

Arts and Sciences ASUN debate held

■ The college's candidates visited with students and discussed ideas.

By Glenn Connot
Staff writer

Improving communication in the Arts and Sciences college is the goal of many of its ASUN senate candidates.

The candidates were given a chance to share their goals at this year's Arts and Sciences Senate Candidate Debate on Tuesday afternoon.

The Arts and Sciences Student Advisory Board sponsored the debate for candidates vying for six seats in ASUN.

The debate gave candidates an opportunity to express their stance on issues that will be important in this year's March 1 student government election and allowed students to get to know the candidates better.

The event began at 4 p.m. with free pizza and pop. The event was open to all students, including those not enrolled in the Arts and Sciences college.

Then the group moved to the Nebraska Union Auditorium for an informal debate. About 50 students attended the debate.

The debate began with a welcome

from mediator Mindy Lacey. The 14 of the total 16 candidates present were then allowed to brief the audience on their backgrounds and political platforms.

Many issues were mentioned, including lowering the foreign language requirement for Arts and Sciences students, organizing bigger and better student events, making public the students' evaluations of teachers and improving communication between students, staff and ASUN.

The candidates were then allowed to field questions from the audience and from a list of non-partial questions from the mediator.

This year's candidate debate was deemed a success by debate organizers Lacey and Laura Grother, members of the Arts and Sciences Student Advisory Board. Audience attendance was up from last year's debate.

The increased attendance improves the senators' view of their positions, said Grother, the board's vice president and a senate candidate. "It lets them know they're going to be accountable during the election year."

A list of the Arts and Sciences senate candidates are posted in the ASUN office window at 136 Nebraska Union.

The College of Business Administration will be holding a debate Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union main lounge.

Lincoln businesses offer their 2 cents in penny drive

■ Community works to collect money to pay for Lincoln statue.

By Jennifer Walker
Senior editor

A penny doesn't buy much these days.

But a community project that started Feb. 11 will put the city of Lincoln's pennies to work for a good cause.

The Lincoln Arts Council, in cooperation with the mayor's office and local businesses, is sponsoring a penny collection, called Pennies for Lincoln, that will pay for a sculpture for the front of the new Justice and Law Enforcement Center, 575 S. 10th St.

The idea came from the Public Art committee, which is a subgroup of the Lincoln Arts Council, said Margaret Berry, executive director of the Lincoln Arts Council.

"We thought this was the perfect way to commemorate Lincoln because he's on the penny," Berry said.

The Lincoln Arts Council and the mayor's office have issued a challenge to local businesses, encouraging them to find creative ways to collect pennies. Berry said that Valentino's of Lincoln

was the first store to offer an idea.

Mike Messineo, instructor of operations for Valentino's of Lincoln, proposed that Valentino's offer up to \$1 off the price of a pizza, depending on the number of pennies customers donate.

Berry said Peoples Natural Gas also planned an in-office program for its employees. Gwen Newman picked up the collection cans for the company.

"So far, we've only collected the containers from the Lincoln Arts Council," Newman said. "But we've put one at the reception area where people come to pay their bills, and we have one in the lunch room for our employees. We're just putting them out there and hoping people will put in their 2 cents."

No one business or donor will contribute the majority of the cost for the project, Berry said, which is the point of the penny drive.

"We designed (the Pennies for Lincoln project) not for any one group but for a broad number of sources," Berry said. "We wanted the whole community to be a part of it."

That community interest is displayed through Kahoa Elementary School's, 7700 Leighton Ave., involvement in the project.

The school's third-graders have crafted collection cans for the school's

classrooms and for the classrooms of other schools in the city. Jane Janesh, a teacher at Kahoa, is in charge of the project.

Mayor Don Wesely's office is also a supporter of Pennies for Lincoln. In a statement, Wesely said the sculpture would "create a beautiful and lasting tribute to our 16th president, for whom this city is named."

Pennies for Lincoln will run until March 24, when the Lincoln Arts Council hopes to have raised the \$40,000 needed to complete the sculpture.

It will be cast in bronze from a mold the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery purchased in 1996 from the family of the artist, Louis Slobotkin.

The original sculpture resides in the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., according to the Lincoln Arts Council's Web site, www.artscene.org/pennies.

Pennies will be collected by local businesses, including the City of Lincoln-Lancaster County Public Building Commission, the Lincoln Journal Star, the Lincoln Public Schools and Kahoa Elementary School, The Mill, Russ's Markets, U-Stop Convenience Shops, Valentino's of Lincoln and Kmart.

Secretary of Education challenges standards

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right now is the time to raise the standards.

"A quality education for every child is the new civil right for the 21st century," Riley said. "But there is a gap between what we know we should be doing and what we are actually doing."

Quality teachers are the key to a good education system, he said. They are among the "real patriots of the 20th century era."

Riley said the country will need two million teachers within the next 10 years, and just filling the positions will not work.

States need to set standards for teachers and then stick to those standards when it comes to hiring educators, he said.

The nation also needs to look into making teaching a yearlong, higher-paid profession, Riley said.

"We will never really improve education until we come to grips with teacher compensation," he said. "If we demand more of teachers, we need to compensate them and treat them like the professionals they are."

Sen. Ardyce Bohlke of Hastings, chairwoman of the Education Committee, has introduced several bills this session dealing with Nebraska teachers.

She said she was pleased Riley mentioned several of the things that Nebraska had legislation for already.

"We have 10 priority bills in the Education Committee this session," Bohlke said. "That's a huge amount, and it shows the dedication of the senators."

Parents play a role in education too, Riley said.

They need to stay connected with their teen-age children and listen to what they are saying, he said.

"The most important thing we can give young people is a sense of hope," Riley said.

Setting new expectations is one thing, he said, but they also need to be implemented correctly.

"Good things are happening in public education."

Mike Johanns
governor

All students should be able to read well by the time they are in the third grade, and eighth-graders should be exposed to geometry or algebra, Riley said.

High schools also need to offer more Advanced Placement courses and foreign language programs, he said.

Riley, who favors smaller high schools, said high school seniors should have to pass a comprehensive final exam before they could graduate.

Johanns disagreed with this proposal.

The governor said he supports Nebraska's method — state standards with local accountability.

"Good things are happening in public education," Johanns said. "Sometimes when there's a movement to fix something that isn't broken we need to recognize that it isn't broken."

Riley said he wants to implement a senior-year transition project that would bring together university leaders, parents and students to take a closer look at the senior year of high school.

Students' senior years in high school determine their levels of success in college, Riley said.

He said the new expectations for America's education system can be set and exceeded if everyone works together.

"I hope in 50 years America will look back and say, yes, we lifted our children," Riley said. "Let's go forward and create a great democracy of excellence for this century."

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