

Upgrade salaries, now or later

The question of faculty salaries reared its tired head again at the NU Board of Regents meeting last Saturday.

University administrators predicted that 130 positions could be cut if the Nebraska Legislature passes the budget recommended by its Appropriations Committee.

NU President D. B. Varner also reported that the university still ranks at the "bottom of the bottom" in faculty salaries.

At issue is the university's request for a 12.32 per cent pay boost to bring salaries in line with other Big 8 universities.

The Legislature, meanwhile, has to balance the

NU request against the recommendation of the Appropriations Committee, which is to increase salaries four per cent with an additional merit raise of one per cent.

In the fall of 1974, the Daily Nebraskan printed all UNL faculty salaries and editorially called for upgrading those salaries.

As time passes, the gap widens between what faculty salaries are and what they should be. Inflation has reduced what those salaries mean and also has reduced the amount left over for salaries after university operating expenses have been taken care of.

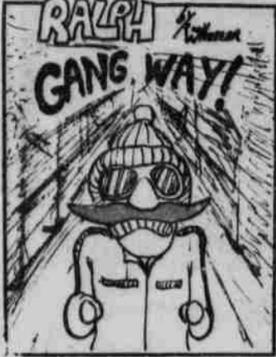
Faculty salaries must be upgraded, though, and at some time the move will have to be made. Politicians can orate eternally on the university and decry how much money it requires.

If the university is to survive, and to survive is to continue to attract and keep competent faculty, then salaries need to be brought in line.

Students can't expect to get the goods they deserve unless NU competes in the marketplace.

Apoologies are extended to Dick Piersol, Daily Nebraskan legislative reporter, whose Monday column "Rarefied Air" was omitted from yesterday's editorial on the spring '76 Nebraskan. **Vince Boucher**

d.n. soapbox



con/pro | Sign here-no here; you may lose financial aid

By Neil Klotz

(This is the first of a three-part series on how to get financial aid for the 1976-77 school year. Most deadlines fall in the next three months.)

Ebenezer, meet the Ghost of Financial Aid Present. You walk into the scholarships and financial aid office looking for money for next fall. The director tells you that, based on the information you gave about family finances, you won't be expected to contribute toward your education. This is according to a government-approved system of estimating financial need.

The next day you return and fill out more forms. This time the director tells you that you are expected to contribute \$1200 toward the cost of your education, also according to a government-approved system.

You ask him which figure is correct. He tells you they both are, and he can decide which one to use. At this point you are ready to wake-up, but the director points to a copy of the *Federal Register* and says, "Its all right here."

Mind-boggling trip

It is all there, I discovered, after a mind-boggling trip through the rat's nest of regulations which surround the three federal financial aid programs administered through colleges: College Work-Study (CW-S), Supplementary Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and National Direct Student Loans (NDSL).

Essentially, if your financial aid office gives you the wrong forms, you could lose a bundle in grants, loans and work-study that you are legally entitled to.

At stake is almost a billion dollars' worth of financial aid which students at more than 1,000 institutions may not get their fair share of. It happened like this.

Early this year, the U.S. Office of Education (OE) issued regulations that would require all private "need analysis" firms like the College Board's College Scholarship Service (CSS) and the American College Testing Program (ACT) to submit for approval each year the formulas they use to figure a student's financial need. In addition, these firms' estimates of how much a family should contribute to approximate almost exactly new federal

"benchmark" figures.

Calling for more aid

The regulations were partly in response to a previous announcement by CSS that it had adjusted its need formulas to drastically lower a family's expected contribution. This did not go over too well with the Federal government, because it meant thousands of families across the nation would be waving Parents' Confidential Statements calling for more aid than OE had.

For instance, a family that previously was required to contribute \$1,230 would have to put up only \$590 under the new CSS formula. Under the federal "benchmarks," the same family would have to pay \$990.

CSS and ACT agreed to a common formula that would meet federal guidelines. But their system hasn't been approved officially.

Then OE threw a curve ball. If a school did not want to pay to use CSS or ACT, it could use two other free systems which already were approved and ready for use. These two systems, however, call for families to contribute amounts far above OE's new "benchmarks" set up, it seems, for everyone but itself.

The first, known as the "income tax system," stipulates that a family's contribution must equal the amount it paid in federal income tax plus 5 per cent of its assets above \$12,500. Under this system a family that would, for instance, pay \$40 under the federal "benchmarks" would have to pay \$940 under the income tax system.

