

Daily Nebraskan

Does ASUN really represent students' opinions about grading scale resolution? In Opinion/4

The Nebraska women's soccer team is one of the nation's elite after only seven seasons In SportsThursday/10



The Lincoln Community Playhouse tempts viewers of all ages with the playful, bumbling bear, Paddington In Arts/8



Grading resolution fails to make the curve

BY MARGARET BEHM

The student government decided Wednesday night to ditch its plans to recommend a change to UNL's grading system.

The resolution that would have recommended the Academic Senate change the university's grading system from using only plus grades to using plus and minus grades failed.

Joel Schafer, Association of Students at the University of Nebraska president, said the resolution's failure reflected students' wishes.

"I was glad to see the resolution fail," he said. "I don't think that students were in favor of it."

Senate resolution No. 4 failed with a vote of 14 against, nine for and one abstention.

"A lot of senators felt it was unnecessary," Schafer said. "We wouldn't see any benefits from moving to a plus-minus system. But there would have been a lot of negatives."

Kourtney Mueller, the senator who proposed the resolution, said UNL's grading system isn't the best for students.

She said the grading system, which doesn't

ASUN

include minus grades, made University of Nebraska-Lincoln grades less valuable than those from other schools.

"The inflated grading system decreases the value of our grades," said Mueller, chairwoman of the academic committee.

Mueller received about 100 e-mails from students discussing the resolution. ASUN also received about 100 e-mails.

Graduate Sen. Jeffrey McCune encouraged senators not to pass the resolution because students and senators weren't educated enough about the resolution.

"We, as a government, don't fully understand the ramifications of this," he said. "Talking to senators, I realized this."

Arts and Sciences Sen. Aja Bowling said the change would make students concentrate on their GPAs instead of what they're learning.

"This could foster an unhealthy attitude on our

"A lot of senators felt it was unnecessary. We wouldn't see any benefits from moving to a plus-minus system. But there would have been a lot of negatives."

Joel Schafer
ASUN president

campus, and I don't want that," she said.

Business Sen. David Kavanaugh said because UNL's grading system was different than its peer institutions, students weren't able to compare themselves to people who go to other schools.

"The fact of the matter is that we are compared against our peers, and I would expect the University of Nebraska to prepare us for that," he said.

ASUN speaker Jason Mashek said even if the new grading system ended up lowering GPAs, the resolution would give more value to UNL degrees.

"Twenty years from now, are you going to be telling people what your GPA was or will you tell them the university you got your degree from?" he asked.

The proposed system would have helped profes-

sors grade students more accurately, Kavanaugh said.

"We just feel that having a grading system like this will allow professors to better judge the work that students do," he said.

In other news: Senators unanimously passed a bill that calls for a constitutional convention.

This was an important start to the process that would rewrite ASUN's constitution, Schafer said.

"I think it is important that we passed this and to get moving on it," he said. "And this is the first step."

The constitution hasn't been changed since 1965 and it's due time for a change, he said.

"This is something that we need," he said. "The time has come for us to change this."

Bush, Gore state cases to nation

Both candidates address national television audiences, offering stances and seeking support.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Gore made a surprise proposal for a statewide hand recount of Florida's 6 million ballots Wednesday night, and George W. Bush swiftly rejected it, calling the effort under way in several Democratic-leaning counties an "arbitrary and chaotic" way to settle the presidential race.

With their futures tied up in a knot of legal battles, the presidential rivals made dueling appearances on national television, calling for a quick end to the contested election but disagreeing on how to do it.

"Our goal must be what is right for America," the vice president said at his official mansion in Washington.

"This process must be fair, this process must be accurate, and this process must be final," Bush said from the governor's mansion in Austin.

Their evening addresses capped a whirlwind day of legal activity that gave both weary camps tasted of victory and defeat — but no clear road to completion.

The Florida Supreme Court, all Democratic appointees, rejected a request from Republican Secretary of State Katherine Harris to block any manual recounts while the courts decide whether the process is legal.

The high court's ruling, though far from the final word, gave Democrats new vigor in their ballot-by-ballot bid to trim Bush's 300-vote lead in the state. Officials in Broward and Palm Beach counties hunkered down for an excruciating hand count of 1 million ballots.

