

campus report

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN STUDENTS

FALL 2008 • VOL. 25 • NO. 1



University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Parents Association

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2008

Co-President

Joy Citta
Lincoln, NE

Co-President

Rosemary Eastwood
Lincoln, NE

President-Elect

Position Available
We need you!

Secretary

Position Available
We need you!

Treasurer

Kaylene Luedtke
Columbus, NE

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Dick Luedtke
Columbus, NE

Elizabeth Pokorny
Omaha,

One Position Available
We need you!

First Semester

First Day of Classes

August 25, 2008

Labor Day

September 1, 2008

Fall Break

October 20-21, 2008

Thanksgiving Vacation

November 26-30, 2008

Last Week of Classes

December 15-19, 2008

Final Exams

December 15-19, 2008

Undergraduate Commencement

December 20, 2008

Welcome Parents

Juan N. Franco, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs



With the arrival of students, the UNL campus is transformed from slow-paced summer activities to a sea of energy and excitement. It is great to have the students back! Big Red Welcome activities began with the new student convocation, a picnic and the popular student tunnel walk at Memorial Stadium on Friday. On Saturday we had tours to help students find their classrooms in preparation for the start of classes. Later that night they were treated to a concert and various activities in the City Student Union and ended with the annual pancake breakfast at midnight. This year we fed about 3,000 students. On Sunday we had the Welcome Street Festival at the Stadium Loop in front of the Coliseum. Vendors and student organizations occupied about 400 tables with many giveaways. It is estimated that about 5,000 students attended this activity.

We expect another great year at UNL. Our enrollment is expected to increase yet again. While this is great news for us, it does present us with the challenge of accommodating the increased number of students. In that regard, we have begun discussions on a new academic building to provide needed additional classroom and lab space. We will begin construction on the new residence hall this fall, we have started the renovation of the Abel and Sandoz Towers, and we will have ground-breaking ceremonies for the new Gaughan Multicultural Center this September.

There are many other exciting things occurring on campus this year. For example, we will have a new student e-mail system with the @huskers.unl.edu address. This system will provide enhanced capabilities for students and will be an account students can keep even after they graduate. Students can activate their new e-mail account at <http://huskers.unl.edu>.

In an attempt to keep students on campus involved in healthy, non-alcohol events, the Student Involvement Office is teaming up with Student Government (ASUN) to host several late night programs. These programs will be held on selected Friday nights. If successful, it could be expanded to other nights.

We are also working with ASUN, the Chair of the Faculty Senate, the Scholarship and Financial Aid Office, and the Alumni Association Office to develop financial management workshops for students.

Safety on campus remains a constant concern for us. UNL has adopted the UNL Alert system to notify students and staff of campus emergencies. Please encourage your son or daughter to sign up for this system if they have not done so. They can sign up by going to: <http://emergency.unl.edu/unlalert.shtml>.

Freshmen receive much information when they attend the NSE programs and when they first arrive on campus. We know that it is hard for them to retain all the information at once or to give it the importance it deserves when they have not yet started classes. For that reason the University has implemented the mid-semester check program. Held during the fifth week of the semester, this program provides workshops on topics that become much more relevant to students once the semester starts. Please encourage your son or daughter to attend these sessions.

Thank you for sending your sons and daughters to UNL. We look forward to seeing you during Parents Weekend which is scheduled for October 10-12, 2008.

UNL Parents Association
2008 Executive Committee
Approved November 10, 2007

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University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Parents Association
PO Box 81688, Lincoln, NE 68501

**GET ON
BOARD ...**

By Elizabeth Pokorny,
Member-at-large



Mark and Elizabeth Pokorny

Have you ever wondered “What is the UNL Parents Association?” Are you interested in what is up and coming at the university? Well, make sure you come to the next UNL Parents Association meeting (Saturday, November 8). As the newest member on the board, I have been asked to jot a few notes for the newsletter this month. I attended my first meeting when my son was a sophomore. I found out I could help with the Big Red Road Show at the Qwest Center in Omaha. I live in Omaha and this worked well for me. The parents took turns with shifts at the UNL Parents Association booth and each of us was able to go visit other booths. I picked up some brochures and even a new toothbrush from the Health Center for that college student of mine. I had always been involved in parent activities for my children when they were in the younger grades but venturing out at the college level was new for me. I also recognized that my son still needed some parent involvement, but this college experience would be largely directed by him and his success would be of his own merits. I took the opportunity with one of the first meetings to meet him afterwards for supper, and he found that supper out with mom was a pretty good deal. I assured him that the meetings were only 3-4 times per year, not every month! I took the first year to just attend the meetings. I learned about the plans for new housing for students, for the model of a “green dorm room,” and plans for financial information with alumni involvement for students managing their money. This last one jumped out at me as I think college students need to be aware of the big D word, DEBT. This year I am one of the UNL Parents Association members-at-large. This role is good for me as I enjoy helping with what needs to be done. We are currently working on UNL Parents Weekend that is on October 10-12. I would like to encourage you to attend this weekend to get to know the college your student is attending. Best wishes for a good school year!!!

UNL Alert
Where you need it. When you need it.
Sign up today.

