



## ASUN 2011-2012 Year-End Report

2011-2012 will be remembered as a year of new collaborations with other University groups. Through a collaborative spirit, ASUN was able to accomplish many things in the betterment of the University and the campus life environment. Here is the Year-End Report detailing where we have been and where we can continue to go:

### Graduate Student Representation

In the fall, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and ASUN created a survey of graduate students. From the data, it was realized that graduate students did not feel represented or a part of ASUN. As such, ASUN created the Graduate Student Task Force, a collaboration with GSA, to focus on graduate student issues. This group created a master plan of steps that need to be taken to better represent graduate students. ASUN and GSA have since included this group in their bylaws.

Additionally, ASUN created the “Graduate Student Chief of Staff,” who will serve as the liaison between graduate students and ASUN. This Chief of Staff will also be a co-chair of the Graduate Student Task Force (the other Co-Chair will be elected by GSA). ASUN feels the GSTF is the best option for resolving communication issues and tackling the complex problems that graduate students face.

### Graduate Student Travel Grant

One of the primary issues identified by graduate students was the lack of travel grant funding at UNL for research. The research process is expensive, and graduate students receive very little assistance. Many other BIG schools offer university-wide assistance. The GSTF in conjunction with President Carr and GSA President Jons created a process, application, rules/regs, and communication plan for a proposed travel grant at UNL. Graduate Students voted in a special election, and with nearly 17% turnout (more graduate students voted here than in the past 4 ASUN elections combined), a large percentage voted “Yes.”

The travel grant proposal has since been presented to Dr. Weissinger, who has said she is on board and interested in pursuing it. ASUN is excited to continue working towards this goal of providing travel grants to UNL graduate students.

### 24-Hour Study Lounge

This recurring topic once again came up as a need for students (in the very same surveys that went out for graduate students). ASUN’s Academic Committee and Vice President Lopez pursued many options for finding an “experimental” place to host the study lounge. The Gaughan Center provided an ideal location for ASUN to have the study lounge at the end of the first semester. Each night, data was collected. What we found was that this service was catering to all types of students—Greek, non-Greek, residence hall students, graduate students, and perhaps most importantly, off campus students. We found the service was very helpful. As such, we look forward to continuing a partnership with the Gaughan Center and the Nebraska Unions in an effort to find a permanent home for this service.

### Student Workers’ Rights and Responsibilities

After returning from an Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) Conference, ASUN was encouraged to develop a document that detailed the rights and responsibilities of student



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workers, as there are many at UNL. After researching other such documents at surrounding universities, Dr. Franco created a draft, which has since gone to HR for further development. ASUN looks forward to creating a way to communicate this plan to employees. Perhaps ASUN could host training sessions for all student employees.

### Code of Conduct Renovation

Dr. Hecker approached ASUN to create a new Code of Conduct. The present Code had not been updated for many years. Using a template, four ASUN students paid close attention to many small details, held our students to sometimes even higher standards than expected, and worked to include the “Show Your Red” Character traits into the code. After completing a first draft, the Code was presented to GSA, RHA, ASUN, Pan-Hellenic and IFC for input. Our final draft was presented to Dr. Hecker.

### Communications

Early in the year, ASUN identified many gaps in the way we communicate to the University Community. As such, we improved communication in a number of ways:

- Extensive Website Renovation
  - Project Tracker/Accountability Meter
  - RSO Information Request
  - Staff & Exec Bios
- Communications Plan
  - Best practices for communicating with various groups
- Communications Checklist
  - Uniform steps for communicating a new project
- Renewed Digital Media Presence
- Alumni Newsletter
  - “The Leader” was sent out each month to ASUN Alumni providing updates
- Online Broadcasting of Meetings / Live-Tweeting
- Student Organization Representative Council
  - Brought together over 100 RSO leaders from around campus

### Sustainability Master Plan

Led by ASUN’s Environmental Sustainability Committee chair Matan Gill, ASUN developed an “Environmental Vision Statement” for the University, with a list of 10 goals and strategic steps to achieve those goals. The Chancellor’s Commission on Environmental Sustainability has adopted this list of “10 in the BIG” and continues to develop them. Such strategic goals will be very helpful in bringing the many environmentally conscious campus groups to the table on the same page.

### Big Ten Student Government/Big Ten on the Hill

President Carr concluded his term as the Director of the Association of Big Ten Students at their bi-annual conference at Penn State. ASUN also attended the January conference at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



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Additionally, ASUN again hosted the Association of Big Ten Students in Washington, D.C. for the Big Ten on the Hill Advocacy Conference. This year saw another very successful conference. ASUN coordinated with the White House to meet with the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture, State Department, and the National Science Foundation. Each meeting focused on specific issues of higher education. Many great ideas for future collaborations were developed.

### Yes2Better Rec Center

ASUN recommitted itself to the Rec Center improvement efforts, this year testifying at the Coordinating Commission for Post-Secondary Education and the Executive Committee of the Legislature. As Stan Campbell said, "The fruits of this labor are very sweet." It was a long time coming, but ASUN was proud to be part of the efforts. Additionally, ASUN has been delighted to be such an integral part of the design/construction planning of the two new rec centers. We appreciate the Rec Center keeping us involved in the process.

