



PHOTO BY ROB WEIDENFELD

**Helping hands**

The Easter Bunny made a cameo appearance at Sigma Chi's Easter egg hunt Saturday. The event was a benefit for the children at St. Jude's Ranch.

# Students question architecture program

BY STEPHANIE PENNER  
COPY EDITOR

Architecture students are angry because they feel their future's have been jeopardized by the controversy surrounding accreditation of the program.

The program is experiencing difficulties gaining accreditation because it doesn't meet all the criteria to become accredited—namely the program must have its own building. Planning of the building is currently tied up in a lawsuit. Without accreditation the students can't become licensed architects.

One architecture student said accreditation was vaguely explained and passed off as if it was not important.

"When I started at this school I didn't know anything about accreditation," the student said. "When I confronted (Hugh Burgess, head of the program) I was told not to worry about that."

Burgess told *The Rebel Yell* in a previous article that he never promised accreditation to the students.

One student claims this is not so. "He implied it all along," the student said. "He told me, 'If I thought it would hurt you, would I let you go through this program? Things will be on track. The students are why we're here.'"

"The way he said it almost guaranteed it," another student said. "But he didn't come out and say it."

Odeh Kheir, a graduate school, said accreditation was never promised. "We all knew the process," he said.

One local architect, who was hoping to gain a master's degree from UNLV, spoke with Burgess about five years ago (1988) and at that time Burgess told the architect he anticipated accreditation in two years (1990).

In a 1989 edition of the book *Architecture Schools of North America*, UNLV is listed as initiating accreditation in the 1989-90 school year. The school also made plans to graduate 15 students with a master's degree in 1991, according to the book.

Not one student has received a master's degree from the architecture program. One student will receive an unaccredited master's next month.

The magnitude of this matter is not small.

For architecture students to receive a license, first they must have accredited degrees. If they meet these requirements, then they can participate in the Internship Development Program. Once they complete the IDP, they are eligible to take 12 licensing exams. Then they become licensed. But none of this can

happen without an accredited degree.

The program isn't accredited because, among other items, it must have its own building. The building was underway last year but planning was postponed because the Nevada State Ethics Commission found the building's designers, Ray Lucchesi and Steve Carr, as professors, to be at odds with Nevada law that bars state employees from seeking government contracts.

They filed a civil suit contesting the commission's decision and the case is not expected to be heard in court until late summer.

Because of the ruling, 14 professionals who served as part-time faculty members quit because they didn't want to jeopardize their firms.

Students were left in limbo the first month of the spring 1992 semester.

"The first month of my (20th century architectural) history class was a big joke," a student said.

Pat Klenk, the instructor of the course was going to wait for the Ethics Commission ruling before quitting, but the university wanted to know what he was going to do so he quit in mid February, the student said.

The student said Carr was to be a teacher for design class, but he never showed up because of the controversy. The class was set up for two teachers to team teach. Because there was only one teacher it limited the class to the instructor's time, the student said.

Another student said a graduate student taught a third-year design class that a professional architect was supposed to teach. The student said the graduate student wasn't qualified enough to teach the course and said their

education was jeopardized because of it.

Of the faculty that was brought in the student said: "There were people not from the field teach-

ing us. They knew how to put numbers into calculations, but I bet they wouldn't know when to use concrete."

## Architecture

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ber and Kheir will graduate with an unaccredited degree next month.

Kheir is the first student to graduate with a master's degree from the architecture program.

"There is no enthusiasm anymore," Kheir said. "There's no green light. We're trying so hard but there's always something in the way. There's always some major disappointment."

"The students aren't sticking with the program. Everybody's leaving and no one's applying for graduate school. If I were them I wouldn't either."

"We could care less who builds it. All we want is the building. The money is there so why can't it be built? If we don't we'll lose all the students."

Kheir is most upset with the professionals involved in the situation.

"It seems as if there's no concern about the students or education," he said. "To me, I think the principle is money for those people and they're hurting the students."

One student would rather worry about school work than about a degree being worth something.

"If the accreditation doesn't come through, its all worth nothing," the student said. "There will probably be a mass exodus out of here. No one wants to go through all of this work and have nothing to show for it."

"I can leave, but I don't want to, but then I don't want to limit

my options either."

Without accreditation a student cannot become a licensed architect in the majority of other states and is forced to stay in Nevada where their degree is acceptable.

Kheir, a native of Palestine, said accreditation is very important to him, but it isn't as important in Palestine as it is in the United States. Because the architecture program is under the College of Engineering, which is accredited, it's acceptable in his country.

"But what if I decide to stay in this country?" he said. "The question of accreditation is important to me and to all international students."

Kheir is hoping the program will be accredited by 1995. Under regulations set by the National Architectural Accrediting Board, a two-year buffer will protect students.

If the school is accredited by 1995 protection will be granted to Kheir and everyone who graduates after him. If not, then they are all out of luck.

One student doesn't believe accreditation can happen by 1995. "There's no way," the student said. "It will take nine months to a year for the drawings to be completed and another year and a half for the building to be built."

That would put the date of completion at the end of the year, 1995. That is if drawings were started now. And right now there isn't even anyone to design the building.

The only other hope for the students is a plan to provide the program with temporary space to appease the NAAB. If the NAAB likes the proposal they will grant the program accreditation.

Senior Vice President and Provost John Unrue and Hugh Burgess, head of the architecture program, met with the NAAB the first day of April to discuss this alternative. Although no decision was formally made, Unrue said he is very optimistic. He said he hopes to occupy space no later than the fall semester.

"That's what they're trying for," a student said, "but all the students are quitting. The students that could be accepted somewhere else, (Burgess) lost them."

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