

Legislature Session To Consider Voting Age, Merger

Omahans May Vote On OU-NU Merger

By Julie Morris
Senior Staff Writer

The possibility that the University may merge with the University of Omaha was put into writing Monday as Legislative Bill 736. Sen. Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff introduced the measure which provides that Omaha voters would decide the outcome of the merger suggestion. If Omahans approve, the 8,040 Omaha campus would become the University of Nebraska in Omaha.

Eight of the 12 Omaha senators signed the bill in addition to sponsorship from Sen. Harold Simpson of Lincoln and Bellevue Sen. Dale Payne. Speculation that the two schools might merge became public about two weeks ago. The OU Board of Regents has reportedly set Jan. 1, 1968 as the target date for the effective merger. University Regents have not made any mention of dates, but generally favor a merger.

University Regent Benjamin Greenberg endorsed the move calling it an opportunity for growth of the University. The suggestion for the merger partially came because Omaha has been experiencing financial difficulties in supporting OU which is a municipal institution. Omaha Sen. Richard Proud said Omahans "have indicated they will no longer support OU to the extent it should be supported." Proud said that Omaha's recent rejection of a proposed mill levy hike that would have made more funds available for OU was indicative of this attitude.

A bill that would give some type of state aid to OU has also been introduced in the Legislature, but many senators feel that a complete merger with the University would be more effective in the long run.

If the schools did merge actual control would presumably be under the present University Board of Regents. Omaha University would continue under a president who would report to the Board of Regents, according to proposed plans announced by the OU Regents.

Carpenter said "Omaha's problems have only begun" with a lack of financial support for OU. He said if the two school merge, OU "could be as big or bigger than the University" in five or ten years.

The Scottsbluff senator also said that the research potential offered by a merge of the two schools, with the University medical college campus in Omaha, are tremendous.

Citing other advantages for the merger, Carpenter said "The University of Omaha is getting to the point where it is too big for Omaha to support, tuition rates are almost prohibitive for some now."

Carpenter added "You must realize that the appropriations (budget) you get are based on the number of votes you get" in the Unicameral.

Carpenter said an OU-NU merger would mean 19 senators, 12 from Omaha and seven from Lincoln, would be representing the University of Nebraska. The lawmaker said 26 votes are needed to pass a budget appropriation.

"I would attempt to project that the citizens of Omaha would pass it (the merger proposal) by a vote of two to one," Carpenter said.

The Omaha senators who co-sponsored the bill are Sens. Edward Danner, Sam Klaver, C. F. Moulton, Richard Proud, Florence Reynolds, William Skarda, George Syas, and William Bloom.



THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE . . . bustles with activity as legislators and pages reconverge upon the Capitol.

Floor Debate For 18 Voting Age Scheduled In State Legislature

By Julie Morris
Senior Staff Writer

A bill calling for a constitutional amendment to lower Nebraska's voting age to 18 will come up for floor debate in the state Legislature Tuesday.

Student supporters of the bill, LB132, said they hope to "pack the galleries" with young people during the floor debate.

Mike Tefft, chairman of the Nebraska Youth Council for Teenage Suffrage, said there will probably be sharp debate on the issue among the 49 senators. A three-fifth vote is required for passage of the measure because it is a constitutional amendment. If the bill passes, the proposed amendment will be presented to Nebraska voters in the November 1968 elections.

At least one senator has expressed disfavor for the measure. Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly said he personally feels that "a little more experience will enable young people to make more sound decisions" on governmental matters.

On the other hand, a

score of people appeared at a public hearing on the bill last week. All of the dozen who spoke before the Legislative Committee on Government and Military Affairs were for the bill, while no one appeared in opposition to it. More than half of those who appeared at the hearing were students.

The eight-member committee, headed by Sen. Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff unanimously passed the bill for Unicameral consideration.

The measure, sponsored principally by Omaha Sen. Eugene Mahoney, will appear on the floor under "general file". Bills on general file have already been introduced and referred to a committee which studied the measure and held public hearings on it. When the bill is brought onto the floor under general file, the question is thrown open to discussion and debate and may be amended. The bill then is referred to the drafters for final printing before it appears on the floor again under "select file".

A final vote on the bill is not taken until it makes a third trip to the bill drafters for revisions and correction of errors.

It is normal procedure for the Legislature to call for a straw vote on bills on general file, Tefft said this will probably be the case with LB132.

John Schreking, a University junior who supports the measure, urged students to attend the session when the bill will be brought before the senators. Schreking said the bill will probably be brought up in the first part of the session, which usually begins at 9 or 10 a.m.

They noted that four other states, Kentucky, Georgia, Alaska and Hawaii have lowered their voting age below the usual 21 and that eight other states, including neighboring Kansas and Iowa, are presently considering similar action.

