

Professors play the political game

Titus seeks second term Vergiels wants to close gap between UNLV and UNR

by Stephanie Penner

District 7 state Senate candidate Alice Constandina Titus, democrat, better known by UNLV political science students as Dina, said her roles as state Senator and university professor oftentimes create a conflict of interest in the Nevada State Legislature.

"I find myself wanting to do everything I can to support the university," Titus said. "However, when you have to vote on money and policy you can't always just look at the university, you have to look at it in relation to the kind of programs the state needs as well."

Although a conflict of interest exists, Titus said in 1988 she campaigned on a strong education platform. People voted for her knowing her support for the university, she said. In the past four years Titus has helped to increase funding for the university system and community colleges.

"I think that we need to have a first-class university," Titus said. "We need to support the university by paying teachers competitive salaries to get the best faculty members and emphasizing research."

However, because of recent budget cuts, she is not optimis-

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tic about the funding. "I think next session we're going to have a much smaller pot to divide up and the university is going to be one of the ones not to get very much," she said.

"The university is not very popular right now because of all the conflicts that have gone on," Titus said. She emphasized that funding might suffer because of this lack of popularity. "Some people are disfavorably opposed toward the university," she said. "Its not like it was in the past."

University officials who are also members of the state Senate are oftentimes accused of voting themselves pay increases while in office. Titus explained that any bill affecting faculty pay that is voted on decides the salary of all state employees.

"Since I am a state employee, yes, I've voted on my own pay increase," Titus said. "We're talking about increases of 2 or 3 percent so its not like I'm voting myself some big raise or anything."

Titus is also a strong advocate of environmental protection. During her term she wrote the law requiring all state agen-

cies to recycle paper and supported the Chemical Catastrophe Prevention Act to protect Nevadans from potentially harmful industrial plants.

She served in three of the nine standing committees of the Nevada Senate. She was Chair of the Judiciary Committee, Vice Chair of the Legislative Affairs and Operations Committee and a member of the Government Affairs Committee. These committees review proposed legislation.

The university has benefited from Titus' teaching since 1977. A native of Georgia, Titus received her doctorate degree from Florida State University and her master's degree from the University of Georgia. Currently, she teaches Introduction to American Politics, Legislative Processes and a class emphasizing the political campaign process.

"What I'm doing now as an elected official is putting those things I've studied and taught for some years together," she said. "It's a learning experience for me and I also think students appreciate it because I go into the classroom and bring back not only what the book says but what really happens."

by Stephanie Penner

District 3 state Senate candidate and UNLV professor of education John Vergiels, a democrat, is seeking his third term in the Nevada State Legislature.

Vergiels said he wants to bring a UNLV perspective to the state legislature and said he would like to see UNLV treated equally with the University of Nevada-Reno.

"I want to make sure that UNLV has parity with UNR," he said. "Right now the funding for UNLV faculty and staff is 25 percent less money per student than UNR."

"We need to provide more funding for student loans," Vergiels said. "(In the last session) the university only received the minimum amount." He would like to see money restored in the next session to the university budget that was cut because of the state budget crisis.

Vergiels said he also wants UNLV to continue to grow as it

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has in the past and that he would support that growth in any way that he can.

"One of my main platforms concerns women's issues," said Vergiels. "I'm heavily pro-choice." Vergiels said his campaign is endorsed by women's political action groups.

Vergiels, 54, was elected to the state Senate in 1984. In that time, he served as minority floor leader and is currently the majority floor leader. A 24-year resident of Las Vegas, Vergiels has served in the State Assembly for 12 years from 1972 to 1984.

At the university, Vergiels teaches undergraduate secondary education classes primarily dealing with social science. He is a past department chair, past Faculty Senate chair (1971), and the current area coordinator for secondary education.

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