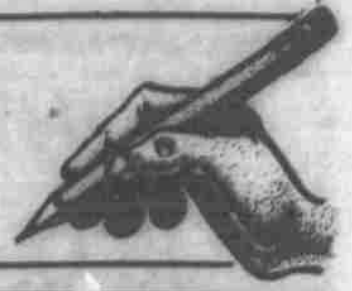


opinion



Imperfect formula beats status quo

Wednesday President Varner tried to calm what he termed a "siege of bitterness" in the university community toward the decision to ask the Legislature for parity money for the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO).

The annual budget which the regents sent to the governor last week had \$500,000 earmarked to help finance UNO's academic programs at a level equal with comparable academic programs at UNL.

Two committees appointed by Varner and an independent consultant worked for over 18 months to determine imbalances in funding levels at UNO and UNL.

After studying several other state college plans coping with the problem of equitably financing more than one campus, the committee adopted a formula by which cost per credit hour at UNL and UNO could be compared.

According to the formula (which, trust us, you don't want to have explained) UNO needs slightly more than \$1 million to fund its academic programs on the same level as comparable programs at UNL.

The regents plan to ask for the parity money in two increments, believing \$500,000 is all UNO could effectively put to use in one year.

There are those who feel UNO is infringing on money which belongs to UNL. Others think UNO is getting just a fraction of what it needs. The rest wonder what this thing is called parity.

Of course there is nothing magic about the \$1 million figure.

A group of leading faculty members and administrators from both campuses agreed on the funding plan. It may not be perfect but it is better than the haphazard 50-25-25 formula used for years to divide academic improvement funds among the campuses. At least now we have an educated guess as to the relative funding needs of the campuses. With time and practical application, the formula can be improved.

As Varner said Wednesday, both campuses could effectively use twice as much money as each is getting. Since neither campus is likely to get all it needs both should share equally in the shortage.

Absolute equality cannot be determined but the committee has decided this is a proposal the university can support in the Legislature and to the citizens of the state.

The last thing we need is to give either group the appearance that we cannot settle our differences on the issue.

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes letters to the editor and guest opinions. Choices of material published will be based on timeliness and originality. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name, but may be published under a pen name if requested.

Guest opinions should be typed, triple-spaced, on nonerasable paper. They should be accompanied by the author's name, class standing and major, or occupation. All material submitted to these pages is subject to editing and condensation, and cannot be returned to the writer.



Organized political action group one way to lobby effectively

By Don Wesley

Now was as good a time as any to begin looking forward to the next session of the State Legislature. Senators are thinking about what bills they will introduce in the upcoming session. Lobbying groups are beginning to develop legislation which they want introduced in the Legislature. The stage is being readied for the "best show in town".

To find out what is happening in the State Legislature you could begin by contacting the office of the Clerk of the Legislature. The clerk has copies of the rules of the Unicameral public hearing testimony, committee and floor debate minutes, legislative bills and more. Although the clerk's office is most helpful when the Legislature is in session, the staff can answer or properly refer your questions about the Legislature. The telephone number of the clerk's office is 471-2271.

It is a good idea to get to know your state senator. Senators should be, and usually are, accessible to their constituents. They have busy schedules but I have always found them to be willing to talk, if a meeting could be arranged. It is best to have some topics and questions in mind before you meet with a senator so that you can make the most of your time together. Call the clerk's office if you are unsure of how to contact a state senator.

If you are interested in the Legislature, I suggest you work through one (or more) of the many citizen organizations which lobby in the Legislature. Working through a citizen organization is important. Someone may have an excellent idea for a legislative bill, but senators consider how much support there is for a bill. If an organization supports a bill by doing research, lining up witnesses, and gathering support for the bill from other organizations and individuals, a senator is much more likely to introduce the bill, according to Lincoln state Senator Steve Fowler. The following are citizen organizations open to students which lobby in the Legislature.

Nonpartisan organization

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan citizen organization. The league believes that citizens should be informed about issues and should be active in their government. Marge Young, league member, said the group's main goal was to promote support for and involvement in good government by carefully examining both sides of issues and then taking an informed, thoughtful position on those issues. The League is open to both men and women. Students are welcome.

The League of Women Voters is a respected organization. The league moves slowly and carefully on issues. They take the time to thoroughly study and deliberate issues.

If you are interested in joining the League you can contact their office by telephoning 475-1411.

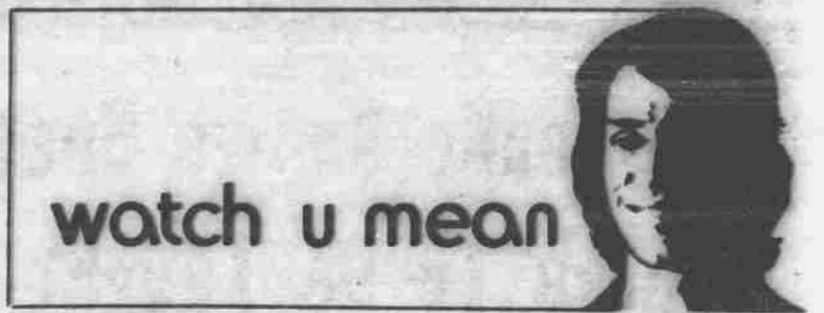
"Common Cause is a hard-hitting, relentless and

successful national citizens' lobby, born of the dire need to return to all citizens their constitutionally guaranteed right to have their voices heard in their own government." That is how the group decides itself. What more can I say?

In Nebraska, Common Cause is probably best known for its successful lobbying efforts for the Open Meeting Law and the Sunshine Act, both of which will and have done much to open the decision-making processes in Nebraska.

Sunset Legislation

It is likely that Common Cause will lobby for Sunset Legislation during this next legislative session. Essentially,



Sunset Legislation forces state agencies to periodically justify their existence to the satisfaction of the Legislature. There are not many students now working for Common Cause, but they are welcome.

A couple of distinctions between the League of Women Voters and Common Cause need to be pointed out. The League is not only active nationally and with the State Legislature, but works locally in city and county government. Common Cause, in Nebraska, works only on the state and national levels. Common Cause also focuses on just a few issues in the Legislature while the League is concerned with a broad range of issues. If you are interested in joining Common Cause you can call Marge Schlitt at 477-2529.

The Sierra Club is another well-known organization in Nebraska. The Sierra Club was formed in 1892 to help people explore, enjoy and protect wildlands and wildlife and to preserve and restore the quality of man's environment and the integrity of the earth's ecosystems. Unfortunately the Sierra Club has been branded as a group of obstinate environmentalists. Its unrelenting opposition to the Mid-State and O'Neill Reclamation Projects, and its insistence on the installation of extensive pollution control equipment at the Sutherland Power Plant has taken a great deal of courage and sacrifice. These stands have caused some to view the Sierra Club suspiciously and, on occasion, with disdain.

The Sierra Club is one of a number of environmental groups, which lobby for important environmental legislation. The bottle bill, the Endangered Species Act and land-use planning are some of the Sierra Club's concerns. If you are interested in joining the Sierra Club call Marge Schlitt at 477-2529.

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