

Ambassadors introduce UNLV to new students

by robert danner

staff writer

Towards the end of a long hallway on the seventh floor is a rather unpretentious office occupied by John V. Martin, who is Deferred Giving Coordinator for UNLV.

Martin is the coordinator of UNLV's Student Ambassador Program. Sharing the office is Lucy Klinkhammer, his Assistant Coordinator.

Together, the two work hard to promulgate a positive image of UNLV through the Student Ambassador Program.

Martin said the program was started in 1983 by himself and two others who were UNLV students and graduates of local high schools.

He said it was common for the top academic students within Clark County not to attend UNLV after graduation

from high school.

"What we tried to do with the founding of Student Ambassadors," Martin said, "was to get a student organization together to promote UNLV."

The program was organized to get students to go out and talk about UNLV."

Martin said when creating such an ambassadorship program, it was important to give these students a high profile in the community.

Martin said there were several misconceptions high school students had about UNLV.

"Many feel we are an academic wasteland," he said. "People don't really believe in the quality of the academics at UNLV, so it is the goal of our Student Ambassadors to make them aware that a quality education is here for the taking."

"The other misconcep-

tion," Marin said, "is that UNLV has only several colleges because there are just a few programs which seem to get all of the publicity."

"The truth is that our school has over 50 academic degrees from which to choose."

He said the Student Ambassador Program tries to attract as strong a representation of the UNLV student body population as possible.

"We would like to have ambassadors who represent Greek organizations, the honor society, and social life as well. We try not to be heavily weighted to any one particular major or organization and we make a strong effort to have all of the colleges represented," he said.

Martin said that a selection committee chooses two deans every year to sit on the committee for the programs.

"We look for students who are bright, articulate and energetic. Dr. Maxson likes to say that he wants people to picture UNLV students as being exactly like student ambassadors."

"We have several of the Elardi Valedictorian scholars in the ambassador program. What we ask of the student ambassadors when they join is to maintain the same academic standing they had when they entered the program because we do promote them as an honors group."

Martin said the promotion of the Student Ambassador Program as an honors group helps the credibility of the ambassadors when they are speaking before a group of high school honor students.

"If one of our students," he said, "can say that he or she is going to med school at USC next year, that shows that UNLV students can go on to prestigious graduate schools after they have graduated from UNLV."

He said most universities have programs similar to the one found at UNLV.

"What makes our ambassador program unique from ASU and other schools is that we give our

student ambassadors important responsibilities.

"Dr. Maxson likes to make them an integral part of what he does. When he hosts the Board of Regents at his home, he will invite student ambassadors, whereas, at other campuses, the student ambassador type organizations just give tours of the school with admissions representatives."

"After our student ambassadors have been trained, we will send them out on their own to talk with honor society students of the high schools. From our prospective, we feel that this lends more credibility because there is not a paid employee of UNLV watching over them while they give a speech to these high school students."

Martin said when ambassadors are on their own, they tend not to hold back on what they say. High school students, in turn, tend to ask more questions about UNLV.

"What I and Mrs. Klinkhammer have been striving for is a higher profile on campus. We have, in the past, taken out ads in *The Yellin' Rebel* to promote the ambassador program. I would like for there

to be no recruitment of the program. We would rather have a heavy number of applicants from which to choose."

Martin said there is no monetary reward for the student ambassadors. "They do it," he said, "out of the goodness of heart. While these students do not get paid for the services they perform, they get a good feeling from serving their school."

"If one of our ambassadors can talk a high school valedictorian into coming to UNLV, that is a real plus."

Martin said the student ambassador program has no budget per se.

"Our ambassadors do not travel the circuit," he said. "Students don't have three days or a week to take off from their studies."

He said that UNLV presently has 17 ambassadors that represent seven of the eight colleges on campus.

Martin said a student does not stop being an ambassador when he or she graduates.

"I would like to think that once a student becomes an ambassador, he or she becomes one for life," Martin said.

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Plaque

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with any plaque that's designed to be permanent in honor of some transitory political movement that might be supported by our administration today and out tomorrow," Wright said.

"I think allowing a political club to erect a monument to a cause that it supports opens the door for equal opportunity for every other political group," Wright continued.

"I certainly encouraged students who objected to it to find out about it."

Tony Sanchez, a political science major and a senator for the College of Arts and Letters, was

one student who decided to speak out against the plaque.

Sanchez said that while the message offended him personally, he took a different approach to protesting the plaque.

"Our feeling is that it's a political statement on a state-funded university," Sanchez said. "We were not going to argue it on a political basis. We just argued that it shouldn't be there in the first place."

College Republican vice-president Allen Chastain said he does not know who paid for the plaque or how much it cost.

"According to what I

heard, it was donated," Chastain said. "I apologize for not knowing much about the plaque."

Chastain said the plaque was Scott Black's project. Black did not return the *Yellin' Rebel's* phone calls.

Ackerman said the school did not fund the original plaque, but money for re-wording it and replacing the base will come from his office.

"I truly don't see anything wrong with what the plaque said on it," Chastain said. "At least we're doing something on campus. That's the main thing."