

Exon's cuts ingites concern at regents meeting



NU President D.B. Varner . . . expressed his concern over Gov. J.J. Exon's proposed budget at the Board of Regents meeting in Omaha.

by H.J. Cummins

A proposed tuition increase and the allocation of 20 per cent of the requested program improvement funds for UNL—both part of Gov. J.J. Exon's proposed 1973-74 University of Nebraska budget—are of "particular concern" to NU President D.B. Varner. Varner was addressing the Board of Regents at its February meeting in Omaha on Saturday.

Varner said he fears the tuition increase proposed by the governor, "could create a genuine hardship for many parents and students."

The Exon's budget calls for students to pay \$18 a credit hour, for resident tuition, and \$48.25 for non-resident tuition. The regents had recommended the figures be \$17 and \$46. Both plans eliminate the "Free hours" (from 12 to 16 credit hours) students can now take.

Varner also said in his statement that the reduced program improvement budget "will clearly impede progress toward reaching the goals of the five-year ("Toward Excellence") plan."

Exon's \$91.4 million proposed NU budget is \$2.7 million less than the regents' request. By campus, the governor's recommendations are: \$50.6 million for UNL, \$1.2 million less than requested; \$13.7 million for UNO, \$375,000 less than requested; and \$22.9 million for the NU Medical Center, \$1.1 million less.

The differences, according to NU Vice President for Administration Howard Neville, are generally because of reductions in improvement

money and the governor's recommended 3.5 per cent salary wage increase for faculty. The regents had budgeted a 5.5 per cent increase.

The governor also reduced the NU construction budget by nearly \$14 million. He proposed \$2.2 million for a UNL Life Sciences Building, \$3.7 million less than requested; and budgeted no money for proposed land acquisition and a new library for UNO.

In other financial business, Varner read a letter he'd written to the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, requesting reimbursement for the tuition losses suffered by NU because of the Legislature's liberalizing the residency requirements.

The losses for the three campuses were: \$248,071 for UNL; \$9,700 for the NU Medical Center; and \$182,710 for UNO.

In other action, the board:

—amended the contract offer of Athletic Director Bob Devaney, extending it from five to seven years. His salary would remain \$35,000 a year.

—learned that a freeze on certain Housing and Urban Development programs will prevent UNL from obtaining low-interest loans for its 40 new married student housing units. UNL Chancellor James Zumberge said a study showed that 32 two-bedroom units and eight three-bedroom units would best serve students' needs.

—appointed T.E. Hartung as associate dean of the College of Agriculture and director of resident instruction. He had been chairman of the NU Department of Food Science and Technology.

Harper criticizes closed meetings

by Mary Voboril

A decision barring the public and press from task force hearings about student fees sets a "dangerous precedent" that should be discontinued and might even violate Nebraska statutes, according to Council on Student Life (CSL) member Chris Harper.

Harper introduced a resolution at last Thursday's CSL meeting requesting that news reporters be allowed to attend and report on meetings of the four student fees task forces established by UNL Chancellor James Zumberge to study the use and distribution of student fees.

Ken Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs, said committee chairmen jointly decided to close the meetings to the public and press.

Bader would not say if he agreed with the decision, but said he fully supported the taskforces and "wasn't going to tell (them) what to do or not to do."

He said he "didn't know the entire reason why Harper brought up the issue," except that Harper "probably felt deeply about it." He said that there were arguments on both sides.

"There probably are a number of persons who feel, like Chris, that if meetings are being held on public property and in public meetings on issues that will affect the public, the public has a right to information concerning what is being discussed," he said.

On the other hand, he said, sometimes greater harm can be caused by having meetings open rather than closed and "sometimes it is much better to have a free and open discussion (among committee members) without fear of reports in the press."

"However," he said, "generally speaking, (University) meetings should be open to the press." But he indicated that closing meetings occasionally is justified "if something is being discussed which might do harm to individuals."

He said an example would be meetings pertaining to tenure or promotions within the university.

Asked if persons or situations were being discussed in task force meetings that might have caused harm to individuals, Bader said "there could have been."

The reports, established because administrators decided student fees "have not been allocated properly," concern the University Health Center, administration of student fees, programming financed by student fees and fee-financed facilities.

Health Center hearings have been held since mid-September, but other hearings have been held since about mid-November. All meetings have been

closed to the press, and committee members have been instructed not to talk with reporters. Meeting minutes have been unavailable to the press.

All reports are scheduled to be in Bader's hands by the end of this week. He said he then would release them to the press. From Bader the reports go to Zumberge, who then will make recommendations to the Board of Regents.

With committee meetings for the most part over, Harper said he would modify his proposal at this Thursday's CSL meeting to include a more general proposal allowing the press access to meetings which involve student concerns.

He said the problem of closed meetings will be far from solved when the fee reports finally are released because a "dangerous precedent" has been set.

Harper, a copy editor for the Daily Nebraskan, said he raised the issue because he was "personally concerned" over the possible precedent.

He said he was not asked by any member of the Daily Nebraskan to introduce the proposal, and that it was offered "with direct reference to the task forces," although it would be modified later.

He would not disclose the wording of the new proposal, which he said would be introduced at this week's meeting.

However, Harper indicated concern over the legality of the closed meetings. He pointed to sections 84-1401-1405 of the Statutes of the State of Nebraska, which state in part: . . . all convened meetings of governing bodies of all agencies now or hereafter created by the Constitution, statute, or otherwise pursuant to law . . . exercising legislative, executive or administrative powers or supported in whole or in part by public funds or entrusted with powers of recommending the expenditure of, or actually expending, public funds shall be deemed to be a public meeting. . . and which shall be open in attendance to the public. . .

" . . . all persons interested in attending public meetings are hereby fully empowered and authorized to do so, and all such parties shall be allowed to . . . fully report. . . what transpires thereat, or may do so from the minutes thereof, so that the public of this state shall have full rights to know about, and have full access to, the public bodies. . . created to serve them.

" . . . Any official who shall violate the provisions of sections 84-1401 to 84-1405 shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction thereof, be subject to a fine not exceeding \$25."

Zumberge could not be reached for comment on the matter.



Chris Harper . . . "Closed meetings may be illegal."

Regents differ on student post

Two NU Board of Regent members differed in their opinions of LB323, Hastings Sen. Richard Marvel's bill to place one to three students on the board.

The bill would have the Legislature determine the student regent(s) selection procedure. The student(s) would have one vote. The bill is a constitutional amendment so it must be approved in a state election.

Lincoln Regent Ed Schwartzkopf said in the Friday evening meeting with the Intercampus Student Advisory Council, that he's not opposed to the idea.

"But if students are serious, why don't they do more in the Legislature. That's where the power is," he said.

Board Chairman Robert Koefoot said he feared the student member(s) could set a dangerous precedent.

"Would the administration and faculty then want a board representative?" he asked.

Todd McDaniels, a member of the ASUN Legislative Liaison Committee, said the committee would like a student on the board, to more directly express student concerns and inform students more quickly of board action.