Search for dean nearing a finish

By Cara Pesek
Staff writer

The search for a new dean for the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences may finally be coming to a close.

Negotiations are under way between the university and candidate Marjorie Kostelnik, said David Brinkerhoff, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs.

Kostelnik is chairwoman of the Department of Family and Child Ecology at Michigan State University.

Brinkerhoff said the search for a new dean has not been easy.

Before the search began last spring, another search had been conducted.

"We had a search going before and didn't find a suitable candidate," Brinkerhoff said, "so we started over."

This time the pool of candidates was also small, said Marilyn Schnepf, a member of the search committee.

Schnepf said there were several reasons for the small number of candidates.

It is getting harder to be an administrator at a university, Schnepf said. For that reason, administrators are in great demand, and universities seeking qualified applicants have to be competitive.

She said the university is also facing a "dual-career problem" – where two members of the family work instead of just one.

"It's not just a decision for one person," Schnepf said. "It's a decision for the whole family."

Schnepf said the college is hoping to have a new dean in place by July 1.

Rita Kean, previously the chairwoman of the textiles, clothing and design department, is serving as interim dean until a new dean is hired.

Former Dean Karen Craig retired at the end of last semester.

Brinkerhoff said Craig had initially planned to retire in July but postponed her retirement because of the first unsuccessful search.

LEGISLATURE

Bills help officers, inmates

By Gwen Tietgen
Staff writer

"I would ask you to ask what it costs us not to do this."

June Remington
National Association of Social Workers Nebraska chapter executive director

Bills aiming to curb statistics such as the six jail suicides that have occurred in Nebraska this year were examined Wednesday.

Preventing jail suicides and helping inmates who are mentally ill is what Sen. Jennie Robak of Columbus hopes to accomplish with LB965 and LB1022, which she introduced.

Joel Dalton, director of corrections for Hall County, has had experience with jail suicides.

"Less than one week ago, we had two people with psychotic episodes," Dalton said. "One person ended up being seen by three officials.

"Later, a police officer found the inmate trying to hang himself with a bed sheet.

"It shouldn't be up to a police officer to find an inmate before he hangs himself," he said.

Both bills were discussed by the Health and Human Services Committee.

Robak said LB965 would increase the training for law enforcement officials to screen inmates.

Officials would be more likely to recognize when inmates could be harmful to others and to themselves, she said.

The bill would also train officers to deal with medication issues and provide funding and support for a 24-hour hotline to a psychiatrist.

"We need to give our law enforcement officers better tools, and I think this would be a good tool in helping officers who don't know how to recognize mental illnesses," Robak said.

Part of the discussion concerning LB965 included a fiscal note attached to the bill asking for $6,408,000.

"I also think there are federal funds available besides just using state general funds," Robak said.

June Remington, executive director for the Nebraska chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, spoke neutrally about the bill.

"I would ask you to ask what it costs us not to do this," Remington said.

LB1022 would establish a task force in order to help inmates with mental illnesses.

Robak said LB1022 came out of a interim study this summer. From this study she discovered no one could tell her how many inmates had mental illnesses.

Aleisa McKinlay, the public policy specialist for Nebraska Advocacy Services Inc., spoke on behalf of the bill.

McKinlay said the group participated in the study and found there are not a lot of screening and assessment services in Nebraska facilities.

Dalton said this has become a major problem in the United States.

"The problem is that the 63 jails in the state don't have adequate health care," Dalton said.

Robak said the bills would be moving to the Executive Committee.

Former coach freed on bond

■ **NU track and field** coach says he didn't know of the Texas indecency charge.

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

A former NU volunteer coach posted bond and was released from jail Monday, but charges still stand.

The warrant for Michael Marsh, a 35-year-old former University of Nebraska volunteer cross-country coach, was issued Dec. 17 for his alleged fondling of a 16-year-old student between classes at Mesquite High School in Texas last year.

