

Eyster: Inspiration at 20 leads to current job

Continued from page 1A

Schoonover, who has worked closely with Eyster in his position as housing director, characterized his leadership style as "collaborative and participatory."

"He is always willing to listen to new ideas and new thoughts," she said. "I appreciate his great listening skills."

Eyster's skills as a mediator should be useful in his new position. As vice president for student affairs, Eyster is charged with overseeing a variety of groups and organizations, ranging from the Office of Admissions to Physical Activity and Recreation Services.

He plans to make the promotion of diversity a focus of his new job.

"(Diversity) is a campus-wide priority and certainly within student affairs," Eyster said. "We have to recognize that the world is getting to be a smaller and smaller place."

Although Eyster is new to student government, ASUO President Adam Walsh said that, so far, he is "taking all the right steps."

"He is really engaged into being a good liaison between us and the administration," Walsh said.

Eyster said he does not want to be a "placeholder" in his new position as vice president of student affairs, but also added that he does not want to assume the office on a permanent basis. When a new vice president is found, Eyster plans to resume his duties as full-time housing director, a role that he aspired to when he was an undergraduate.

"I am a little bit unusual," Eyster said. "From the time I was probably 20, I knew what I wanted to do as a career field — I wanted to be a director of housing."

As a freshman at Nebraska, Eyster was president of his floor. The following year he was president of his hall. After that he worked as a Residence Assistant.

When he began college, Eyster planned to pursue a career in teaching. After student teaching in an eighth grade social studies class, he changed his mind.

"It was totally devastating," Eyster said, noting that his students

seemed disinterested in learning.

He realized he was better suited to work as an educator outside the classroom.

"There are lots of ways to teach, and there are lots of ways to have an impact on educational environments and policy that affects students," he said. "As I was getting close to graduation, I realized that what I had been doing as an RA was educational."

As director of housing, Eyster works to integrate residence halls into the learning experiences of every resident.

Eyster has consistently supported steps to make living and learning complementary, Schoonover said.

"Mike has been an instrumental part in our residential FIGS [Freshman Interest Groups]," she said. "I would say between our academic initiatives, our community development and hiring, that we have made great strides in our residence halls."

Eyster said that the Living Learning Center (LLC), which is scheduled to open next fall, will further the housing department's goal of creating learning experiences outside of the classroom. The LLC is the first step toward Eyster's goal of upgrading residence facilities.

"We need to renovate or replace every one of our residence halls in the central part of this campus," he said.

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IN BRIEF

Vaccine manufacturers prepare for bird flu

WASHINGTON — President Bush summoned vaccine manufacturers to a White House meeting Friday, hoping to boost the industry amid increasing fears of a worldwide outbreak of bird flu. It's the latest in a flurry of preparations for a possible pandemic.

Senior administration officials also met with representatives from some 80 countries on Thursday night to compile an account of what is being done globally to prevent a pandemic, and to determine where exactly improvements are needed.

Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt told the foreign health officials that preventing a pandemic would require a network of countries working together. And he said though a pandemic may be avoided this year, or next year, there eventually will be one, as there was in 1918, 1957 and 1968.

"We need to be ready," he said.

This month, vaccine maker Sanofi-Pasteur begins the first mass production of a new vaccine that promises to protect against bird flu, producing \$100 million worth of inoculations for a government stockpile.

But it would take months to create a new vaccine from scratch if a different strain of bird flu than today's, known as H5N1, emerges. Even if the vaccine works, Sanofi is producing enough to protect anywhere from 2 million to 20 million people — depending on how much must be put into each dose — and it's not clear when or where simi-

lar large stockpiles could be made.

The nation has only three main manufacturers of vaccine against the regular flu that circulates each winter.

Bush called together the heads of major vaccine companies "to press ahead to expand our manufacturing capacity for a vaccine to address this risk," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said Thursday.

On the agenda for Friday's meeting is liability, McClellan said. If healthy people suffer side effects from a vaccine, manufacturers can face huge lawsuits, one reason many companies have left the business in the last two decades.


Another reason is that vaccines aren't very profitable, especially flu vaccine; it must be made fresh every winter to keep up with new strains. The irony: Although there have been three shortages since 2000 and supplies are strained again this year, in most years manufacturers throw away millions of unused flu shots.

The Bush administration has been criticized for not getting help fast enough to devastated Gulf Coast states after the storm.

Bush has pushed the focus now on bird flu by suggesting Tuesday that the military might be needed to enforce mass quarantines.

In the flurry of activity, the Senate last week passed legislation authorizing \$4 billion for additional purchases of anti-flu medication. The vast majority is to buy Tamiflu, a pill to both treat and possibly prevent bird flu but that is in short supply. Leavitt has called for a Tamiflu stockpile to treat 20 million people, but the government has enough for just 4.3 million so far.

—The Associated Press



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02316

Spending: Post-hurricane jobless claims increase

Continued from page 7A

came despite increased costs for hurricane aid and rising monthly costs of the war in Iraq. The Congressional Research Service said in a separate report Thursday the Bush administration is now spending about \$5.9 billion a month on the war in Iraq, a 19 percent increase from a year ago.

Holtz-Eakin also said Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were "unequivocally bad for the U.S. economy" but that "the economy will weather this."

The impact on the economy was illustrated Thursday as the number of hurricane-related jobless claims rose to 363,000 last week. More bad news is expected with the release Friday of unemployment figures for September.

Congress is already conducting hearings on whether the money appropriated so far is being spent wisely. Paulson said four federal contracts that were awarded with little or no competition will be rebid in an effort to save taxpayers' money.

"I've been a public servant for a long time, and I've never been a fan of no-bid contracts," Paulson told a Senate panel investigating FEMA's response to the hurricane. "Sometimes you have to do them because of the expediency of getting things done."

And I can assure that you we are going to look at all of those contracts very carefully."

"All of those no-bid contracts, we are going to go back and rebid," he said.

FEMA awarded no-bid contracts of up to \$100 million each for housing and construction to four firms — Bechtel Corp., Fluor Corp., the Shaw Group and CH2M Hill — it had reviewed shortly before Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast. So far, the four companies cost a combined \$132 million, FEMA officials said.

Separately, FEMA's budget for the 2006 fiscal year that began Oct. 1 was passed Thursday by the House on a 347-70 vote as part of a \$31.9 billion measure funding the Homeland Security Department.

The House voted Thursday to prohibit Medicare and Medicaid coverage for erectile dysfunction drugs such as Viagra in order to cover health care costs and extended unemployment benefits for Gulf Coast hurricane victims.

The legislation, approved by voice vote, provides \$500 million in federal unemployment funds to disaster states, including \$400 million to Louisiana. It extends Medicaid and

other health programs that assist low-income families nationwide. Bill sponsors said cutting off coverage for erectile dysfunction drugs would save the government \$600 million over five years.

Three other Katrina-related bills also were passed by the House.

One would waive some Section 8 housing rules to help more displaced hurricane victims get rent vouchers and prohibit the Housing and Urban Development Department from canceling contracts with subsidized housing project damaged by the hurricane.

Two others would allow the Agriculture Department to divert money from rural public housing funding to rental assistance for storm victims and make it easier for community development block grants to be used for storm-related reconstruction.


Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary John Snow said the Bush administration, while supporting tax incentives to rebuild the Gulf Coast economy, will oppose any proposal to have the federal government guarantee state and local bonds.

"That would be a serious mistake," he said.

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