

Students, faculty step up fight for domestic partner benefits

Gaining Ground

news analysis by Dane Stickney

In the past year, one of the most-talked-about human rights issues was domestic partner benefits.

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska passed a bill Feb. 23 supporting domestic partner benefits.

The Academic Senate for the third time showed its support April 4.

Thursday, it came to light that UNL was working toward implementing a student health care service that would provide domestic partner benefits to UNL students.

The term domestic partner benefits is not totally clear, and that has caused trouble.

The term, as it has applied to situations at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, deals with benefits including health care.

Currently, the NU system offers benefits to employees and their spouses. If domestic partner benefits were put into effect, unwed partners of UNL

faculty and staff would also receive these benefits.

Because no state in the United States recognizes gay marriages, domestic partner benefits are the only way partners of gay faculty could receive benefits.

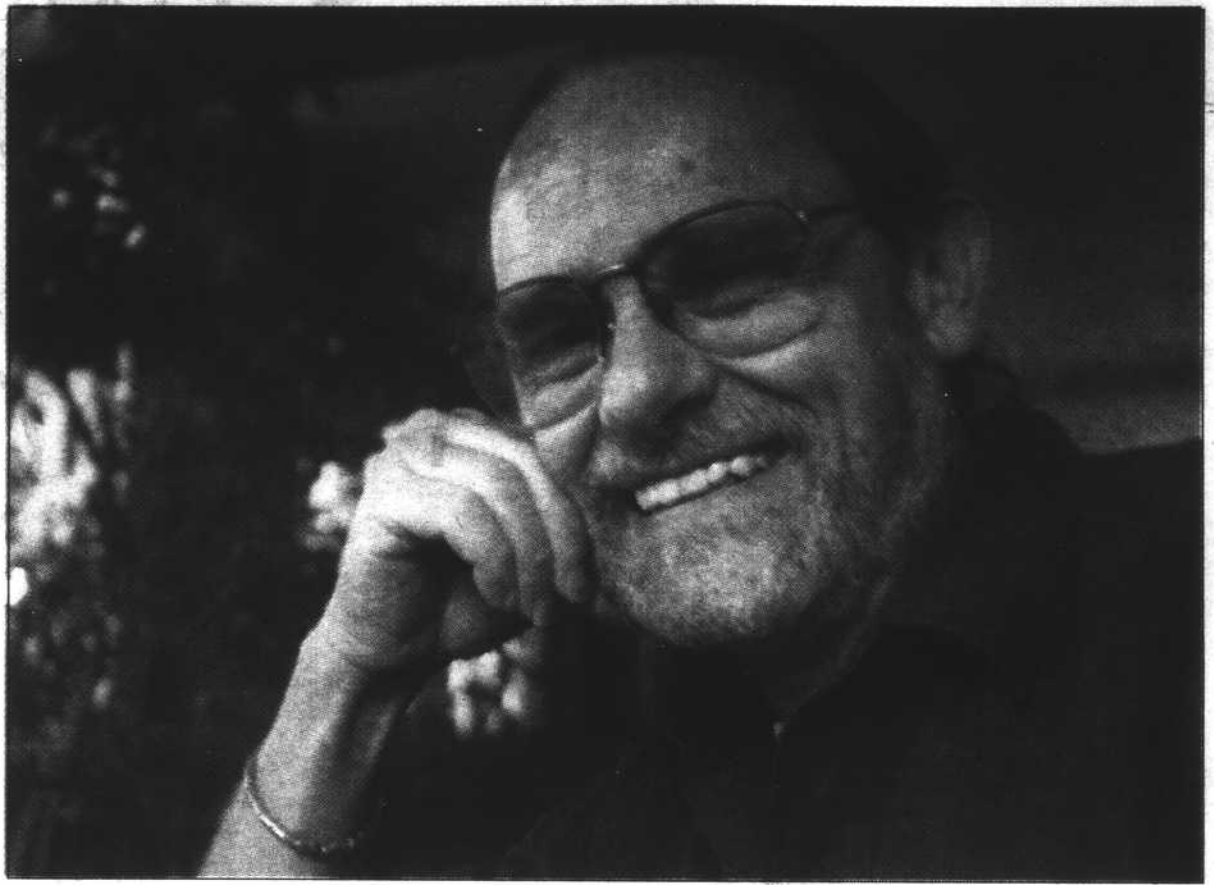
The situation gets blurred because heterosexual couples who live together but aren't married could receive domestic partner benefits, too.