Cell Phone Text Messaging Computer Landline/Office

“The new UNL Alert system has new services that will let the university send personalized emergency messages to computers, land-line telephones and cell phones with text and voice,” said Christine Jackson, UNL Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance. “Our students, faculty and staff can choose which devices they want messages sent to, and even prioritize which are alerted first. It’s a powerful, customizable emergency communication tool for our university community.”

Encourage your student to sign up for UNL Alert by going to <http://emergency.unl.edu/unlalert.shtml>.

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

By Kelli Smith

Many within higher education have documented that the level of serious mental health problems among college students has increased significantly over the past decade (Marsh, 2004). In the book titled **College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It** (Kadison & Foy DiGeronimo, 2004), the authors make a compelling argument for how students benefit from counseling services, noting that students receiving counseling are more likely to be successful academically and receive their college degrees. In addition to providing a detailed view into developmental and student mental health issues, they offer advice for counseling centers, students, and parents of college students. For parents in particular, the authors suggest the following to support their son or daughter: maintaining open communication while actively listening and not being judgmental; encouraging and teaching skills to solve problems; understanding the warning signs of psychological disorders; and knowing what resources are available on campus and when to call for help.

Fortunately students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) have a wonderful resource we want parents to know about – Counseling & Psychological Services, better known as CAPS. All UNL students are eligible for three free counseling sessions at the University Health Center which is conveniently located on campus. Charges begin with the fourth visit and are based on

an hourly rate. Currently enrolled students taking seven or more credit hours during the semester automatically pay student fees that allow them to benefit from reduced rates. Students enrolled in six or fewer credit hours and pay student health fees benefit from reduced rates as well. Insurance may cover counseling visits depending upon the student's insurance plan.

The CAPS staff provides individual, group and relationship counseling. Walk-in and after hours assistance is available for students with urgent concerns. In addition, staff psychiatrists can prescribe medications if needed. They also offer special workshops and support groups that help students relax, gain assertiveness skills, manage the demands of school and children, improve body image, complete theses and dissertations, manage anger, and handle other issues of concern. More information can be found at <http://health.unl.edu/students/caps/>. Should you suspect your son or daughter may benefit from this service, please consider suggesting CAPS. Your child will need to be the one desiring assistance, but your support could prove invaluable.

REFERENCES

- Kadison, R., & Foy DiGeronimo, T. (2004). *College of the overwhelmed: The campus mental health crisis and what to do about it*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Marsh, K. (2004). Emerging trends in college mental health. *Student Health Spectrum*, 2-7.

Online and Independent Study: The convenient way to earn credits

Trevor Meyer, Marketing Specialist for Undergraduate Distance Education

“Independent study allowed me to complete my final degree requirements, while still working a full-time job. The flexibility of the classes makes them a perfect option for anyone who wants to further their education, but can’t commit to a ‘normal’ class schedule.”

*—Matthew Hoden, August 2008
UNL graduate, Accounting Major*



While traditional, face-to-face interactions between student and professor remain the norm inside University of Nebraska–Lincoln classrooms, online Independent Study classes have become a very popular option as well. At UNL, Independent Study classes are taught by the exact same professors who teach the traditional, on-campus classes and they often follow the same curriculum. The main difference to both student and professor alike is the added convenience. Students in these classes are not given assigned classrooms or schedules. Instead, they are given a detailed syllabus outlining due dates for various assignments. Class lectures are often recorded and posted online allowing the student to get the classroom experience anywhere with Internet access. Professors are still available during office hours if students are struggling with a particular concept, allowing students to receive the face-to-face instruction as needed.

These classes have been a hit with students often juggling internships, part-time jobs, or other extracurricular activities in addition to their studies. Many students already taking 12 – 15 credit hours of traditional coursework are able to take an additional three credits of Independent Study classes because they can easily be worked into their schedules. In a time where a five year matriculation has seemingly become the norm, Independent Study has become a popular option for students wanting to graduate in four. Additionally, many students have utilized Independent Study courses during the summer months and holiday breaks to earn credits from UNL despite spending time away from campus. For more information, visit <http://independentstudy.unl.edu/>

While UNL does not offer any undergraduate degrees that can be earned exclusively online, online graduate degrees are available in a variety of subject areas. For more information, visit <http://extended.unl.edu/gradprograms/>



How to compare student health insurance plans – parents do the homework

A family health insurance plan may not be the best solution for a college-bound child. Considering options other than your current employer's health insurance plan, such as a school-sponsored plan, may be worth the exercise. The family plan might not provide the coverage needed when the student is away from home, and it might even stop coverage in mid-academic year when the student reaches a certain age, perhaps 19 or 23 years old, or changes from full-time to part-time enrollment status.

Students present unique challenges and need health insurance coverage in various geographies. Parents are sometimes surprised at the true cost of student health insurance and that their children are not fully covered as they move from place to place.

In addition, some family plans (including some HMO plans) consider a student's campus health center out of its service area. For example, a student covered by an HMO from Florida may not be covered for non-emergency care in Nebraska and may have to return home for non-emergency care. Parents may face big bills for non-emergency coverage.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) works with Aetna Student Health (ASH) and Ameritas Group Dental, a division of Ameritas Life Insurance Corporation, to offer The UNL Healthy Option Student Plan, a medical and dental plan, as well as a pharmacy program, to students who attend the UNL. Coverage is also available for dependents.