Only slight improvement

The second system is only slightly better. It's the Family Contribution Schedule used to award Basic Grants (BEOG), a separate parcel of federal aid issued directly from the government, rather than through schools. The federal "benchmarks" use Bureau of Labor figures for the cost to a family to maintain an average lifestyle, but the BEOG system uses Social Security poverty level figures. So while under the "benchmark" formula a family of four would be allowed \$9,000 to maintain itself, it would be allowed only \$5,700 under the Basic Grant formula.

To put things in perspective, a family with a \$12,000 income and assets of \$20,000 would be required to pay \$1,410 under the Basic Grant system and only \$500 under the federal "benchmarks."

Did OE know it approved two systems which produce figures way above its own schedule?

"The difference is recognized," an OE spokesman said, but "the commissioner does not consider it desirable to force institutions to use the services of a need analysis contractor" and will continue to let schools use either of the two systems.

'Prefer one system'

Could a school use both systems at the same time—or a mixture of all three including the private firms?

"We would prefer one system used uniformly, but there is nothing to prevent that variance," the spokesman said.

In one stroke OE seems to have muted demand for financial aid dollars by schools that unwittingly use the "free" systems, and at the same time set up the possibility for unscrupulous financial aid officers to give preferential treatment to some students, merely by switching systems.

The snafu is compounded by the fact that the free systems now are the only ones officially approved. OE is telling all schools that have been using the private contractors that they will have to "stand by" until the CSS-ACT formula is approved. Meanwhile, most schools have January deadlines for picking up need-analysis forms and March deadlines for returning them so students will know before summer how much aid they are to get. As time runs out, "several schools" have turned to the income tax or Basic Grant systems, an OE official said.

Even if most schools that have used CSS or ACT in the past stick with them, more than 1,000 schools do not use either. The very real danger is that, when these schools find out that what ever system (or combination of guesses) they've been using must endure a federal approval process, they'll turn to what the government says they should use—the free system.

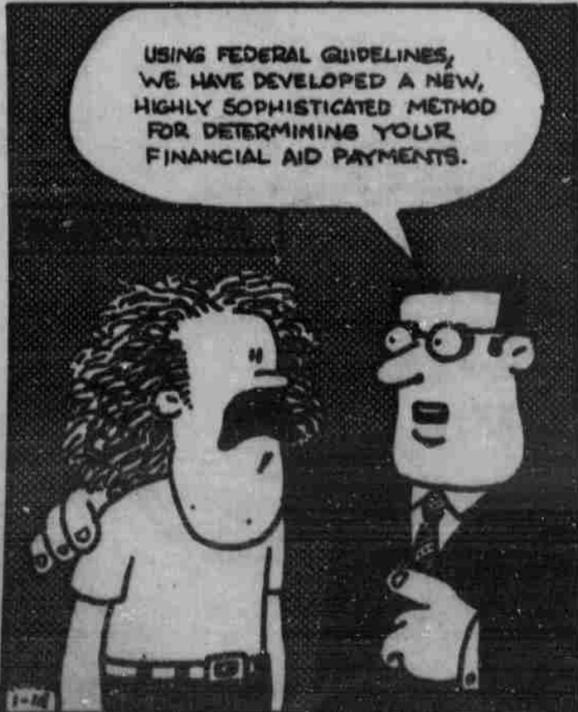
'Point out difference'

About all you can do at this point is make sure your financial aid office does not use the income tax or Basic Grant systems. If your officials are not aware of the difference, point it out to them. You will have at least hundreds and maybe a couple of thousand dollars of aid bucks riding on it. So make the effort.

Things always can be worse, and in the financial aid picture for 1976, they are. Another federal aid program, the Guaranteed Student Loan, now is on trial in the United States Senate; for the last half-year, legislators have heard gruesome testimony about sloppy record-keeping systems, misuse of funds by and bribery of government officials, illegal collection processes, negligence and on and on. In addition, Pres. Gerald Ford still is trying to rescind funds for student financial aid for 1976. Even if he does not succeed, the Congressional appropriation for student aid actually is \$190 million less than last year because of inflation.

What can you do? Make sure you are (1) aware of and (2) apply for every dollar you are eligible for. For the next two columns, I'll do my best of the first point. Number two is up to you.

(College Press Service)



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STILL HERE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS