

# Force looks at freshman retention

By **KIMBERLY SWEET**  
Senior staff writer

For the typical freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the first weekend at school is reserved for getting used to residence hall life and learning to navigate around campus.

But if Ted Parady, a professor of biological sciences, could have his way, students new to UNL would spend the first weekend at school on a camping trip, learning about biology or meeting new people.

Parady, along with 22 other UNL faculty members, staff and students on the Freshman Experience Task Force spent last year coming up with recommendations on how to successfully assimilate freshman students into college life.

Camping trips are not on the list yet, but an optional overnight New Student Enrollment, first-year charter seminars, more learning communities and an interactive Web site are.

The task force, which was appointed by Richard Edwards, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, was charged with the task of making recommendations that would increase the freshman retention rate.

Parady said the group looked to make recommendations that would be realistic without requiring an onslaught of new funding.

"One of the things we decided was that this cannot be heavily resource-dependent," he said. "We decided to use

the expertise we have available and to piggy-back on existing programs."

Nancy Stara, associate to the vice chancellor for academic affairs, said Edwards was impressed with the recommendations the group presented.

"I would say he is supportive," Stara said. "I think the recommendations are realistic and can be done."

In order to make recommendations, the task force first had to gather information about incoming freshman, Parady said.

"It became apparent that we were losing a disproportionate amount of freshman who were intellectually well-prepared," Parady said.

After getting information on freshman, the task force concluded that those who belonged to an identifiable community had better success rates than those who were loners.

By creating more learning communities, freshmen who aren't connected to groups such as fraternities, sororities or band would have a chance to be a part of an identifiable group, Parady said.

The task force also saw an opportunity for a more intensive orientation period during the first few days of school. Providing some kind of structured activity during the first hours they are on campus could make the transition from high school to college a little easier, Parady said.

"There are 72 golden hours where we could work to help make the transition easier," he said.

Another way to help freshmen stay after their first year is to establish first-

year charter seminars. These classes would provide small, interactive class environments where new students could establish relationships with professors and other students, Parady said.

Other recommendations include an overnight New Student Enrollment and creating a Web site to communicate what it takes to succeed at UNL.

The recommendations, which were presented to Edwards in June, are now up for review by the entire campus. The task force is looking for feedback from faculty, staff and students from a variety of disciplines to comment and make suggestions on the feasibility of the recommendations.

Along with receiving feedback from around campus, the next step in the process is forming subcommittees with special expertise. The subcommittees will work on developing programs and freshmen seminars for next year, Parady said.

Parady said he wants to see concrete evidence of the group's work outside of the report by next year.

"It's up to the campus as a whole," he said. "Our goal is to have some tangible pilot programs on line next year."

Two forums will be sponsored by ASUN and the Academic Senate to gather feedback on the recommendations. They will be on Sept. 16 in the Nebraska Union and Sept. 17 on the East Nebraska Union.

Part One of the task force's recommendations are available on the Web at <http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/Activities/TF/Freport.html>.

# Egyptian president survives yet another assassination attempt

PORT SAID, Egypt (AP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has survived a series of assassination plots and attempts, brushed off an attack Monday that left him grazed and the assailant dead.

The afternoon attack came as hundreds of people chanting Mubarak's name and carrying his photograph thronged the streets of Port Said to welcome the presidential motorcade.

Mubarak, riding in a black luxury car, was visiting the northern city to tour industrial projects and deliver a speech ahead of a presidential referendum in Egypt.

"While the president was waving ... through the car's window, a person approached the motorcade holding a sharp tool and inflicted a light wound," said a statement from the president's office. It indicated Mubarak was wounded on the arm.

The special security guards immediately killed the assailant, the statement said. The statement did not explain how the assailant was killed, but witnesses said he was shot several times by Mubarak's guards.

The attacker was identified as Said Hassan Suleiman, 40, a clothing vendor who "has been known for

impulsive behavior and recklessness." The police statement added that he had "no political affiliations."

Suleiman was a common criminal, police sources said without elaborating.

Later Monday, Suleiman's neighbors, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they believed he was an Islamic fundamentalist. They said he was arrested nearly two months ago for suspicion of belonging to a militant group but was released three days later. He always carried a pocket knife, they added.

Mubarak's wound was treated with a disinfectant. Appearing composed, he spoke as scheduled about an hour after the attack and made no mention of it. He had changed from a brown suit to a dark blue one.

Sources said Mubarak then went to spend the night at the coastal resort of Sharm el-Sheik, where a day before he had presided over the signing of a new Israeli-Palestinian peace accord. He is scheduled to travel to Libya on Wednesday for an Organization of African Unity summit.

Egyptian television later showed videotape of cheering crowds but cut away as shots rang out and did not show the attack.

# ASUN needs students' opinions on parking vote

From staff reports



ASUN is opening its doors to the campus community on Wednesday.

At an open house scheduled 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., members of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska hope to spread the word about student government.

Second vice president Trisha Meuret said the open house has two purposes: to inform students about ASUN and to gather student opinions about the proposed parking garage.

ASUN receives one vote on the parking garage issue, Meuret said, and student input will dictate how they vote.

ASUN wants to know how all students feel, but would especially like to

hear from new students, Meuret said.

The three executive members and most ASUN senators will be in and out of the office all day to answer questions and talk with students.

Meuret said it will be a fun atmosphere complete with music, food and drink.

There will be information and committee applications to pick up, as well, she said.

Students are encouraged to attend to learn more about ASUN and give their opinions.

"This is one of the surefire ways of letting us help them out," Meuret said.

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