

# Voter turnout 12 percent in runoff

BY VERONICA DAEHN  
Staff writer

If 20 more students had decided to vote in the ASUN election Wednesday night, next year's student government may have had a different outlook.

A runoff election, held because neither party garnered enough votes a week ago, was decided by 20 votes.

As expected, voter turnout was not as high as last week. Out of a possible 20,511 eligible voters, 12.03 percent voted Wednesday, compared to 13.2 percent last week.

Voice party executive candidates Andy Schuerman and Rachelle Winkle won this year's Association of Students of the University of Nebraska election with 1,237 votes.

Focus candidates Paul Schreier and Jon England received 1,217.

For second vice president, Focus candidate Trisha Meuret defeated the Voice party's Vernon Miller with 1,289 votes. Miller obtained 1,124.

In the presidential race, six blank ballots were turned in and seven ballots were deemed invalid.

There were 54 no-votes in the race for second vice president.

The runoff election was held because ASUN

election guidelines dictate an executive candidate must receive a majority of the total votes cast in general election.

If a majority is not achieved, the candidates are victorious only if their vote total is higher than their opponents' by at least 10 percent of the total number of votes cast.

Because no candidate gained a majority or won by 10 percent, a runoff election was held Wednesday.

No margin of victory is required in a runoff election. Parties can, however, request a recount. Both parties will have until Friday to do so.

An electronic counting machine was used to count ballots last week, but an election commission of eight people spent more than three hours sorting and counting the ballots by hand Wednesday night.

Because of limited finances, Marlene Beyke, ASUN director of development, said the machine could not be used the second time.

While the machine is more accurate, Focus senate candidate Judy O'Brien said the commission did a good job by hand.

"The machine seems more efficient," she said. "They're doing a good job guaranteeing that the count is right by hand, though."

O'Brien, who lost her senatorial race last week, said the runoff created extra stress for both parties

Voter turnout	
Runoff election	
12.0 percent of 20,511 eligible voters	
1999	13.2 percent (from last week)
1998	13.5 percent
1997	9.8 percent
1996	8.4 percent (18-year low)
1995	12.7 percent
1990	16.3 percent

JON FRANK/DN

who were already worn out from the campaign.

"I understand why it was necessary," she said, "but it was hard on both sides to campaign for another week."

Voice Senate candidate Nick Burns agreed. The cost of campaigning was steep, he said.

"I would have liked to have seen it taken care of last week," Burns said. "A lot of people went for broke that last week and it made it difficult on everyone involved."

Beyke said the work that the candidates did to encourage students to vote in the runoff was impressive.

"The candidates really worked hard to get everyone out."

# Dole warms to presidential run

■ The wife of former Sen. Bob Dole, Elizabeth Dole announces the formation of an exploratory committee while speaking in Iowa.

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Elizabeth Dole moved a step closer to a full-fledged campaign for president Wednesday, announcing the formation of an exploratory committee and saying she sees "a great American yearning" that she is ready to fulfill.

Highlighting her qualifications in the race for the 2000 Republican nomination, Dole said she had worked for five presidents — and had held two Cabinet posts — but she also sought to separate herself from other political candidates.

"What does a woman like me have to offer the country?" she asked. "I'm not a politician and, frankly, today I think that may be a plus."

She pointed to her experience as secretary of labor and secretary of transportation as well as her eight years heading the American Red Cross.

"That's experience and that's what counts," said Dole. "I'm not a seat-warmer. I want to get in there and make a difference."

Her speech, announcing an exploratory committee looking toward a campaign, was heavy on themes and

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GEORGE W. BUSH  
Texas governor

light on specifics.

"I want to hear from you. This is a people-to-people effort on my part," Dole told more than 400 backers who jammed a rally. "We're going to be laying out positions on all these issues, but we're going to be doing it in a thoughtful way."

During her speech, Dole moved about the room much as she had during a presentation that won her high marks at the 1996 Republican National Convention that gave the 1996 GOP nomination to her husband.

Bob Dole did not attend Wednesday's event, and she didn't refer to him directly.

After her speech, Elizabeth Dole left the room without answering reporters' questions.

Early polls have shown Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Elizabeth Dole far ahead of other potential GOP

rivals. And Bush issued a statement welcoming her to the contest.

"I think Elizabeth Dole is a fine person and I'm glad she's in the race," Bush said. "I think it's instructive to America that the first viable female presidential candidate is a Republican."

A Gallup Poll released Wednesday showed Elizabeth Dole with 50 percent support compared to 45 percent for Vice President Al Gore in a one-on-one matchup. Bush had a 56 percent to 41 percent lead over Gore.

Four out of 10 poll respondents said that, all else being equal, a man would make a better president than a woman. Three out of 10 said a woman would be better.

The telephone poll of 1,014 adults was conducted Friday through Sunday and had an error margin of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

# Few choose to complete honors program

HONORS from page 1

The number of honors students who graduate from the program fluctuates because students fulfill degree requirements in different manners.

"For some reasons, students tend to stick around longer," Berger said. "Sometimes it takes longer to fulfill all of their requirements, i.e. the thesis."

Alyson Goodall, an August 1998 honors program graduate, agreed.

"I stuck around for the summer just to work on and finish my thesis," Goodall said. "I'm glad I did so."

Goodall, who is currently a graduate student at the University of Arizona, said graduating with honors has allowed her to excel in her graduate studies. Goodall, who received her bachelor's degree in communication studies, is pursuing her master's in public administration.

"It's amazing to me to hear not many students graduating with honors," she said. "I cannot imagine myself graduating from the university without it."

Goodall said graduating with honors has benefited her academically and professionally.

"It was important to me to graduate with distinction because UNL is such a

big school," Goodall said. "I wanted to set myself apart from the rest, then and now."

Berger said each college and department has its own methods of determining what degree of distinction an honors student can graduate with.

Students who fulfill all honors requirements can graduate with distinction, high distinction or highest distinction, he said.

"It's up to the individual colleges. The honors program doesn't decide," Berger said. "But to graduate with honors, students do have to complete a research or creative activity, such as a thesis, their senior year."

Brian Buescher, a May 1997 honors graduate, said the decision to write an honors thesis may be hard for some students.

"Writing an honors thesis is not for everyone," Buescher said. "But the fact the students use and abuse the textbook scholarship, well, that's wrong."

Neither Buescher, who is currently a second-year law student at Georgetown University Law Center, or Goodall received the textbook scholarship. The scholarship was implemented in 1995, during Buescher's junior and Goodall's sophomore year.

"It's sad to hear students are taking

advantage of the scholarship," Goodall said. "Students should really try to fulfill all of the honors requirements."

Buescher agreed.

"It wasn't easy, but I did it," Buescher said. "It was definitely worth it."

Berger said the program would increase opportunities for students to pursue their thesis, including the continuation of an honors thesis workshop.

"The common trend we are seeing is more students finishing their requirements and graduating from the honors program," he said. "We want to keep it like that."

Scott Schreiter, a junior honors communication studies major, said he had been contemplating his thesis this year.

"I don't know what I want to do it on yet, but I do know I want to do it," Schreiter said.

Buescher said he was pleased to hear more honors students pursuing a thesis.

"When you combine wonderful students and the opportunity to succeed, you have students who fulfill their college goals," Buescher said. "Individual and academic success is what the program likes to see."

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