



NU President D.B. Varner

Policy coordination needed in state education—Varner

By Charles Wieser

The need for Nebraska universities to coordinate educational policies, the importance of continuing education and criticism of a national report calling for increased tuition charges for public colleges and universities were voiced Wednesday by D.B. Varner, NU president.

Varner was speaking to 52 Nebraska school superintendents who were representing Class A and B schools at the President's Conference for Nebraska School Superintendents.

"This belief that kindergarten to the 12 grade is in one world, while the university belongs to another one is foolish," he said.

He said that learning is a life-long process and that education is a continuing program.

"We (the universities, public and private schools) have to start working together because now we're competing for dollars, while working from the same pool of money," Varner said.

The common objective of Nebraska schools, he said, is to develop the state's human resources.

"We have a financial and human responsibility to Nebraska residents to provide a properly managed educational system," Varner said.

He warned that problems and values in society are constantly changing. This has led him, he said, to be apprehensive toward the recent enthusiasm for career education.

"Education is much more than training people to be electricians, plumbers or auto mechanics. What's a skilled engineer or accountant going to be doing in the year 2000?" Varner asked.

"We need to help students shape a system of values that will help them to cope with this dynamically changing world. We can't force them to learn a given system of values. Instead, we must lay out all possible options and let people decide their own set of values," he said.

Varner said that nearly 50 per cent of Nebraska high school students fail to enter a university, technical or vocational college.

"This means that many young people are not taking advantage of their chances to obtain a higher level of education," he said.

Studies are being planned on the subject.

"By knowing the reason why students aren't attending post-high school institutions, we'll have a weapon that will better our chances of

persuading more people to attend college," Varner said.

He said that to increase the percentage of students receiving higher education from 50 per cent to 70 per cent would be a significant improvement.

Varner also said he disapproved of a national report that said public universities and colleges should more than double their undergraduate tuition charges.

The Committee for Economic Development, whose 200 members are mostly executives of major corporations, made the recommendation last week.

"This strange reasoning by a group of executives saying the public should pay an increasing portion of their education will only further increase student bodies," Varner said.

He said the report's recommendations would give poor persons a definite advantage, while adversely affecting the middle class student.

"Middle class students will be abandoned in terms of any kind of financial aid. This means that a large portion of America's society will be deprived of the opportunity to attend a four year college," he said.

Varner said more interaction and cooperation between administrators at the university and the public-private school levels would improve academic standards in Nebraska.

Some of his suggestions for accomplishing this are:

- Increase the amount of information about NU's curriculum to high schools.

- Create more feedback to high schools relating to how their students are doing at NU.

- Improve teacher training by letting the high schools tell NU how to better train student teachers for their particular schools.

- Have special study teams from NU go into schools and study specific problems related to each school.

- Send some of NU's faculty into the public or private school system to work for a semester or year, while at the same time allowing a number of high school teachers instruct classes on the university level.

- Setting up a regulatory system where more frequent meetings could take place between university and public-private school administrators.

Hiram Scott acquisition debate to continue

By Steve Arvanette

The controversy surrounding the University's year-long attempt to create a campus at the former Hiram Scott College in Scottsbluff appears to continue despite a special governor's committee vote recommending against acquisition.

Regent Robert Koefoot, a member of the special committee, said he expects NU's Board of Regents to "abide by the report of the committee."

Another board member, Regent Edward Schwartzkopf, said he thinks the issue is still open for discussion despite the committee's decision.

By a 7-3 vote, the committee approved a statement calling the University's plans "not of a scope and significance" to warrant development. The University had hoped to use the Scottsbluff campus for programs in rural health, agriculture and continuing education.

Gov. J.J. Exon appointed the committee at the regents' request and following his veto of a bill passed by the 1973 Legislature which called for acquisition of Hiram Scott by the University without cost.

"I don't think we have all the facts," Schwartzkopf said. He said he wants to read the committee's detailed report before deciding whether the Hiram Scott issue should be dropped.

"I would not say it is a dead issue,"

Schwartzkopf said. He added that he does not know why a majority of the committee voted against acquiring the defunct campus.

Schwartzkopf said he heard the presentation of the University's planned use for Scottsbluff when it was made to the committee. "I thought it had a lot of merit," he said.

Both Schwartzkopf and Koefoot said the board would delay any final

decision until the committee's final report is forwarded by the governor.

Koefoot, one of three committee members to vote against the motion, was less optimistic about the future use of Hiram Scott by the University.

"My feeling is since the committee turned down the proposal, the regents will concur with that decision," Koefoot said.

The regents have previously gone

on record unanimously supporting acquisition of Hiram Scott by the University. The board could accept the property without approval of the governor or action by the Legislature.

Koefoot said in view of the committee's decision it is "my feeling we (regents) would turn it down." He said he has not received a final copy of the report which was adopted Friday in Grand Island.

Educators focus on race, teaching issues

public what is needed to help improve our schools," he said.

Fullerton said that the Omaha public school's are one of a few districts now working to solve racial integration problems. He also said Omaha's schools were less segregated than other Nebraska public schools that have few or no minority students.

He also said that a new approach is being used in teaching with preschool children.

"We're moving away from the tradition that a 12 year academic program is all that is needed. It may prove beneficial to work with preschool children," Fullerton said.

Martin Petersen, superintendent of the Alliance Public School system, said his district is working to help Indian

and gifted students.

"I don't think we have a Chicago problem in Alliance. Out of the Chicago population, there's only one person who is critical of our school program," he said.

Petersen said that while there are racial integration problems

He said it was a different matter when discussing difficulties involved in educating Indian children. "With Indian students we face the task of changing their system of values. We approach the education of Indian students with American middle class values which are not very effective."

Wanda Meeh, superintendent of the Council Public School system, expressed appreciation for having failed to enroll in the teachers.