Those opposed to domestic partner benefits have said providing benefits to unwed partners would invalidate marriage.

But without the benefits, gay faculty members, like George Wolf, are out in the cold because they couldn't get married in this country if they wanted to.

Wolf, an English professor, has been pushing for domestic partner benefits for years.

Wolf said the issue is telling of a university's commitment to diversity.



GEORGE WOLF, English professor, has been a leader in the fight for domestic partner benefits. "If I were on the market for a job, as a gay man, there is no question that domestic rights are too big a financial matter to ignore," he said.

Lydia Gonzales/DN

"If I were on the market for a job, as a gay man, there is no question that domestic rights are too big a financial matter to ignore," he said. "If I were a straight professor, I would also look at domestic partner rights to see just how committed the university is to creating

a diverse setting.

"They don't have to provide any domestic partner rights, but if they do, it shows they are willing to go above and beyond what is asked of them to make their employees happy."

To fully understand this year's

activity surrounding domestic partner benefits, the history of the relationship between UNL and the NU system must be examined.

In August 1998, after getting strong support from the Academic Senate, representatives from UNL took a plan calling for domestic partner benefits to the University-wide Benefits Committee.

The language in the bill was confusing because it did not specify whether the plan would provide benefits for both gay and heterosexual couples.

Agnes Adams, chairwoman of the committee and a supporter of domestic partner benefits, said committee mem-

Please see **BENEFITS** on 4

DO THE MATH!

\$ 57.00 MORE @

NEBRASKA BOOKSTORE

TEXTBOOK TITLE:	BUYBACK VALUE* AT NEBRASKA BOOKSTORE	BUYBACK VALUE* AT THE UNIVERSITY STORE
Human Geography, Knox	\$10.00	\$00.00
Building Communication Theory, Infante	\$10.00	\$6.00
Heating, cooling, lighting Design, Lechner	\$33.00	\$20.00
Exploring Psychology 4 th ed, Myers	\$15.00	\$10.00
Intro to probability and math statics., Bain	\$26.00	\$15.00
Racial & Ethnic Relations, 6 th , Feagin	\$19.00	\$17.00
Princ. Of Material Science, 3 rd , Smith	\$30.00	\$25.00
Proteins 2 nd Edition, Creighton	\$22.00	\$15.00

RESERVE YOUR BOOKS NOW + Register to win a TV/VCR!

STORE BUYBACK HOURS:

May 1-3 : 8-6 p.m.

May 4th: 8-8 p.m.

May 5th: 8-6 p.m.

*Buyback Value based on the "buyers guide book" listing for Follett Education Group (University Bookstore), and Nebraska Book Company (Nebraska Bookstore), as of April 24, 2000.

**Don't drive home
this summer just to
see a doctor - visit the
University Health
Center!**

You are eligible to use the University Health Center at reduced rates if you elect to pay the Health Center fee and you: 1) are taking three or fewer credit hours; or 2) were registered for the Spring 2000 semester and are registered for the Fall 2000 semester; or 3) were a May 2000 graduate. Rates are higher if you do not pay the Health Center fee.

If you are enrolled for four or more summer credits in any session (except Pre-Session), you are automatically billed for the student Health Center fee.

Do you need help determining the best health care option for you? Please call our Business Office at (402) 472-7435 for assistance.

Summer Hours:
7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mon. - Fri.
10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Sat. & holiday
Call 472-5000 for appointments

**UNIVERSITY
HEALTH CENTER**
15th & U Streets