is not used, low-income, minority and special-needs students at NU campuses would receive the money.

Participants also said too much focus had been put on postsecondary education. The FEF's mission is to bring education within the reach of Nebraska students.

"It's definitely a very narrow focus on post-secondary," Gardner said. "Their mission doesn't say that."

Scott Davis, FEF president and chairman, did not attend the discussion.

Nebraska is one of 23 states that have secondary student loan markets that are eligible to switch to for-profit. Consumers Union has been monitoring these switches since a 1996 federal law allowed them to occur.

LeeAnn Roth, director of the Nebraska Career Information System, who attended the roundtable discussion, said the issue was largely unheard of in Nebraska.

"People have no idea this has even

"The Attorney General has a special obligation to protect charitable assets in the state."

PATRICK GARDNER
coordinator of Education Assets Project for Consumers Union

happened," she said. "We need to get information out that this has happened."

Gardner said he will request that Attorney General Don Stenberg take the responsibility of ensuring more public involvement in the FEF. He will also request that the Attorney General investigate the valuation of the \$100 million.

"The Attorney General has a special obligation to protect charitable assets in the state," Gardner said. "At this point the Attorney General's review has been minimal. We expect them to beef up their investigation."

Gardner said he was not accusing the foundation of fraud, but a closer review of the valuation and the transition was needed.

"You don't have fraud in order to ask what happened," Gardner said.

Similar transitions of health-care organizations several years ago resulted in cases of assets of the non-profits being severely undervalued, said Harry Synder, who was also at the discussion and is a senior advocate for the Consumers Union's west coast office.

"Whether it's health care dollars or educational assets these are funds that are owed to the public," Synder said.

Consumers Union wants to ensure that does not happen with organizations such as NebHELP.

"I'm not suggesting any of this is the case," Synder said. "The problem is we don't know."