

Baumgarten hits NU parity data

By Tom Eaton

Whether funds for UNL or the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) are adequate depends on how the figures are viewed. But the campus equity report was shaded by political overtones.

That is the message in a report to the UNL Faculty Senate Tuesday concerning UNL and UNO parity. Henry Baumgarten UNL Faculty Senate president, presented the report.

"If you allow a person to pick and choose their data, they can come up with any figures they want," Baumgarten said.

For instance, he said, by varying the way information from various colleges is mixed, one can show UNL lacks financing of \$1,056,000, \$1,423,000 or \$2,500,000. In fact, any other figure can be created, Baumgarten said.

The calculations are "so inaccurate and unreliable" that no one can tell whether there is a financial imbalance between the two institutions, Baumgarten said. It is necessary to find another procedure that involves evaluation as well as computation, and the missions of the two campuses must be defined, he said.

"As I have said all along, if you give comparable funding for comparable programs, you'll arrive at two comparably mediocre institutions," Baumgarten said.

However, the problem has ceased to be academic, he added. The committee that studied possible financing inequities between UNO and UNL ignored warnings contained in the Wisconsin study, and someone ran to a "political bear" when "presumed inequities" were found, Baumgarten said.

"Some political bears have chased some administrators

up a tree and out on an \$1 million limb," Baumgarten said.

And now, they're upset that someone below is "shaking the tree." After all, the bears have awfully sharp teeth, he said.

"Some of us are a little tired of the administration's 'father knows best' attitude," he said. "We're tired of making resolutions and having them ignored. Some of us are tired of decisions that are based on what's best for the administration."

Baumgarten said he had hoped someone in the university's central administration would call after seeing his report and say, "We're sorry, we really blew it." But his report, thus far, has brought a call from only one member of the NU Board of Regents.

Baumgarten said that Lincoln Regent Edward Schwartzkopf called after reading the report. He said the regent was impressed with his findings and asked him to appear at the regent's Friday meeting to answer questions about the parity issue.

UNL Chancellor Roy Young, who was at the senate meeting, said the university administration was "very much concerned" that the figures be as accurate as possible.

In other business, motion for creating a Faculty Senate committee to study the budget was approved.

William Campbell, associate professor of physics, proposed the motion to create a three-member committee. Campbell said the committee would be important in the future when dealing with budget issues such as the amendment passed by the Nebraska Legislature last session that spread budget cuts through NU.



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