The secretary of state also announced she would not accept the hand-counted ballots, calling the counties' reasoning "insufficient." Harris vowed to certify the Florida election results Saturday without the hand recount totals. Gore's lawyers said they will challenge her decision today.

In another front, Bush's lawyers filed a 182-page appeal in a federal appeals court in Atlanta. The Texas governor lost a round Monday on his move to shut down the recounts in Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Broward and Volusia counties.

Legal matters aside, both presidents-in-waiting launched fierce public relations campaigns in the court of public opinion. They wanted to look prepared to serve, but not hungry for power.

"This is the time to respect every voter and every vote," Gore said from his official residence, framed by pictures of his family.

Gore pledged that, if Republicans allow manual recounts to continue in Florida's Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties, he would accept without challenge whatever tally those recounts should yield — added to certified results from 64 other counties and overseas absentee ballots due by midnight Friday.

"I will take no legal action to challenge the result, and I will not support any legal action to challenge the result," Gore said, offering to drop the threat of major Democratic litigation that has hung over the proceedings for days.

He suggested a meeting with Bush before state officials certify the results "not to negotiate, but to improve the tone of our dialogue in America." And he said both candidates should meet again after a

Please see ELECTION on 5



VICTORY CHEER: Elizabeth Kozisek waves a Match Booster Club flag after the Husker women's volleyball team defeated the Iowa State Cyclones 3-1, Wednesday night at the Coliseum. Kozisek has been coming to support the Husker volleyball team for 15 years, she said, and has been a member of the Match club for 13 years.

UNL graduate begins career in Unicameral

Less than six months after graduating, Phil Erdman, 23, beat incumbent Gerald Matzke to become one of the youngest state senators ever.

BY GEORGE GREEN

Phil Erdman's first job fresh out of college is not your typical entry-level position.

Erdman, who graduated from UNL in May, defeated incumbent Gerald Matzke for District 47's seat in the Legislature.

At 23 years old, Erdman is one of the youngest people to ever be elected to the Legislature.

"It's been exciting," he said. Being young, though, will not affect Erdman's performance, he said.

He said his expectations were similar to the expectations of any senator.

It's important to gain respect from other senators and push for legislation that will benefit your constituents, he said.

No matter who you are or how old you are, you need to do those things, he said.

Erdman will not be alone as he enters new and foreign waters. Seven other senators serving their freshman terms will learn together, he said.

It's this process of becoming comfortable with the Legislature's nuts and bolts and establishing an office and staff that will be difficult, not overcoming age-related difficulties, he said.

Erdman does not expect to be treated like a child by older senators, he said.

In fact, many senators have contacted Erdman to offer him help and instruct him on the workings of the legislature, he said.

"They're helping me get off on the right foot," he said.

Secretary of State Scott Moore, who was elected to the legislature when he was 25 years-old, said Erdman won't receive any flak for being the young guy.

Erdman will have to learn the ropes, which takes awhile, Moore said. But the older senators will treat him as an equal when the Legislature is doing its work, he said.

When Moore was elected to the Legislature, he said he was treated just like any other senator.

Outside of hearing rooms, though, some of the other senators would affectionately refer to him as "the kid," he said.

When it comes to his policies and plans, Erdman insists he will not be anyone's kid.

Erdman said issues that matter to his district would dominate his priority list, not issues about his age.

Specifically, Erdman said he would focus on educational problems, which have plagued the state in the past.

The state funding formula for education has to be tweaked so it isn't so volatile, he said.

School districts now have to guess how much money they will receive because the system changes the amount of money



DN File Photo

"It's up in air, and I will welcome any committee."

Phil Erdman
District 47 Senator

they will receive all of the time, Erdman said.

It is vital to stop fetal tissue research and so-called partial-birth abortions, Erdman said.

These practices do not match the values of Nebraskans, he said.

"I want to be on the front-lines of both issues," Erdman said.

To change his plans into realities, Erdman is gunning for a seat on either the Appropriations,

Agriculture, Education or Health and Human Services committee.

But where he finally lands depends on what the senior senators do.

Once the older senators choose their spots, Erdman will know more about his options.

For now, he said he would wait and try to learn about his new job.

"It's up in air, and I will welcome any committee," he said.

Phil Erdman, 23, is one of the Legislature's youngest-ever senators to serve. Erdman said his age won't affect his work and said he planned to focus on education, agriculture and fighting against abortion.