

Task Force report appears thorough but short-sighted

by Mary Voboril

Thorough. Professional. Well-documented. Such might be a first reaction to the 36-page student fees administration task force report.

But a closer examination reveals that the task force has been short-sighted in several areas, omitting explanations and essential details.

Furthermore, the report seems geared to benefit the administration, not fees-paying students. And it's the more than 20,000 UNL students who bear the entire student fees bill, now set at \$51.50 per full time semester.

Most of the task force recommendations hinge on establishing a program and facilities (student fees) allocation board. The board would be composed of six faculty members or administrators and five students.

Therein lies the first problem.

Although no faculty member or administrator pays a "student" fee, all can enjoy similar benefits in, for example, use of fees-financed programs and speakers. All receive the *Daily Nebraskan*, all can take advantage of recreational facilities, such as tennis courts.

In light of this, it seems inequitable that the task force should recommend that voting allocations board members be 50 per cent faculty/administrators and 50 per cent students.

The sixth faculty member and chairman of the board is the UNL chancellor. The report does not indicate whether the chancellor, defined as a non voting member, can vote to break a tie or what should be done in that case.

Another problem of the allocations board concerns the selection of student members. ASUN and the Council on Student Life (CSL), the report says, should work in conjunction to screen city campus applicants for placement on a ballot for University-wide election of three members of the board. The Agriculture and Home Economics Advisory Boards should select one candidate in the same manner, as should the Graduate Student Association, the report says.

However, such a selection method is unwarranted.

By ASUN constitutional definition, "All regularly enrolled students at UNL shall be members" of ASUN. This of course includes agriculture, home economics and graduate students. Why should the three groups be allowed to select a student for candidacy when, for example, the college of Arts and Sciences Advisory Board has no say in who is selected by ASUN/CSL?

According to the report, recommendations of the

Opinion analysis of the author

allocations board for distributing student fees must be made to the chancellor. In turn, the chancellor will place the recommendations on the agenda of the Board of Regents.

The task force does not indicate whether the chancellor may make changes of his own in the allocations, or chuck the whole report and make allocations as he sees fit. There is no suggestion for alternative measures in the event that the chancellor stalls or refuses to place the recommendations on the regent's agenda.

The task force did provide for an appeals route in case an organization's request for fees is not granted or is drastically slashed. According to the report, an appeal would have to be based on "new evidence" and must be in the form of a petition signed by "at least 100 valid, ID holding students."

The petition stipulation, however, is possibly discriminatory to minority groups, including any organization with a small membership which perhaps could not generate the necessary signatures.

The appeals route includes a decision by the student affairs office, to which the initial request would be made. Presumably student affairs would make an arbitrary decision concerning whether the request is reasonable. If it decided to the contrary, evidently that ends the matter. The task force makes no provision for appealing a student affairs decision.

Supposing the appeal is granted, the chancellor is given the power to call an appellate board. Perhaps he also can decide not to call the board; the report does not say. But if he does, the appellate board would hear the case and return a decision to the allocations board, which then would make what it called a "final" decision on the case. From the board, the appeal would go to the chancellor, who would pass it on to the regents. The regents would have the ultimate say. Again, the report does not state whether the chancellor has the authority to change the appeal.

The task force report also calls for fee-funded

organizations to operate on the University's fiscal year (July 1-June 30) instead of the academic year schedule now used. However, students manning the organizations don't operate on a fiscal year—they operate mid-September to mid-May.

In light of its zero-based program of yearly of each fees request, the task force asks that year-end reports be due by Sept. 1, following the close of the fiscal year June 30. This would leave organizations with two summer months to prepare a detailed report, which would be considered when the time came for future fees to be allocated.

In another area, the task force recommended a zero-based budget plan be adopted for the allocation of student fees. This would mean that no fee-funded program automatically would have its budget renewed each year.

The only exception to the zero-based budget, according to the report, would be the \$14.50 now set aside for the retirement of bonded indebtedness.

