

Daily Nebraskan

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Tuition hikes on the horizon

BY ANNA JO BRATTON

Increases in tuition may be key to UNL's survival as a nationally competitive university, NU administrators said Wednesday.

The administrators came together with Gov. Mike Johanns, senators and business and agricultural leaders at the Higher Education Forum to discuss the University of Nebraska's role in the state.

The event kicked off a series of six forums that will be held across the state over the next two days to gauge Nebraskans' expectations of the university system.

Much of Wednesday's discussion

focused on the need for more funding to keep the state universities competitive.

"The state has done a very good job of funding the university system," NU President Dennis Smith said. But Smith said funding had to be supplemented with other income, including tuition, to continue to carry out the university's functions.

"We can no longer do all these things with the resource-base available," he said.

If the NU Board of Regents doesn't raise tuition, services will have to be cut, Smith said.

"Something has to give," he said.

If tuition does not give, quality will, said Frank Newman, the forum's keynote speaker. Newman is the director of a national program funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The program focuses on public policy for higher education.

The competition to attract students is steeper than ever, Newman said. The emergence of online degree-programs, as well as for-profit institutions, such as private colleges, are giving students more choices in education.

"We're in a time where students are going to multiple institutions, often at the same time," Newman said.

This raises the issue of specialization, he said.

If a student can take engineering classes online through a university specializing in that area, it is futile to try to compete, Newman said.

"Every university is going to have to ask itself what do we do well, and who do we serve?" he said.

If NU focuses on what it does well, it can stay competitive.

But to retain these areas of excellence, the university system must retain good faculty, which requires more funding, Smith said.

Please see TUITION on 3

ASUN

Explorer holiday canned

The senators passed a bill recognizing Columbus Day as "American-Indian Day," which drew fire from a university professor.

BY MARGARET BEHM

Student government unanimously passed a bill Wednesday that dubs Oct. 9 "American-Indian Day" instead of Columbus Day.

But, a university professor said Christopher Columbus was an important man and shouldn't be singled out as an oppressor.

Edward Homze, emeritus history professor, said the day is an acceptable traditional holiday that shouldn't be used to tout politically correct values.

"It's another case of trying to pick a particular important historical holiday and saying it's a sign of oppression," Homze said. "I think they're searching around for someone to point a figure at, and Columbus was it."

Vernon Miller, who spoke during open forum, said passing the resolution meant senators supported a culturally sensitive atmosphere. Miller, an American Indian, said he is offended by Columbus Day and said the holiday gives honor to an undeserving person.

"It's just supporting someone who openly supported hatred," said Miller, a senior business administration and secondary education major. "To me, celebrating Columbus Day is like celebrating the person who assassinated Martin Luther King."

Despite any controversy surrounding the holiday, Homze said from a historical perspective, Columbus is an important person. He said his behavior wasn't good, but it was typical of explorers of that time.

"We're making a judgment from the year 2000 on Columbus," he said. "It's seeing him in retrospect of 2000 instead of the 16th Century."

ASUN President Joel Schafer said the resolution was a way for ASUN to show support for minorities.

"I think that often ASUN has had a reputation of only caring about students of color when it comes election time," he said.

