

Evaluation key to increased regent management

Accountability, or how to assure Nebraska taxpayers that they are getting the best investment for their contribution to higher education, was the matter on the table before the Nebraska Legislature's Appropriations Committee Tuesday.

President D.B. Varner addressed the problem of accountability in the context of proposed changes that would place the management of the University of Nebraska back with the body to which it was originally delegated—the NU Board of Regents.

The regents have requested that the Legislature appropriate funds for the university in one lump sum and let the regents be responsible for parceling out the dollars.

Before the Legislature hands over the goods and gives up some measure of fiscal control over

the university, it wants the assurance that tax dollars won't go down the drain—of waste, inefficiency and poor academic programs.

Varner claims that by returning financial control to the regents, the burden of finances will be the most compelling means of control over academics and faculty performance.

Under Varner's proposal, the Legislature would look at goals for the long haul as well as shorter term objectives and decide what financial support is needed.

Evaluation at the end of each year would let the state senators know how far the university had gotten with its goals and objectives.

The plan supposedly would reduce financial haggling and allow the state senators a more direct forum for probing university academic objectives. It would also return financial control to the regents, in everything from programs to merit salary increases for faculty who deserve those increases.

Varner's plan stated, "No management tool is more important than budgetary control."

The question behind this question, as one senator did ask, is how can the regents be active managers of a multi-million dollar institution composed of three large entities when they meet for only one day a month?

There seems to be two answers.

First, in every case they wouldn't manage. The day-to-day authority would be delegated to the university administration.

The regents would set budget amounts for specific areas but would necessarily have to rely on the administration's working knowledge of the

university to estimate what those amounts need be.

Second, if the regents were managers, perhaps they would be forced to manage.

Instead of the yearly melodrama of the regents presenting one budget request, consisting of precise and inflexible categories, only to be met with the Legislature appropriating less funds in each of those categories than the regents requested, the regents would have power to put the money where they wanted it to go.

They would be subject to more scrutiny and pressure, since they would be the ultimate source of what everyone in the university wants—money for their own department.

The regents would be more than figureheads with constitutional authority and no real power. And a lot of people would be more interested in what the regents do.

Varner presented a plan which he called workable but not necessarily foolproof. The proposal is carefully conceived and deserves serious consideration by the Legislature.

The key is evaluation. While educational matters are difficult to evaluate, and much of the evaluation is subjective, procedures such as accreditation reports and investigation of university departments by evaluation teams are useful measures of where the university stands in relation to other schools.

Giving the regents the financial power to act on those evaluations and move in directions toward improvement could only serve the best interests of students.

Vince Boucher

d.n. soapbox



letters to the editor

Dear editor:

We believe that the letter written by Peter D. Murphy which appeared in the Letters to the Editor column, Jan. 16, 1976, was inaccurate and misleading, addressing emotional issues rather than objective facts.

First, the \$50,000 referred to was a separate line item appropriation by the Unicameral, an appropriation which was added to the general library fund (see March 26, 1974 Legislative Journal p. 6951,6952).

Second, the access to the Law Library is a prerequisite for studying by the law students. Access to non-circulating materials, available only within the Law Library, is more logically analogous to the laboratory access needs of a chemistry major and clearly distinguishable from the needs of the undergraduate, who needs primarily his or her course materials, which have been purchased and are with the student 24 hours-a-day. It is these specific needs which have prompted law students to lobby for expanded library access.

We invite anyone who questions the Law Library situation to visit us regarding the facts.

P. J. Canarsky, D.K. Rusk and Mark Buchanan

Only two showed

Dear editor:

Hey sports fans, guess what's new at Nebraska? We

have a basketball team. That's right. Only two members of the yell squad have heard, at least that's all that showed up at the Kansas State game last Saturday. Maybe there was a reason for such poor representation.

Be it as it may, Nebraska does have a basketball team and a good one at that. Ten wins against four losses and a defense which ranks in the top ten nationally! It seems to me that they deserve a little more support and respect than they received last Saturday.

A basketball fan

Squeeze a few more

Dear editor,

Since the city decided it needed more revenue from the university sector and installed all those meters (I assume they will also spring up like dandelions on R St. this spring), another problem became worse as a side effect—less parking.

The marked, metered spaces are big enough to park a truck and consequently there are about 20 to 30 less parking spaces available. This makes it important that we utilize what space there is efficiently. Everyday I see cars with big spaces in between them, some almost big enough for a VW or some other small car. But almost doesn't count.

When you park make sure you are close to the car in front of you. You only need 1 to 2 feet between to get out. If you have the first car, move to the front of the area, even hang your bumper over the red line. In this manner we can squeeze a few more spaces. The city doesn't need our 5 cents and \$.

Eric Seberg

word unheard

Surprised Yankees hear Watergate reality

By Del Gustafson

"I am an aristocrat. I love liberty and hate equality."

—John Randolph (a statesman of the early south.)

Sam Ervin's speech the other night was a real joy. Not only in the actual content of the address, but moreover, in the knowledge of discomfort and downright dismay the speech must have brought to the huge audience.

The reason for the mass discomfort came from the fall of great expectations—a devastating collision of myth with reality. The speech, titled "Post-Watergate America," was delivered by none other than the man who "got" Tricky Dick—Sam Ervin. What could be better, cried Alphonse Student, than to hear folk-hero Sam attack those nasties which, everyone knows, led to Watergate: privilege, free enterprise, greed (and, to hear it in that cute Southern drawl!).

Well, the key to the speech lay more in the Southern drawl, than in the evils of Watergate. Sam Ervin is first and foremost a Southern Democrat, and it is a statistically proven fact that no Southern Democrat can talk for five consecutive minutes without praising liberty or reverently invoking the name of Thomas Jefferson, John C. Calhoun or John Randolph.

Five freedoms a surprise

Sam didn't even make an attempt to talk on Post-Watergate America, but rather spent the entire speech regaling the surprised Yankee audience with an exposition of the five freedoms implied in the Declaration of Inde-

pendence's immortal phrase, "the pursuit of happiness": Economic freedom (free enterprise), intellectual freedom, religious freedom, personal freedom and political freedom.

It was a fine address—the kind the members of a free society should listen to at least annually if they are to preserve eternal principle against temporary passion—but it really didn't deal with Watergate. Or did it?

Upon reflection, it seemed the secret to the control of future abuses of governmental power could be the preservation of those five freedoms against state encroachment. With the concentration of vast economic and social power in the hands of the central government and, more specifically, in the hands of the President, it is not surprising that sinful men use that awesome power for illegal ends.

Privileges dispensed

As government increasingly supercedes the marketplace as a distributor of economic reward, it is inevitable that men will gravitate to the one seat of power which dispenses social and economic privileges supported by the legal monopoly on coercion—the state. While viewing the central government's movement to crush all countervailing power bases independent of society's control, we would be wise to recall Lord Acton's maxim about the corrupting influence of absolute power.

Individual freedom never promises to end all social evils—it is tyranny which seeks to eradicate all social ills—but freedom will lessen the scope of the abuses of state power. Wise statesmen like Sam Ervin know that. Thank goodness!



Photo by Ted Kirk