Aetna Student Health has more than 25 years of experience specific to student health insurance. They work with on-campus health services to provide convenient access to care and services. ASH works with the campus health center to emphasize healthy lifestyles and prevention of illnesses.

What is the right plan for college students?

How does a parent make a choice on health insurance for his or her child? To weigh the cost and value of the school-sponsored health insurance plan versus keeping the student on the parents' plan, parents must be prepared to do a detailed comparison of medical plan provisions. Evaluating the premium and the deductible, including total out-of-pocket expenses and the employer contributions versus the student premium, will provide a start to a comparison.

A student health insurance plan may have many of the same benefits and services as an employer plan, however, it is then customized by the school for the student population and is administered by the student health center on campus. To determine what is best for your student, ASH recommends starting with a checklist, including access to local and national providers; prescription coverage; 24-hour nurse line availability; no age restrictions; medical evacuation; travel abroad; discounts on dental and vision services; and dental plan options.

You may want to consider The UNL Healthy Option Student Plan with Medical Dental and UHC Pharmacy Coverage if you have no insurance or if your current policy will not cover services provided at the UHC because it is out of network or will not provide coverage due to a decrease in credit hours.

It is worthwhile for parents to see the true cost and coverage of their student health insurance. Nothing is more important than your children. Preparing a sound decision-making process for choosing their health insurance, along with academic and financial planning, is the foundation for their college successes.

Additional information about The UNL Healthy Option Student Plan is available at <http://health.unl.edu/insurance/benefits/>. Your student can enroll for coverage by logging on to his or her WAM account and clicking on "UNL Student Insurance Enrollment" under "Other Student Services." Visit <http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/> to find out more about Aetna Student Health. ASH provides an overview of how to evaluate the insurance options to parents on their website http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/stu_conn/parents.aspx.

Other items to add to your checklist:

- ✓ Visit the school's health services center, and identify a health contact on campus.
- ✓ Review the school's website and literature.
- ✓ Parents should weigh the difference between carrying a dependent on a parents' plan with the benefits of a school plan.
- ✓ Understand the school's health insurance requirements.
- ✓ Evaluate the access to care for a typical student who is traveling to school, home, work, or participating in travel abroad programs.

Parents Association Grants

Recipients of the 2007-08 Grant Funding Requests

These are the grant proposals that the UNL Parents Association agreed to fund with proceeds available from the tuition raffle proceeds:

- \$200.00** Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Office for a "Welcome Parents" Banner.
- \$500.00** Career Services to be used toward the renewed lease of Career Cruising, a career information and assessment system, for the next year.
- \$550.00** Student Involvement/Nebraska Unions for student activity equipment and supplies, such as game systems, controllers, or a karaoke machine which will be used for student events on both East and City campuses.
- \$1,000.00** Husker Choices, University Health Center, for promotional items and prizes associated with the Husker Choices Social Norms Campaign. Husker Choices is a peer education group that provides UNL students with helpful information about alcohol. Members are trained to deliver presentations on various alcohol-related subjects, like the effects of alcohol on women, acute alcohol poisoning, and alcohol laws and policies. One of their campus campaigns is the Social Norms Campaign complete with a prize patrol (students can win \$10 cash if they have the Social Norms button on their backpack and are spotted by a member of Husker Choices).

\$1,250.00 Friends of the Libraries of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln to be applied toward the purchase of furniture for the C. Y. Thompson Library located on East Campus.

Each year, the UNL Parents Association receives requests for more funds than they have available. While all requests are worthwhile, we simply do not have the funds to grant them all. The criteria established to fund grants are:

Must impact the majority of our UNL student population, and must support the mission of the University in providing a safe, educational environment and promote student success

While the University works hard to meet as many of the students' needs as possible, additional assistance is appreciated and improves the college experience our students have. The UNL Parents Association recognizes that our students need quality academic resources, safe alternatives for social activities and stress reduction, health issue awareness to stay healthy, places and activities to help reduce stress levels and increase focus throughout the academic year, and finally, help students as they complete their graduation requirements and move into the job market.

In an effort to increase the funding for these grant requests and other UNL Parents Association activities, the UNL Parents Association will be hosting a Silent Auction at Parents Weekend 2008. Many wonderful items will be available, and we encourage you to visit the silent auction tables while you are there and bid on items of interest knowing that your contributions will be going to a good cause – helping our students succeed.



PARENTS ASSOCIATION TUITION RAFFLE

Watch for your chance to enter the UNL Parents Association Raffle in your mail this fall! The Tuition Raffle is the UNL Parents Association's primary fundraiser. Proceeds from the raffle help fund grants which benefit the general student body, like those listed above, as well as other Parents Association activities. You could win in-state tuition up to \$2,500 for the Spring Semester for your UNL student (two prizes) or a book scholarship up to \$250 (three prizes) while supporting the efforts of the UNL Parents Association at the same time. Good luck!