Part of the administrative task force's actual task, as requested by Ken Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs, was to "recommend procedures by which the subsequent administration of approved programs can be achieved."

In view of this, the task force called for early election of organization officials, specifically those of ASUN. Some short-sightedness also is apparent there.

The task force recommended that ASUN officer terms begin July 1 after an early March election. It proposes using the March to June 30 period as an internship period for new officers to work with outgoing officers for building the next year's budget.

However, the proposal does not try to restrict the resulting lame duck administration, which would last about two months. The lame duck administration potentially could enact almost any plan it saw fit, even a program that might prove to be anathema to the new officers. And since the new officers would not assume office until July 1, apparently they could not vote to help pass or defeat measures the lame duck administration might propose.

The report does not even indicate whether the new officers could vote on the budget they would work with—only that they would help prepare it.

Other of the administrative task force recommendations involve technical matters in which additional oversights were made. Perhaps if the administrative task force had allowed the press and other interested agents to help evaluate the report as it progressed, such oversights may have been prevented. And the remaining three reports have yet to be released.

UNL student fee pie—sliced into nine pieces

Every full time UNL student every semester receives a tuition statement. But that bill includes more than tuition. It includes a \$51.50 charge for "fees." But very few students realize what programs this money supports, or how much of this \$51.50 the various programs get.

Currently the \$51.50 per semester is divided as follows:

University Health Center	\$21
Nebraska Union	\$6
Daily Nebraskan	\$1.25
Debt service for bond-financed facilities	\$14.50
Recreational facilities	\$2
Building and equipment fund	\$2.50
Student Recreation	\$2
ASUN	\$3.30
Other (Unallocated)	\$1.95

The Board of Regents controls collection and allocation of the fees. The current \$51.50 has been charged since 1969.

According to Miles Tommeraaen, UNL director of business and finance, this last heading of "unallocated" is misleading. The chancellor controls the \$1.95, subject to regents' approval. However, all of the \$1.95 and more currently is being spent for specific activities, said Tommeraaen.

ASUN receives 50 cents of the \$1.95, bringing their total to 80 cents per semester. The remainder is divided among the Student Activities Office, the New Student Program, the Placement Office and the Ombudsman.

Tommeraaen explained that this \$1.45 still is not enough to support these programs so reserves of money collected in prior years is used.

Raymond DeVries, director of accounting, said there was about \$63,000 in reserve June 30, 1972. He said this amount should be exhausted by the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 1973.

This raises the question of how the programs financed from the unallocated funds will operate next year. DeVries said the programs will either have to be cut back or the funding will have to come from the Legislature.

Similar reserves exist in the recreational facilities fund and the building and equipment fund. Money is being held until used for specific projects.

Building and equipment fund money is used for the expansion and improvement of Nebraska Union facilities. Currently money is being spent for a new East Campus Union, Tommeraaen said.

The \$6 allocated to the Union is controlled by the Nebraska Union Board, a faculty-student group. About half of the money is for building operations, with the other half for programs, according to Art Thompson, Union program director.

Some Union programs supported include foreign, weekend and special films, speakers and concerts, the Model United Nations and the Music and Art Lending Libraries. The Union Program Council prepares a

programming budget, which must be approved by the Nebraska Union Board and eventually by the Board of Regents.

ASUN also prepares a budget which must be approved by the Board of Regents. However, "they have a certain amount of discretion," Tommeraaen said. ASUN controls some money which they use to support activities of their choice.

Some of the activities supported this year include the Women's Resource Center, the Day Care Center, International Club, the Mexican-American Student Association and the University Rowing Team. These groups must apply to ASUN for money each year.

If a student group needs money, they do not necessarily have to go to ASUN to get it, Tommeraaen said. He pointed out that a jogging club might get money from the recreation funds which go to the intramural athletics. A debate team might go to the Union Board if they want to bring in a speaker of general interest, he added.



UNL Director of Business and Finance Miles Tommeraaen.