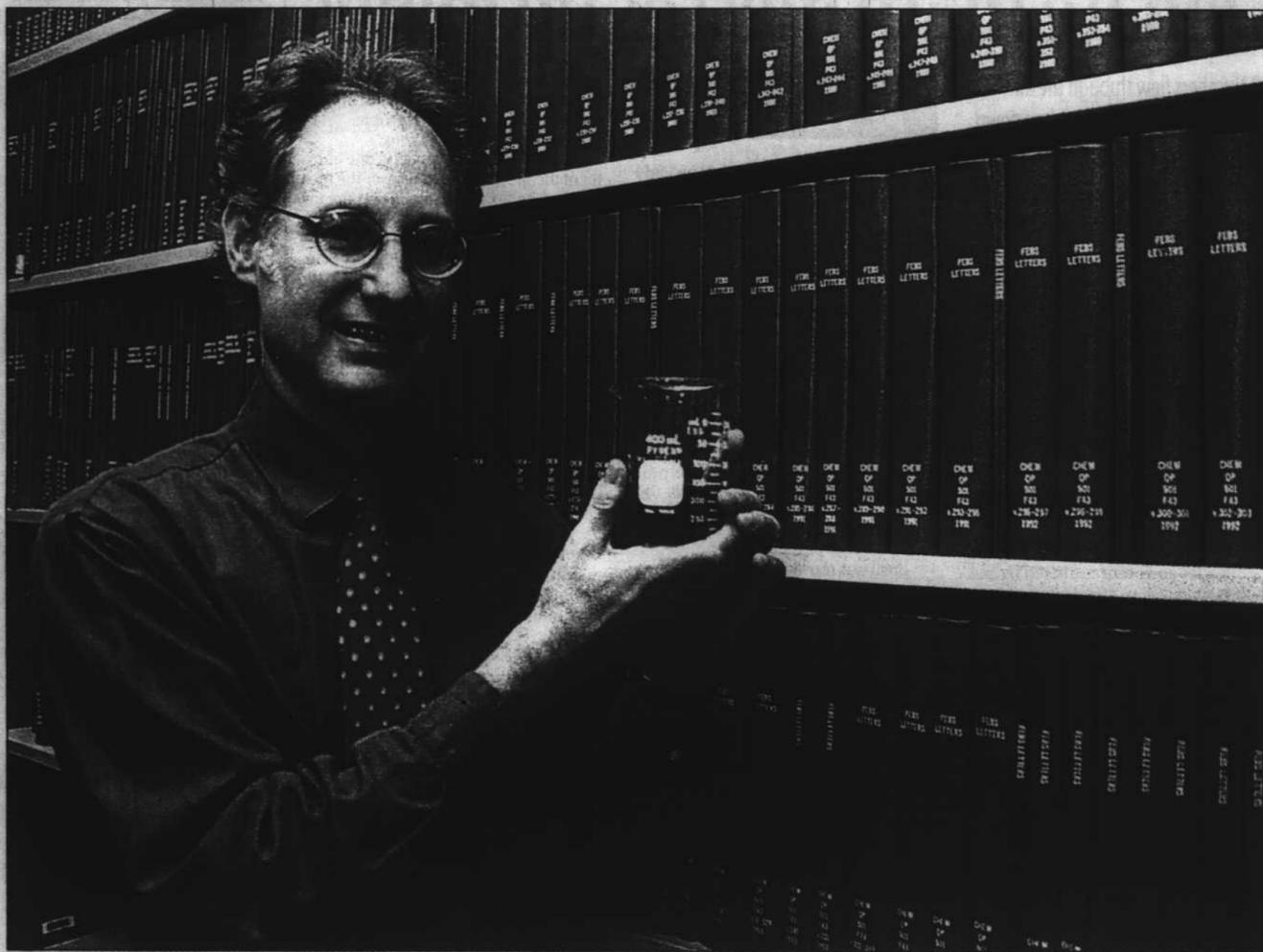
In other news:

Schafer said Gov. Mike Johanns warned at a higher education forum Wednesday that students should expect an increase in tuition.

Because the university shouldn't expect to receive more money from the state, Schafer said, tuition rates could go up 10 percent.

"This is a wake-up call to all of us and all students that we're going to see the administration move forward on increasing tuition," Schafer said.

Please see HOLIDAY on 3



Sharon Kolbet/DN

UNL Chemistry Professor Mark Griep has developed a chemistry class focused on the color red. The semesterlong honors course takes a multidisciplinary approach and allows students to investigate the importance of red in art, psychology, sociology and chemistry.

Class puts students on red alert

BY CRYSTAL K. WIEBE

In a new UNL chemistry class, you won't find just Bunsen burners and test tubes.

Poetry readings, examining sociological issues and thinking about the deeper meaning behind a color might all be topics of study.