Marsh was a history teacher and track and field coach at the Texas high school.

He was arrested Jan. 20 at Sports Courts, 222 N. 44th St., where he worked as a personal fitness trainer.

Gary Pepin, University of Nebraska track and field coach, said no problems had been reported on Marsh since he began volunteering for the university in the fall.

"If we're talking strictly about coaching, Mike would be a very good coach," Pepin said.

"This guy wasn't some yahoo at some little school in Texas … He had athletes that had gone on to major universities throughout the country."

Pepin said he did not know of the charges when Marsh started, Pepin said.

Background checks are made the majority of the time for employees and volunteers, but the extent to which the check goes varies, Pepin said.

Marsh was an excellent high school track and field coach and very enthusiastic about being at the University of Nebraska, Pepin said.

Michael Carnes, Dallas County first assistant district attorney, said Marsh's case would come before the District Court in Dallas County within the next four to six months.

If convicted, Marsh could face a two- to 20-year prison sentence or a $10,000 fine or both, said Sgt. Joel Martin, a spokesman for the Mesquite, Texas, police department.

Council to create link between Johanns, teens

By Jill Zeman
Staff writer

Gov. Mike Johanns emphasized once more his dedication to youth Wednesday when he announced members of his youth advisory council.

Johanns said the council, which is made up of 28 students from Nebraska high schools, gives young people a good opportunity to build their leadership skills.

"This advisory council serves a representative voice for all Nebraska youth," Johanns said in a press release.

Of all groups that offer advice to him, the youth advisory council is the most fun to work with, Johanns said.

"They feel a need to communicate directly with the government," Johanns said.

Johanns said the teens came up with several good, important ideas.

One idea was a Web site for young people that could be linked to the governor's home page.

Johanns said if the Web site became a reality, he'd like to talk to teens in a chat room.

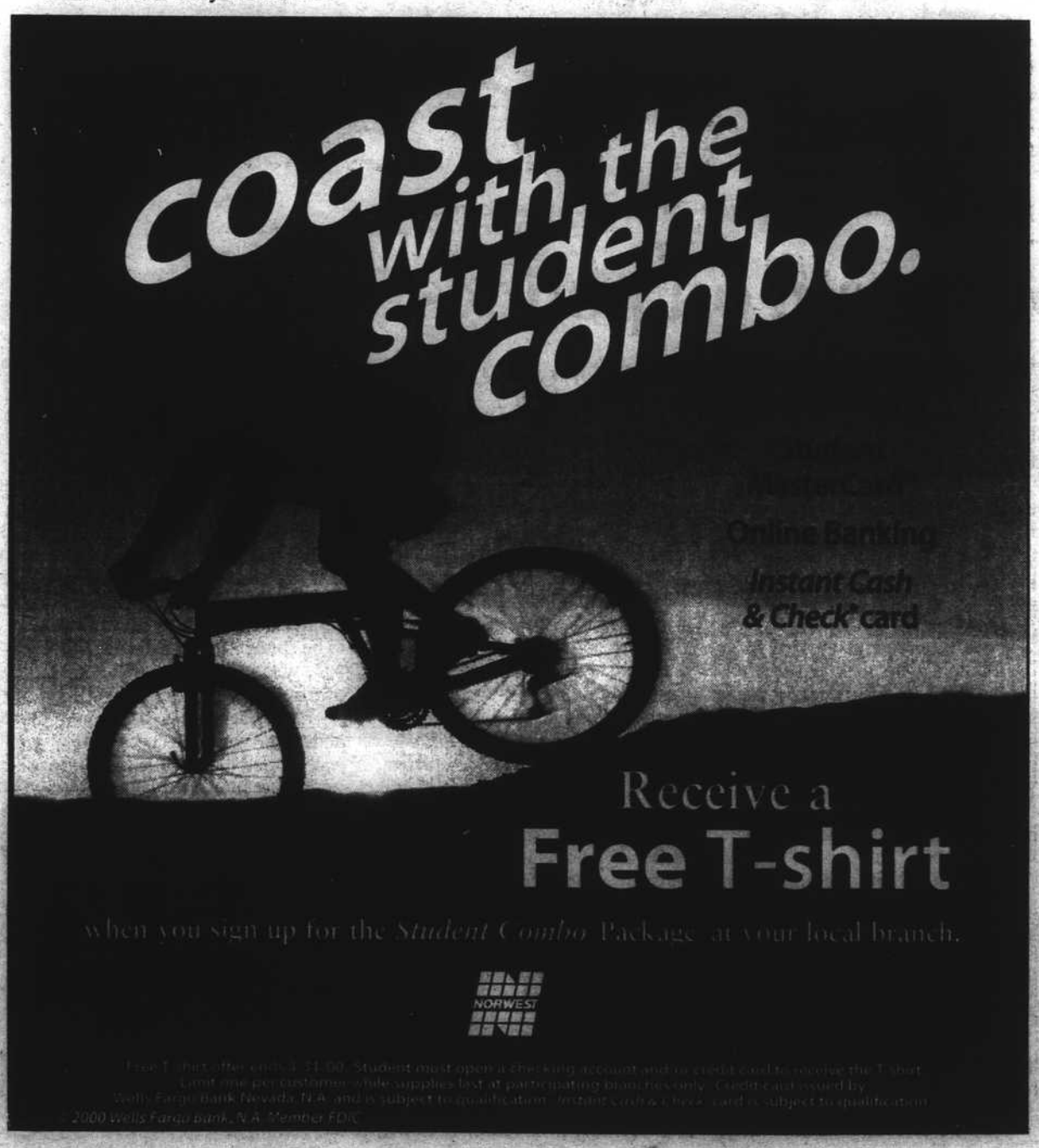
"There needs to be a balance of communication and collaboration between Nebraska's youth and the adults who are creating laws, policies and initiatives that affect young people in our state," Johanns said.

