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Additional \$8 million asked by Varner for NU's budget

By Anita Stork

Proposing at least an \$8 million increase in the university's budget, NU President D. B. Varner appeared before the Nebraska Legislature's Appropriations Committee Monday.

Varner said the \$8 million increase was a "first action" to bring NU's financing into the top half of Big 8 Conference schools.

"This would create a new base of \$85 million in state general funds," Varner told the committee. "From this base we have to consider salary adjustments, inflation, comparability between UNL and UNO (the University of Nebraska at Omaha) funding, lost (University of Nebraska) Medical Center federal funds and workload and program improvements."

NU has requested \$100 million. Gov. J. James Exon has offered \$84 million and the Legislature, in LB691, proposed \$88 million.

Three studies

Three separate studies of NU's financing have been made, including reports by the Legislative Fiscal Office, university and Exon's 1202 Commission on university funding.

Chaired by Gus Lieske, vice-president of an Omaha computer products company, the commission studied how much state general funds NU should receive to equal the average of the top three Big 8 schools. NU then would be financed at a figure representing the average of the top half of the Big 8.

The commission concluded that state general funds of "between \$7 million and \$8 million is needed during the current fiscal year to bring the university on a financing level with the top half of the Big 8."

Varner said NU was prepared to accept the commission's report, but added that "Exon submitted his budget recommendations prior to receipt of the commission's report."

"The \$8 million increase suggested by the commission raises the state general fund from \$77 million to \$85 million," Varner said. "Further increases are needed to fight inflationary costs."

East Union construction

The Appropriations Committee also heard testimony from Warren Johnson, legal counsel for the NU Board of Regents, favoring passage of LR115.

Under the resolution, Johnson said, expenditures of \$680,450 from UNL student fees and \$317,000 from Facilities Revenue Bonds Replacement Fund would be made, along with an additional \$1,331,500 from the surplus fund of the bond issue for construction of the East Campus Union.

"Construction estimates on the new Union were initially \$3 million, but inflation has pushed the funds needed to \$4.3 million," Johnson said.

Money from the replacement fund is needed for fire and safety maintenance on the Nebraska Union, residence halls and the University Health Center, Johnson explained.

New...

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Massengale said he has not examined UNL's agriculture program in depth, but added that the number of University of Arizona agriculture faculty members is proportionally larger than UNL's.

"The faculty is larger at Nebraska, but not when you consider that agriculture is about a \$5 billion industry in Nebraska and a \$1 billion industry in Arizona."

A nationally renowned agronomist, Massengale said he will push for increased financing to establish a strong agriculture program.

Encouraged by "the interest in agriculture throughout the state," he said he is optimistic that Nebraska's Legislature, which approves departmental budgets, appreciates the department's role in Nebraska's economy.

Massengale said he will study UNL's program in depth before sorting out its strong and weak points. Through

contact with consumers and producers, he said he hopes to familiarize himself with Nebraska's needs.

Predicting that energy costs of agricultural production "will increase dramatically in the future," he said research on cheaper production methods will be "the key to future agriculture success."

Specifically, Massengale referred to what he called the increasing costs of irrigation water. Through a grant, he has researched water conservation in crop usage.

Organic farming and "going back to nature remedies" cannot meet demands of commercial acreages, he said.

A Kentucky native, Massengale received his B.S. degree from Western Kentucky University and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin. He has served as an agriculture consultant in the U.S., Brazil and Saudi Arabia.

calendar

- Weather**
Wednesday: Becoming partly cloudy with high temperatures in the lower 40s.
- Wednesday**
8 a.m.—Japanese Agricultural Training Program—Nebraska Center for Continuing Education (NCCE), 33rd and Holdrege streets.
9 a.m.—Student Development staff—Nebraska Union 202A.
12 p.m.—Nebraska Grain Improvement Crop Recognition Conference—NCCE.
12 p.m.—Interfraternity Council Chapter Advisers luncheon—Union Pewter Room.
12:30 p.m.—Career Planning and Placement luncheon—Union 203.
1:30 p.m.—Career Action

- Commission—Union Harvest Room C.
1:30 p.m.—Personnel; Orientation—Union 232.
3 p.m.—Financial Aids; State Advisory Committee Basic Educational Opportunity Grants—Union Pewter Room.
3:30 p.m.—Student Affairs; Staff Development—Union 343.
4 p.m.—University Judiciary—Union 337.
5:30 p.m.—Gamma Lambda—Union Harvest Room A.
5:30 p.m.—Engineering Toastmasters—Union Harvest Room C.
6:15 p.m.—Phi Beta Kappa dinner—Union 242-243.
6:15 p.m.—Builders Red Coats—Union 232.
6:30 p.m.—Panhellenic Rush Chairmen—Union Harvest Room B.
6:30 p.m.—ASUN Senate Meeting—Union 222.
7 p.m.—Pi Tau Sigma—Union 202A.
7 p.m.—Wildlife Club Executives—Union 343.
7 p.m.—Model United Nations Opening meeting—Union Centennial Room, Union Ballroom.
7:30 p.m.—Blacks of African Descent—Union Pewter Room.
7:30 p.m.—Math Counselors—Union 225 B-C.
7:30 p.m.—Mexican-American Student Association—Union 337.
7:30 p.m.—Wildlife Club—Union 343.
8 p.m.—Model United Nations bloc meetings—Union 203, Union Auditorium, Union 202, Union Conference Rooms, Union 232.

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