

Student regent bill readied for debate

By Susanne Schafer

A student voice on the Board of Regents may depend upon the speaking ability of some state senators, because the proposed bill to place students on the board is scheduled for debate in the Legislature Thursday.

The initial bill, introduced by Hastings Sen. Richard Marvel in the last legislative session, was held for final vote until this session. In its present form, the bill requires that one to three students be placed on the board, all sharing one vote. The Legislature is directed to decide the method of choosing the students, the term of office and how the vote is to be split.

But last week, Marvel announced an amendment to the bill. The amendment names the three campus student body presidents as the students to serve on the board. They would be non-voting members although they still would retain the status of regent. This allows them to attend all meetings, to be reimbursed for travel and gives them equal speaking rights.

According to Con Zutavern, ASUN Legislative Liaison Committee chairman, the bill "wouldn't go through without the amendment."

He said he has spoken with 15 senators who favor giving students some type of representation on the board. If the amended bill is approved, it would go into effect before the next school year, he said.

Although the student vote would be lost according to the amended bill, it still is important to have students on the board, in the opinion of Ann Henry, ASUN president.

Henry said students frequently do not have the opportunity to approach the board through present channels.

"Our only formal connection is the student advisory committee meeting, composed of five students from each campus, which is supposed to meet with the regents before their monthly meeting.

"We don't always meet, students are not there when the regents meet during vacation, not all the regents come, and the meetings usually start late, but always end on time, which gives us less than an hour," she said.

Fowler sponsors bill to redistribute aid

By Greg Wees

Students who were able to get the financial aid they applied for should be satisfied—but this isn't always the case, according to Lincoln Sen. Steve Fowler.

Students may not be satisfied with the amount of money they receive because of the way the aid system works, he added.

In Nebraska, most students must apply for aid directly to the university or college they want to attend.

If one school uses its financial aid allotment, then a student wanting to go there must be rejected if he can't pay his own way.

The result is that some students can get financial aid only if they are willing to attend a college they really didn't want to go to in the first place, said Fowler, a member of the Legislature's Education Committee.

To remedy this situation, Fowler said he is drafting a bill that would establish a commission to distribute financial aid directly to the individual on the basis of need.

Still in the research stage, the proposal would gradually decrease aid to the university and instead would increase the money put into a fund to be distributed by the aid commission.

"The long-range plan is to take all money spent on aid for higher education and pool it (in the commission's fund). Any student who wants to go to the University of Nebraska, if he qualifies for aid, would get a voucher for the amount he needs," Fowler said.

Jack Ritchie, director of UNL's Scholarships and Financial Aid Office, said 27 states have commissions distributing scholarships and grants directly to students.

He called Nebraska's present system a "piecemeal" approach that can hurt students. Ritchie cited cases of students who could get grants to a state college or university, but not to the school of their choice.

The Education Committee now is considering LB427, a bill that would create the Nebraska Commission on Post-Secondary Student Aids.

The purpose of this bill is to qualify Nebraska for receiving \$150,000 this year in new federal funds that would be used to supplement aid money, Ritchie added.

However, Fowler predicted there would be some problems in getting the bill passed.

He said that students attending proprietary (for profit) schools, such as the Lincoln School of Commerce or other business schools, would qualify for state aid under provisions of LB427. His bill would prohibit that.

According to a task force report, which recommended the bill Fowler is preparing, LB427 doesn't clearly define student eligibility, nor does it establish an advisory committee such as exists under Fowler's plan.

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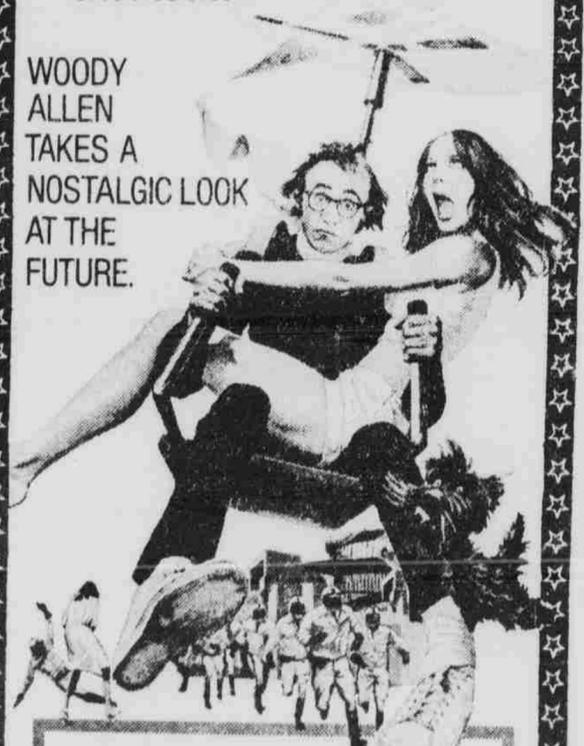
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