In a chemistry class, you say? Some UNL honors students are seeing red in a whole different light this semester in "The Color Red," a chemistry class taught by associate professor Mark Griep.

While the class doesn't skip over the fact red is perhaps most commonly associated with the Big Red on the football field, Griep said the issues it examines surrounding the color red go much deeper.

Miller described the idea for the course as coming to him in a "Eureka moment."

"Once the title came to me, the whole course outline came to me immediately. I thought about Communists (called "Reds" for slang), paintings, pigments, pixels, physics of light, Little Red Riding Hood and, of course, Big Red," he said.

Griep said many science majors' exposure to subjects like art and literature was limited because of their extensive hard-science requirements.

The course, he said, was a good way for students to explore other areas of academia.

"There's a lot of discussion," he said. "You don't (discuss) much in science courses. It's all dry."

Griep got the idea for the course from a colleague at the University of Minnesota, where Griep earned his degrees.

Larry Miller, an organic chemist,

designed "The Color Red" as a freshman seminar course at the University of Minnesota.

"I knew that I wanted to present a course that cut across many fields instead of the usual course that digs deeply into one," Miller said.

UNL's version of the class meets Wednesdays in Hamilton Hall.

Griep said the second lecture of the class involved a lexicological study — a study of words — done by two Berkeley students in 1969.

The scientists found the first two color terms to develop in most cultures relate to light and dark. Red is the next term, followed by yellow or green, then yellow and green, then blue, Griep said.

Griep said the findings were interesting because they implied humans of all cultures are "hard-wired" to recognize colors in the same order.

"The real goal is to interest them in as many different academic disciplines as possible."

Mark Griep
associate professor

Griep's students studied the scientists' research and concluded it had far-ranging implications as the universality of basic color terms has become a hot research topic since 1969.

Following Miller's example, Griep invites a different UNL professor to give a guest lecture every other week, relating red to their academic specialty.

Please see RED on 3

UNL fills IANR vice chancellor slot

BY VERONICA DAEHN

UNL moved a step closer to filling its administrative holes Wednesday when top officials hired a new vice chancellor and vice president for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

John Owens, executive vice president and chief

executive officer at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, will begin work at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on Jan. 1, pending approval from the NU Board of Regents.



Owens

The position opened up in June when Irv Omtvedt retired.

Owens' hiring comes at a time when UNL is plagued with administrative openings and interim replacements.

Edna McBreen, interim vice chancellor for the institute, said she was excited about Owens' coming to

UNL.

"He's a good man," said McBreen, who also was a candidate for the position. "He cares about agriculture. He'll do a very good job."

Owens interviewed at UNL in early September and said he liked what he saw.

Please see IANR on 3

Two stories, one murder

BY JOSH FUNK

Two different versions of Vu Houng La's February murder were outlined in Lancaster County District Court on Wednesday.

The defense said Linh Bao was scared for the lives of his family and himself after being beaten up twice by La and two other men in the hours leading up to La's shooting.

Prosecutor Andy Jacobsen said Bao intended to kill the 37-year-old La, shooting at the red Dodge Colt that La was sitting in at least five times.

Bao's trial for first-degree murder and the use of a gun to commit a felony began Wednesday after two days of jury selection, and it is expected to run through the middle of next week.

If convicted, Bao could face the death penalty for murder and one to 20 years for the gun charge.

The state began its case with eye-witness testimony from a neighbor in the 3700 Cornhusker Hwy. trailer park who saw part of the fight that preceded the Feb. 5 shooting.

In his opening argument, Jacobsen promised ballistic evidence linking shell casings found at the murder scene to Bao's gun, early confessions to police and other eyewitness testimony to show Bao carried out the killing deliberately.

"Linh Bao ran into his trailer and grabbed his .380 (caliber) Smith and Wesson. Then he ran back outside and shot Mr. La as he was trying to leave," said Jacobsen, a deputy Lancaster County attorney.

Please see TRIAL on 3

"He brings real talent and experience. We're very lucky."

Harvey Perlman
UNL interim chancellor