

# Staff member dismissal garners 200 petition signatures

By **JENNA HEINZ**

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Aleecia Pace, a junior general studies major at UNK, met with her adviser for a meeting on March 21. The following day, Pace got an email saying she would no longer be her adviser.

Her adviser, Amy Rundstrom, the director of academic advising and career development, was dismissed the day of their meeting.

"She's probably one of the best staff I've met here on campus," Pace said. "(I think) it definitely questions where the administration is headed toward finding someone else to replace her because I think she was at the perfect spot in the career development (depart-

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**ALEECIA PACE, JUNIOR**

damage to a preexisting head trauma.

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ment). It'll be tough finding someone who is better than her and fills the shoes that she had, in my eyes."

Following Rundstrom's dismissal, a petition was started by Carol Lilly, a UNK history professor. Lilly said the letter of resignation Rundstrom was handed stated "for no cause."

The petition is not asking for Rundstrom to be reinstated, but that others are not given the same treatment.

"The sudden dismissal of Amy without any written explanation or previous notice was pretty shocking, considering that she is widely considered on campus to be one of the best employees on campus," Lilly said. "It seems unethical in a university to fire someone who

has worked here for almost 24 years, who has never had any bad evaluations, with no opportunity to improve on what they think they have done wrong."

As of April 4, the petition has received over 200 signatures, more than 50 being anonymous. Half the signatures are from current faculty while the rest are from staff, students, parents, community members and former faculty. Lilly said the number of people willing to support the petition, once they found out they could do so anonymously, is telling.

"Many of my coworkers, and myself included, want to sign badly but are concerned about repercussions from administration since, as staff, we are not protected," said one person when reaching out to Lilly.

Since the petition was sent, Lilly has received messages from former faculty and staff who said they were dismissed or were made to feel so uncomfortable that they quit. Lilly said the sudden dismissal of staff and faculty feels like a pattern.



**Amy Rundstrom**

"So many people on campus feel a little bit at sea," Lilly said. "We don't know where the administration is going right now and why so many people are losing their jobs in what feels like such a random way. But if there's a reason, we should know. If it's a family, you need to share information with us."

The UNK Education Association expressed their concern in an email to UNK's executive cabinet and college deans.

"As representatives of faculty

at UNK, we would like to recognize the incredible contributions that Ms. Rundstrom has made to the University and especially to the faculty at UNK," the UNKEA executive committee said. "We also want to express our enormous disappointment in her leaving. Importantly, the sudden 'resignation' of a long-standing member creates/adds to a feeling of unease and vulnerability among all employees at UNK."

The petition was brought up at the student senate meeting on April 4 and the faculty senate meeting on April 6.

Kelly Bartling, vice chancellor for enrollment management and marketing, said the work of enrollment units is important to UNK.

"The remaining staff are doing an excellent job supporting students, and there are initiatives in place to fill an open advisor position, increase programming and tracking for career placement, and increase technology use for advising," Bartling said.

# Student reports on-campus assault by visiting biology professor

By **MALLORY BRUNING**

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The UNK Police Department received a call from a female student on April 3 reporting an assault on campus. According to the report in the UNK Daily Crime & Fire Log, the student said she was intentionally struck in the head by a visiting biology professor on March 31. She said this contact caused

According to this student, the class was taking a test online during class time, with the professor walking around to monitor students' screens. At some point during the class, the professor became upset with some people providing wrong answers on the test. This led to the professor striking him twice and two other students once each. The order of which students were struck is unclear.

This student said this faculty was a visiting professor and "had previous complaints about overcomplicating topics in their courses."

Todd Gottula, senior director of communications and marketing at UNK, said the professor is no longer on campus and has been placed on administrative leave.

No charges have been filed. The class where the assaults

took place was not cancelled.

After March 31, the following Monday and Wednesday class times were led by other professors within the same department. The class has been reassigned to another existing faculty member in the department that has experience teaching the specific course.

This case is open and UNK-PD is actively investigating the incident.