

THE REGENTS RAP(?) - I

There should be more discussion between Regents and students because "discussion breeds understanding and understanding breeds trust," according to Regent B.N. Greenberg, M.D., of York.

"Students have a very real responsibility to present their ideas for review and discussion within the University community," he said. "In recent years some student suggestions have been of significant importance to the Regents in their deliberations."

He added that it is unfortunate more students have not been constructively involved in policy-making.

Greenberg said students should have a voice in their non-academic life at the University, but should understand that the Regents have a responsibility to their electorate concerning the general direction of the University.

It is necessary for a Regent to have contact with students, faculty and administrators alike, Greenberg emphasized. He added that each of these factions has a valuable viewpoint and that a Regent cannot do a good job without understanding them all.

"Students certainly have the right to be involved in the evaluation process of faculty members," he said. "I believe other members of the academic community must be involved in evaluation, too."

Greenberg added the tenure system of faculty advancement is a sound way to build a good faculty when it is used as an incentive.

"It should never be allowed to become a crutch or a faculty member's licence for intellectual retirement," he said.

Greenberg is the Regent from the Fourth district. The 66-year-old ear, eye, nose and throat specialist received all his academic degrees from the University of Nebraska. He has been a Regent for 17 years since he was first elected in 1952.

"A major obstacle in student representation on the board of Regents is the matter of continuity,"



he said. "Regental terms run for six years and few of our students are on campus for that duration of time."

Greenberg said the University must find better ways to apply its brain power to solve economic and environmental problems of society.

"It is my belief that state and university social and economic progress are inseparable," he added. "It is imperative for Board members to seek out professional staff members who have the ability to identify the problems of the state and suggest remedies."



Probably the most critical problem facing the University in the future is its finances, said Regent John G. Elliott of Scottsbluff.

"The University was established by the state in the public interest," he added. "We must find ways to be more responsive to the state's needs and gain its further support."

He said that it is not difficult to balance the interests of the University with the interests of the state in his job, because the interests are basically the same.

"The University community is part of the state and has made important contributions to the development of Nebraska," he commented.

Elliott said he considers it his job as a Regent to understand the functions of the University and support its purposes and goals. A Regent must also help prepare the University budget and be in a position to explain the needs of the University to the public, he added.

Students must bear in mind that the Administration and Board of Regents have a responsibility to the public concerning non-academic life at the University. Students should have a real voice though, he said, and they have had active participation in decision-making through elected student bodies.

He added that dialog between students and the Regents is very important and there should be as much interaction as possible.

Elliott said students are sometimes punished by the University for a violation of law that has already been punished by civil authorities because "the campus should not be a sanctuary where unlawful acts go unpunished."

"Students have definite obligations to the academic community and the discipline of the community should be applied," he added.

He said that harsher University penalties for use of marijuana than for the use of alcohol by a minor stem from the attitude of state courts.

"The State punishment for marijuana is more severe than that for a first offense possession of liquor, even though both are misdemeanors," Elliott said.

He commented that students should definitely be involved in evaluation of faculty members. The Administration should also be involved in the evaluation process, he said.

Elliott, 75, is the oldest Regent and has represented the sixth district since 1952. Elliott attended Nebraska Wesleyan University and the University of Nebraska where he won membership in the Innocents society. He is currently an insurance and banking agent in Scottsbluff.

Students must be involved in the University's decision-making process, according to Richard L. Herman of Omaha, the only Regent who voted against formation of the Council on Student Life.

He continued that students must have a responsible but understanding voice in University affairs.

"Students should have the right to make decisions that affect only themselves," Herman added. "However, they also must understand why sometimes their decisions cannot be the only consideration."

He said that in some cases students may not have an overview of the situation because they are actively involved in University life. They may think a decision concerns them alone, when it really has a much broader effect, he added.

The idea of a student Regent, elected under either current state law or a revision of the state constitution, is opposed by Herman. The idea would put too much pressure on the person involved, he said. A student might also find the time required for research in a Regent's job to be prohibitive, he said.

Herman has been a Regent from the second district (Omaha) since 1966. The 49-year-old Army veteran attended the University of Washington and the University of Nebraska. He is currently in the petroleum transport business.

"It is my job as a Regent to use the best of my ability and available resources to improve the University," Herman said.

To be effective in this job he said Regents must work with faculty, administration and students to find where funds are needed. They must then work with the legislature and people of the state to obtain these funds, he added.

Herman described the Board as an elected transmission agent between the University and the public. It also operates much like the Board of Directors of a large corporation, he said.

Herman said he felt Board decisions should be influenced by all segments of the University community. "I draw my information on what students are thinking from personal contact, The Daily Nebraskan and contact with parents, administrators and faculty."

Concerning faculty and faculty evaluation, he said he could not comment on the effectiveness of tenure as a way to build a good faculty because he had never been involved with a school where tenure was not used. The University is building a good faculty though, he added.

Herman said student evaluation of faculty is a good thing. He continued that other methods need to be devised to get more of the academic community into an evaluation process.

