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Prima Ballerina

French dance company celebrates
the past with classical pieces.
A&E, PAGE 8

The Gatekeepers

We may be the keymasters, but they stand
between us and what we want.
OPINION, PAGE 5

Wages worry teachers

*Fewer students join
field after graduation*

By Veronica Daehn

Staff writer

University of Nebraska-Lincoln elementary education major Melanie Hoffman said she wants to make a difference.

She wants to affect children's lives and maybe even change a little bit of the world.

Because of those dreams, Hoffman said she wants to teach.

But she's not doing it for the money.

She said that's a good thing.

According to a report released in December by the National Education Association, Nebraska slipped to 43rd in the nation for average teacher salary for the year 1998-99.

Nebraska teachers make an average of \$33,473 a year, the report said.

That figure is \$7,702 less than the national average.

Educators across the state have been pushing state senators to pass legislation that would put \$40 million toward increasing teacher salaries in Nebraska.

"If Nebraska doesn't act, this fine education system will be at risk," said Duane Obermier, NSEA president. "Do you think any Nebraskan wants that?"

More than 1,000 teachers, administrators and parents rallied the State Capitol on Monday



Nikki Fox/DN

LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL teacher Micah Heibel laughs with students during his fourth period geometry class Monday morning.

night to show their support for the legislation, LB1397.

Members of the Education Committee listened as more than a dozen testifiers told their personal stories of how an increased salary would help the education system.

"Nearly without exception, our Nebraska students make us proud," Obermier said. "We must be able to compete (for quality teachers) for those students, and we will not compete successfully with our 43rd ranking."

Micah Heibel, a Lincoln High School math

teacher, agreed.

Losing teachers to other states because of the low pay in Nebraska is a real issue, especially for young teachers, Heibel said.

"We almost try to dare them to quit," Heibel said. "We give them tougher responsibilities, and we pay them less."

Heibel said he has worked with colleagues who left the profession for higher paying jobs. "They wanted to make a better living," he said.

"A lot of it is the money side of it, but it's

harder and harder to replace them."

Heibel said a higher salary would allow him to concentrate more on his teaching at Lincoln High. He wouldn't have to teach night classes at UNL, he said.

"Teachers aren't elevated to a high level in this state," Heibel said. "I knew when I started that I wouldn't make much money."

But Heibel said he stays in Nebraska

Please see **TEACHERS** on 8

Balance of Power

Officials to shine athletic spotlight on academics

By Lindsay Young

Senior editor

Two of UNL junior Matthew Tweedy's past roommates came to Nebraska because they had heard of its football program, but not much else. One roommate was from neighboring Iowa. The other, from Malaysia.

In a University Foundations class, professor Dave Lewis asked his students to rank what they perceived to be the university's priorities: Money, football or sports usually fell in the top spots.

And when Phyllis Larsen, University of Nebraska-Lincoln spokeswoman, started talking to leaders of other schools about UNL's reputation, she discovered the school doesn't have a bad academic image; it just doesn't have one.

Striking a balance between the image of the university as an athletic powerhouse and as an academic institution isn't easy, UNL administrators said.

Money is what drives much of UNL's image, in terms of where it's spent and how much of it is spent. When money is spent on athletic interests, while, at the same time, budgets of academic programs are cut, members of

the public see the university's priorities as biased, administrators said.

NU Athletic Director Bill Byrne and UNL Chancellor James Moeser said the athletic department is economically self-sufficient. What's more, they said, the athletic and academic budgets are separate, so one doesn't necessarily affect the other.

Despite efforts by the university to make its academic efforts known, the strides it makes in athletics — facility renovations and athletic personnel salary bonuses — are what the public always hears about, said Lewis, the past president of the UNL chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

The AAUP chapter issued a statement earlier this year criticizing an \$89,000 bonus athletic director Byrne awarded himself on top of his \$250,000 base salary.

"We're objecting to the image," Lewis said.

Lewis said faculty members generally feel administrators hold athletics as a higher priority, though he said many aren't aware the athletic and academic budgets are separate.

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IN NEBRASKA
A LOOK AT THE
CORNHUSKER
EMPIRE

—CAMPAIGN 2000—

GOP Senate race becomes tighter

By Kimberly Sweet

Staff writer

For Republican candidates anticipating a run for Nebraska's vacant seat in the U.S. Senate, an already tight race got tighter on Tuesday.

Secretary of State Scott Moore announced his intention to run for the seat that will be vacated by Sen. Bob Kerrey at the end of this year.

Moore said he will make an announcement that will officially kick off his candidacy in the coming days.

Talk of Moore entering the race has emanated from the political front during the past couple of weeks.

"I never started thinking about it until 10 days ago," Moore said.

After former NU Coach Tom Osborne announced on Friday he would go after the 3rd District seat in the U.S. House instead of going after the Senate seat, Moore said he started thinking about it seriously.

The announcement makes Moore the fifth Republican candidate in the Senate race.

Attorney General Don Stenberg, Lt. Gov. Dave Maurstad and Lincoln physician Elliott Rustad were in the race before this week.

George Grogan, who dropped out

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Chuck Sigerson

Nebraska Republican Party chairman

of the Senate race last summer, retired as chief executive officer of Financial Brokerage in Omaha and recently joined the field of Republicans.

Chuck Sigerson, chairman of the Nebraska Republican Party, said the abundance of candidates proves it's a good time to be a member of the GOP.

"It's a sign of the times," Sigerson said. "This is a very good time to be a Republican."

With the exit of Kerrey, Sigerson said many Republicans are realizing they have to seize the day.

"In the last 60 years, a seat has come open only three to four times," he said. "If they don't try for it now, the seat

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