

Varner proposes alternative to NU budget slash

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absorb a budget cut "without severely crippling the university's programs." Varner said if the budget is reduced he would recommend that the NU Board of Regents eliminate selected programs rather than continue to reduce funds for all programs.

As an alternative, Varner suggested the Legislature could raise the university's non-general fund ceiling and let it use this money while it lasts. The non-general fund includes money the university generates such as tuition money, that does not come from state general fund. By law, the university cannot spend that money unless the Legislature appropriates it.

That, he said, could create a peak in temporary savings of \$5 million in January and February and \$3 million by April 1, helping to ease the state's projected cash flow deficit. Those general fund dollars would need to be called in by June 30, he said, but that plan would be more advantageous than a \$2.3 million budget cut.

Questioned by Sen. Marvel, Varner said NU administrators had not decided what selected programs might be cut entirely. He said the School of Scooil Work had been considered since it is in danger of losing its accreditation and will require more money to save it. However, Varner said, he is now convinced that the school "is vital to the state and should not be cut."

ASUN protests

ASUN President Jim Say presented the committee with a report opposing the budget cut, itemizing potential effects of such a reduction and recommending alternatives similar to Varner's.

The report said a reduction's consequences might not be so dire if it merely trimmed excesses from the budget, but that is not the case.

"The budget has already had, whatever fat is contained, if any at all, removed, thus meaning that a cut now would penetrate the very life-blood of UNL," he said.

The report said UNL administrators would initiate most of the following

actions if the budget is cut:

- Reduction of custodial and maintenance service.
- Curtailment of new building openings.
- Freeze on all employe hiring.
- Completely stop university operations for one week, probably this winter.
- Freeze on all outstate travel.
- Cancel summer sessions.

Cancelled classes

The report said an estimated 50 to 75 classes in the College of Arts and Sciences would be cancelled next semester if the budget reductions are enacted.

Frank Thompson, UNL economics graduate student, and Mike O'Connor and Lou Anne Rini, representing the UNO student government, also testified before the committee.

Thompson said because of departmental budget shortages, the size of economics class sections he teaches have nearly doubled.

Thompson said he had discussed the problem with Ken Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs, and Wallace Peterson, Economics Dept. chairman, among others, but the problem always boiled down to insufficient funds.

O'Connor said the Legislature should pay for capital improvements and that student activities are suffering at UNO because of its failure to do so.

Auditor plans amendment

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Johnson suggested that the minimum reserve in the state's treasury should be \$5 million, and said that the Board of Equalization could then set tax rates high enough to ensure this minimum balance. He will submit this proposal in the form of an amendment to LB4 later in the session.

Sen. Eugen Mahoney of Omaha, Appropriations Committee member, accused Ray Johnson of being partially responsible for bringing about the present emergency situation.

Johnson is one of three of the members of the Board of Equalization which voted to reduce the amount of state reserve money in 1973 and 1974.

Mahoney refused to blame the current "chaos" on Exon.

"He knew the reserves were being reduced, and he knew the taxes should have been raised two years ago," Mahoney said.

Raise taxes

Forrest Johnson, vice president for the Nebraska Research Council, Inc., told the committee it would be better to raise taxes than to let the treasury hit rock bottom.

He compared the state to a business which needs reserves to accommodate fluctuations in the cash flow.

The state is in a worse position than a bankrupt business because most businesses can borrow money when they run short of funds, but the state is prohibited by law from borrowing money, he said.

Mahoney asked if it would be

appropriate to deplete the reserve "just this once" to deal with the emergency cash flow problem. Forrest Johnson cautioned that temporary provisions tend to become permanent.

Forrest Johnson said it is time the Legislature took a "good, solid look at the state government to determine what we are paying for that we don't need to pay for."

Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly told the committee that tax rates should be set by mathematical calculations.

"Politics is about ninety-nine and two-thirds per cent of the whole business of LB4," Mahoney said.

Ag college plans winterim trips overseas

For those looking for something to do over Christmas break, the College of Agriculture is organizing trips to other countries to study agricultural techniques.

One trip involves stops in Israel and Switzerland, the other trip travels to Colombia.

Leon Chesnin, agronomy professor, said the Israel-Switzerland trip leaves Lincoln Dec. 22 and returns Jan. 12. Chesnin said Israel's modern technology and "more advanced irrigation methods" will be studied.

The Switzerland trip will feature a visit to the Simmental Valley, where Simmental bulls originated. Foilage production, effi-

ciency of land resources, and cheese production will be studied.

Swiss handling and utilization of animal waste is another area to be studied, he said.

The students will spend Christmas Eve in Bethlehem and Christmas Day in Jerusalem.

The tour, listed under Agronomy 402, is worth three credit hours. Cost for the trip is about \$1,400 and includes transportation, meals, hotel accommodations, tuition, the guides' salary, and a workshop, Chesnin said.

Agriculture Engineering Professor Deane Manbeck, said the Colombia trip leaves Dec. 26 and returns Jan. 9.

"Their (Colombia's) agriculture situation is similar to the Great Plains of 100 years ago," Manbeck said.

The tour will study cattle raising, rice, coffee, potato, and sugar production, he said, as well as tropical fruits and cotton plantations.

The trip's cost is \$700, and includes tuition, transportation costs, shots and some motels, he said.

The tour is worth two credit hours, and is listed as Agriculture 499c. There is a maximum of 20 spaces, Manbeck said, and four or five still are open. Reservations should be turned in today, he said.

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