### Bereavement Policy

ASUN worked over the summer to develop a "Student Bereavement Plan," based on a similar plan created by colleagues at Purdue. Working with Dr. Franco, ASUN felt it had the best solution to ease the responsibilities on students during times of grief. The plan was presented in September to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, who seemed eager to work on the policy. A special committee was developed in November including ASUN executives, and ultimately the Faculty Senate's very own Attendance Committee approved the policy. The policy did not reach the full senate until April. Even more disappointing, the Faculty Senate, in near unanimity voted to table the issue, without providing another solution. This was perhaps most disappointing because the senate's own committee suggested a separate bereavement policy from the already developed attendance policy.

Still, the issue has been raised. The Faculty Senate pledged (and we're holding them to it) to work over the summer on the policy, and make it a top priority next year. We hope this time they follow through.

### The Big Event

In its 7<sup>th</sup> year of existence, the Big Event this year was more successful than ever! With nearly 2400 volunteers, the Big Event was able to secure nearly \$25,000 in donations to make the event happen. Thanks to the Rec Center, ASUN was able to host all the volunteers in one place. It was a fantastic day to give thanks to Lincoln in a BIG way.

### Student Legal Services Archiving/Expansion

With the financial assistance of Dr. Franco, ASUN was able to make a critical investment in archiving nearly 10 years of Student Legal Services documents, freeing up much needed space in the SLS office. (This kind of archiving is what ASUN hopes to do with our own documents in the future.)

In preparation for an increased student population, ASUN has been taking steps to proactively make our services accommodate new challenges. One such step is the expansion of SLS. ASUN called the SLS Advisory Board, a group of past and current individuals who have worked with the Service, to develop a plan for expansion. This appears to be a third attorney,



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and an additional staff person. ASUN continues to develop the most cost-effective plan possible to limit the new cost, while still compensating a new employee and our current employees fairly.

### Constitutional Amendment

ASUN had two constitutional amendments voted on by the student body. The first was developed by freshman, Field McDonald, who found that the language in the ASUN Constitution was gender specific (i.e. “The President in *his* capacity...”). Students voted to change this language to remove any inequalities from the language of the body.

In addition, ASUN is seeking to expand its numbers so as to better represent a larger population in the future. A constitutional amendment to change the number of senators from 35 to 41 was voted on by students. This amendment failed. Still, ASUN sees the need to be the best representatives possible, and looks for alternate ways to do so with the number of students already involved.

### Academic Committee Accomplishments

Led by Senator Stephanie Lee, ASUN’s Academic Committee saw many fine accomplishments throughout this year:

- Clicker Buyback

- The Academic Committee developed a plan with the University Bookstore to buy back students’ “Clickers.”

- Economics Pass/No Pass Debacle

- Four separate students came into the ASUN office with complaints about a discrepancy with a syllabus and the practices in an Economics classroom. ASUN stepped in as a mediator, and ultimately helped resolve the issue.

- Support for “Student Success Plan”

- Senator Lee was part of many discussions with regard to the Student Success Plan created by Academic Affairs. ASUN has been asked to continue partnering with this office to make the plans realities.

### Sustainability Efforts/ Focus Nebraska

ASUN worked tirelessly this year to continue making UNL a more sustainable place. This included efforts in recycling, working with the Chancellor’s Commission, and developing new ways to create a culture of environmental consciousness. ASUN’s Recyclemania was very successful, with UNL ranking very high in the contest’s conclusion. Similarly, for the second year in a row, ASUN hosted “Focus Nebraska,” the largest educational piece on this topic. The week included recyclable crafts and jewelry, recycled artwork, a National Geographic speaker, Yoga on the Green, a tree planting (we won a contest with the Arbor Day Foundation), and many other events throughout the week. ASUN looks forward to continue building partnerships, and creating a collaborative environment on campus.

### Nebraska State Student Association

One of ASUN’s top goals was to create the Nebraska State Student Association, a collaborative group of student leaders from the post-secondary education institutions in Nebraska. With the help of Dr. Franco, the foundations have been set for the Nebraska Campus



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Compact to be the forum by which we communicate with other student leaders. Vice President Hilgenkamp made many contacts with other student leaders and garnered great support. It will be easy now for ASUN to create the Association and lead the efforts of all college students in Nebraska.

### Government Liaison Committee

Led by current ASUN President Eric Kamler, the Government Liaison Committee had another very successful year of advocacy and education. One of the most successful events was the 9/11 Memorial at the beginning of the year. Drawing nearly 300 students and community members, GLC held a memorial and candlelight vigil, much like it did after the terrorist attack 10 years ago. It was a very powerful event.

GLC was also quite active at the Capitol building, opposing and supporting numerous bills that directly or indirectly affected students at the University.

### TEDx—UNL

“TED Talks” are events where speakers present “ideas worth sharing.” A TEDx event is a local event that contains ideas from those with ties to the locality. UNL looked to host a TED event, and received great support from the academic deans. However, due to time constraints, TEDx-UNL was delayed until the fall.

### AFAC Investments

The Academic Fee Advisory Committee (AFAC) used part of the large reserve fund to make nearly \$300,000 in investments in critical academic tools, such as Maple T.A.

### ASUN Budget

ASUN was able to give merit increases to our six fantastic staff members, while reducing the ASUN budget by \$10,000. ASUN continues to look for ways to streamline its budget while maintaining its extensive programming.