A representative of Gov. Norbert Tiemann appeared at the hearing telling the committee the governor supports the measure. Lt.

Gov. John Everroad spoke in favor of the bill as did Lincoln Sen. Roland Luedtke, a co-sponsor of the bill.

"I know youth of this age are ready to take over the ballot, if you can face bullets you should have the ballot," Luedtke said.

Dr. Edward Kuncel, chairman of the political science department at Omaha South said "Our failure to grant these young men and women the right to vote is a gross failure on our part."

Kuncel said that adults tell youth to "learn all you can about government then do nothing for three years. Everywhere else we say learn the fundamentals and practice, practice. Only in government do we say learn the fundamentals and then sit on your hands."

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Merge Splits Senators

Eight of Omaha's 12 state senators are co-sponsors of LB736, which would allow a merger of Omaha University and the University of Nebraska.

The four Omaha representatives who are opposed to the merger are Senators Clifton Batchelder, Eugene Mahoney, Harold Moylan and Henry Pedersen Jr.

Pedersen said he opposes the move because it would mean the University would be even larger than it is now, and eventually too large. The senator said he also objects to the proposal because the present plan calls for control to be under the present University Board of Regents which owes primary allegiance to Lincoln.

Omaha Sen. Edward Danner, said he supports the merger proposal with some reservations but would approve with the consent of Omaha voters.

LB736 provides that the merger proposal would be submitted to Omaha voters before any steps toward a merger were taken.

Sen. Richard Proud of Omaha said he supports LB736 for several reasons. One was that "there are practically no municipal universities left in the country, and it is the obligation of the state to support higher education."

Spire: OU-NU Merger May Give Many Benefits

By Randy Irey
Senior Staff Writer

The proposed merger of the University of Nebraska and the University of Omaha will benefit both Universities, according to Robert Spire, chairman of the O.U. Board of Regents.

"The merger holds the prospect of developing cooperative programs benefiting both campuses. An example would be the dual utilization of the closed circuit television programs presently in use."

Another possibility is that both campuses might obtain a visiting professor for a year, who could spend a semester at each school. Both schools would benefit whereas neither could have obtained the professor without the cooperation of the two schools.

"Another reason in favor of the merger is that it won't be long before there will be 30 or 40 thousand students being educated in Omaha and Lincoln. The best way to do this is for the two cities to work together and therefore provide the best education for the students. This could be facilitated easily because of the close relationship, industrially, economically and culturally between the two cities," he continued.

"In addition, it is feasible that Omaha and Lincoln could become one big megalopolis within our own lifetime which would be a definite factor leading towards cooperation between the two campuses."

Another reason for merger, Spire said, is one that people often forget. It is that we are trying to serve the students. O.U. is presently not serving the students it should because of the high tuition.

According to Spire, if O.U. does not get state aid of some type soon, the school will have to restrict itself to its current programs. It may even have to curtail some programs or raise tuition.

"If we do not receive state aid of any kind, the student at O.U. will suffer financially, educationally or both," Spire emphasized. If the Unicameral ap-

proves the merger plan, the citizens of Omaha would have to vote in a special election to turn O.U. over to the state, since the school is a city-owned university.

Spire emphasized the difficult task that faces this session of the Unicameral.

"The problem of higher education is one of obtaining resources; the problem of the legislature is one of obtaining the resources and then determining how to allocate them among the many objects of state aid."

Merger May Aid Student, Taxpayer



J. G. Elliott

A merger between Omaha University and the University of Nebraska would "provide better educational opportunities for students from heavily populated areas," according to J. G. Elliott, president of the University Board of Regents.

Elliott added he could not estimate when the merger could occur because a merger bill must first pass the legislature and a vote by the Omaha community. The Board of Regents is "pretty much in agree-

ment" that an OU-NU merger would be beneficial to both the student and the taxpayer, Elliott said.

In a recent article in the Nebraska Alumnus magazine Elliott said the state legislator has a difficult duty when he attempts to advocate improved higher education and low state tax expenditures simultaneously.

Elliott also demonstrated the problems which face both the legislator who wants to increase taxes and rapidly improve educational facilities and the legislator who is more concerned with maintaining low state expenditures.

Concerning the low ranking of the University received from the Midwest Research Institute (MIR) of Kansas City and Missouri, Elliott said, "we knew we were lacking in faculty salaries but the quality of education is just as good as in most of the Big Eight schools."

Elliott refused comment on the ASUN proposed Bill of Student Rights and the Nebraska Free University adding he did not have enough information about these affairs to make a statement.

A member of the Board of Regents for 13 years, Elliott was recently elected as President of the board.

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