

Legislature to act on non-fiscal bills

by Steve Arvanette

State senators decided Tuesday to go ahead and pass bills on final reading which have no fiscal impact. Among the bills passed Tuesday was Scottsbluff Sen. Terry Carpenter's LB179 that calls for the acquisition by the University of Hiram Scott College in Scottsbluff.

Gov. J. James Exon had told senators Monday that the state income tax could be reduced by one-third if his state operational budget was accepted without additions.

Senators had tentatively agreed Monday to rush the bill toward final reading Wednesday and adjourn for the year without any additional spending measures.

Monday afternoon saw the governor's budget bill advanced over two of the three votes needed prior to enactment. Shouted down to defeat, with Appropriations committee chairman Sen. Richard Marvel's approval, were all committee amendments to the bill.

Among these amendments rejected was an extra \$1.2 million for the University.

All additional bills calling for state funds will be postponed for one year if the Legislature sticks by its decision on the budget.

Among expenditures to be delayed for one year would be all state capital construction funds. NU had appeared in line for \$16 million in construction funds.

Major NU capital construction funds agreed to by Exon were a new Law College and Life Sciences building on the UNL campus, utilities building at UNO and a College of Nursing

building at the NU Medical Center in Omaha.

The Appropriations Committee appeared to have agreed on Exon's NU capital construction requests and were considering a new library for UNO over Exon's objections.

Anne Campbell, NU lobbyist, said the University will "probably be able to live with" Exon's budget.

But she added: "We'll not be allowed to move along on our Five-Year plan as anticipated."

Campbell said the University's greatest concern was the dropping of all capital construction for one year. "It means keeping on as we've been doing," she said.

Of additional concern, she said, is the \$1 million University deficit that looms in the current fiscal year. It had been anticipated the Legislature would appropriate the needed funds to pay the deficit, however, that now appears unlikely.

Campbell said the deficit probably would be absorbed into the 1973-74 fiscal year's budget. "It'll definitely have an impact," she said of the projected debt.

Although the University will not receive as much state money as expected, it appears NU may gain a new campus. With Tuesday's 25-21 vote to have the University acquire Hiram Scott College, the fate of the proposal lies with Exon.

The governor told the *Daily Nebraskan* several weeks ago that he had not been given a workable plan for the campus and that he might veto the bill.

Should Exon sign the bill, the University would take over operations



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of the campus 90 days after the Legislature adjourns.

Had the bill received 33 votes, it would have gone into effect immediately upon the Governor's

signature. With 25 votes being the minimum needed to enact the bill, it appears unlikely Carpenter could get 33 votes to override a possible Exon veto.

UNL does indeed compute

by Mary Voboril

Computers—someday they will become a public utility, like electricity, according to Don Costello, director of the UNL computing center.

The UNL computer, purchased for about \$2 million in 1967, already has become a utility of sorts. It not only serves UNL and its students, but also is used by such private operations as the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) in Columbus, and state users such as the Legislature.

According to Walt Bruning, director of the University-wide computer network, the purpose for having a network is to share resources—first, within the University system and then to any other interested parties.

All University computing equipment was absorbed by the network, which serves the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the NU Medical Center and UNL, in October 1971. At that time fiscal and managerial control—and ownership—was transferred to NU President D.B. Varner's office.

The legislative budget allocates about \$3 million to the network each year. Of that amount, the Lincoln center receives about \$1.4 million. About \$350,000 is spent each year on UNL data processing and about \$1 million is used for teaching, research and equipment purchases.

In the network allocations system, somewhat of a hierarchy exists. The Legislature allocates money specifically for computer operations. The NU president then apportions funds to the chancellors of the three campuses. Each chancellor divides the money as he sees fit among college deans. From the deans, money goes to department chairman, from chairmen to teachers, and from teachers to students, Bruning said.

Money is divided with consideration as to which departments most use computer services. Students request money from instructors for computer use if they need the computer for a class project.

Everybody pays for using the computer, Bruning said, including the Legislature, which this year will be billed about \$135,000, mostly for bill drafting.

"But before we accept a job, even from the Legislature, we must be sure it is beneficial to both parties—the user and the University," Costello said.

Apparently the University almost always comes out on the long end of the stick.

"There never is any loss to the University for outside use of the computer," Costello said. "There usually is a gain."

For example, the Columbus NPPD contract with the University includes a 25 per cent surcharge on all computing. The company uses the computer for predicting power needs at potentially critical times, determining power load flows and optimum sites for new power plants.

Programs such as NPPD can be used in teaching and research with electrical engineering students, for example. Such arrangements "give us access to programs we otherwise could not afford to have," Costello said.

The Columbus NPPD contract also provides \$4,000 for a graduate assistant to work in the computer center.

Of the 25 to 30 "outside users" not including the state, the Columbus NPPD is the largest, Costello said. However, he said the total billing this year for all outside users "probably will not amount to 50,000."

Another major user is the Legislature. Every word of every statute has been keypunched into computer-readable form for the UNL system. If a state senator wants to change the name of an agency, review the exact powers of a state official, amend an old bill or draft a new one, the computer can give a printout of all bills or numbers or sections of bills related to a particular subject.

The Legislature, like private users, is assessed a 25 per cent surcharge.

Although the state operates its own computing system using the UNL center actually saves the state money, Costello said.

He said "100-plus" people work in the UNL center. Fourteen of these employes have masters degrees, he added.

"The statehouse people do not have the manpower we do—they simply could not afford to hire enough people for the three or four months the Legislature is in session."

Costello said the UNL computer system is "the first and best bill drafting operation in the country." The University benefits because the Legislature was required to purchase special computer equipment, or "hardware" as it's called, in order for UNL to assume some of its operations. The hardware is available year-round to the University, although the Legislature only uses the equipment while it is in session.

The original UNL computing center was established in 1959, Costello said. The emphasis was on computing, and it was little more than a fast adding machine, he said. He added that the center is approaching its 10th year in its relationship with IBM.

"People should realize the computer is no longer just a computer but an information processing machine," Costello said. "Even the Encyclopedia Britannica can be purchased in computer readable form. We are a service agency, but not enough people know what we can do. So we also have to be salesmen."

Thus Costello and his staff frequently visit University departments to explain how the UNL computer can serve them or save them money.

Continued on p.2.