Joyce Jonak, a 17-year-old student from St. Paul, serves on this year's council, which met for the first time Tuesday. She said she learned about it when she was part of a work experience group over the summer.

Her adviser asked her to apply, and Jonak completed the application shortly after Christmas, she said.

Jonak said she was dedicated to youth development issues and hopes to address them while serving on the council.

The council will meet quarterly to discuss its plans, she said.



Fifth party jumps into ASUN election

ASUN from page 1

breaking year," ASUN's First Vice President Rachelle Winkle said about the number of student election groups running this year.

No one in ASUN knew the last time five parties had run.

ASUN also approved bills that will be seen during this spring's elections.

The passing of these bills by the senate does not implement them but only places them on the ballots for voters' approval.

The first is a bylaw amendment to alter the mission statement of ASUN.

Fine and Performing Arts Senator Erin Reitz said a student not affiliated with ASUN liked the new statement.

"They totally agreed with it and said the mission statement is just how they would say what they wanted for their student government," Reitz said.

The mission statement being considered refers to ASUN as "the representative voice for UNL students," whereas the existing statement calls it "the supreme student governing body."

The next bill that was passed was to eliminate the senate seat for the division of continuing studies.

This ensures all of the senate seats are occupied by full-time students.

President Andy Schuerman said the seat has existed only for about 10 years and has been unoccupied for the past five or six years.

The third bill presented and passed by the senate deals with the election policy of executive officers.

Because of the large number of votes cast for ineligible candidates such as Mickey Mouse and Bill Clinton, run-off elections have had to be held.

"With this bill, only votes cast for eligible candidates will be counted," Schuerman said.

Government Liaison Committee Chairman Andy Faltin spoke in favor of this bill.

"I pity the person who has to go through a run-off because of this kind of stupidity," Faltin said.

The bill passed unanimously.

Also passed by the senate was a bill presented by College of Arts and Sciences Senator Natalie Hoover for a gender-neutral student constitution.