

# rarefied air | Budget pressure is taking its toll

By Dick Piersol

The strain of this legislative session is beginning to show. Or rather, the strain of being involved in this state's most political and least understood issue, the NU budget, is taking its toll on the principals.

Last week this column criticized Utica Sen. Douglas Bereuter for equivocating on an amendment to the university budget. He deserves an apology. When he backed away from that amendment, raising cash fund ceilings at all three campuses, he did so because those who asked him to add the amendment had decided neither to object nor support the senator on that particular issue. Meanwhile, the governor was blasting away at Bereuter through the press.

University administrators apparently took the attitude that they could support the flexibility of a higher cash fund ceiling if enrollment swelled beyond their expectations. But if the higher cash fund ceiling is interpreted as approval for a \$4 a credit hour tuition increase, they'd rather sit on their hands.

That left Bereuter alone carrying an amendment the administrators asked him to insert.

### Bereuter on limb

Their request for the amendment itself seems to have been the result of some misunderstanding among themselves. Thus they were reluctant to join Bereuter out on his limb.

The governor and the senator seem to have come to terms. They agree to disagree.

Hopefully, Bereuter, a consistent and hardworking legislator, will also make peace with the university administrators whose credibility he had begun to doubt.

Again, the strain is evident and floor debate on the higher education budget begins this week.

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Exon, for his part, is often quick to comment on university matters. He calls himself the greatest governor in Nebraska history in his support for higher education.

If that means he has been governor while the state spent more and more

money on higher education, he is right.

Monday, March 7, the Daily Nebraskan published an interview with Exon. He denied "penalizing" the university in his budget recommendations because it escaped the three per cent decrease in general fund appropriations many other state agencies suffered during last year's special legislative session.

### Moot point

That is not entirely correct. The Appropriations Committee killed the governor's budget plans a month ago, so the point is somewhat moot.

But the fact that there was a three per cent "reallocation" of general funds in the NU continuation budget is not just coincidental.

There was an effective reduction in revenues and expenditures although it was couched in terms of discontinuance of programs and made up with proposed improvements.

What does it all mean? It means the governor and his budget officers hadn't talked about it for some time.

The one really noticeable part of the continuing university budget issue is a real lack of communication. It exists among administrators, between them and state senators, between senators and the governor, and also between the university and the governor.

### Warm greeting

The nature of the university tends to obscure an issue in terms most politically advantageous to whomever happens to be bending a reporter's ear at the time. The resulting media exchanges usually sound like people comparing apples and oranges.

Budgeting is an example. The university, Legislature and executive all prepare budgets differently. The result is always a certain amount of misunderstanding coupled with some genteel backbiting.

It was pleasant, however, to see President D.B. Varner and Exon greeting one another so warmly prior to the statehouse meeting last week on the proposed multi-state veterinary school.

## CHECK CASHING, BANKING SERVICES SURVEY

Pursuant to campus concerns on the issue of check cashing service and/or banking services continuing on the UNL campus, and in response to those concerns the Nebraska Union Advisory Board seeks your response to the survey questions below, indicating campus community willingness or unwillingness to use UPFF funds or Union space for these functions.

- 1) Is there a need for a check cashing service on the UNL campus? **Yes No**
- 2) Is there a need for a banking service on the UNL campus? **Yes No**
- 3) Should student fees (estimated cost of \$25,000) be used to finance a check cashing service? **Yes No**
- 4) If you voted YES to questions 1 and/or 2 do you want the agency placed in the Nebraska Union? **Yes No**

THE ABOVE FOUR QUESTIONS WILL APPEAR ON THE ASUN BALLOT ON MARCH 17.



# Q ST. FASHION EXHIBITION

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