## Simmons' school criticisms challenged

By Brenda Moskovits

The NU Board of Regents Saturday heard a task force report supporting the university system's open admissions policy, but not without comment by Regent Robert Summons regarding the American College testing scores of incoming UNO treshmen.

The Scottsbluff regent criticized the four Omaha area school districts last week for grade inflation and for allegedly graduating unqualified students to avoid discrimination charges.

Simmons cited the report's table of incoming freshmen ACT scores at UNO and UNL. It showed that test scores from UNL enrollees are "below not only the state average but the national average," he said.

Simmons' accusations were challenged at the meeting by Task Force Co-chairman Donald Stroh, superintendent of the Millard school district, one of the four named by Simmons. Also criticized were the Omaha School District, District 66 and the Ralston School District.

In a heated discussion that was halted by newly-elected hoard chairman Robert Koefoot of Grand Island, Stroh told Simmons that "a city school like the University of Nebraska at Omaha serves a different community than

For instance, Stroh said, someone who takes nine years to complete a degree by going to school at night "has got some motivational skills that ACT scores do not bear out."

ACT scores are "pretty narrow and do not in any way reflect the quality of education in Nebraska schools," Stroh said.

Not all go to college

Simmons asked Stroh whether the Millard schools have graduated students who were unprepared for college. Stroh answered that "all of our students don't pass with the preparation to go to college and they should not.

"Do all students who get a law degree pass the bar exam?" he countered.

- Simmons, a lawyer, responded, "I wouldn't be bragging if I knew those scores."

## Commission gives symposium grant

The Old West Regional Commission has approved a \$20.000 grant to UNL in support of the university's 1979 Great Plains Symposium.

Merlin Lawson, UNL professor of geography and program chairman for the symposium, said the symposium will be held March 2-3 at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education.

Co-sponsored by the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources in cooperation with the Energy Research and Development Center at UNL, the symposium will feature more than 30 Great Plains scholars who will present papers encompassing the past, present and future of the Great Plains.

Special addresses at the symposium will be given by Marion Clawson, former president of Resources for the Future, and Charles Roberts, chief meteorologist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

During the symposium, participants will identify resources available in the Great Plains, discuss future conditions and identify information which will help policy makers and presidents adapt to future prospects.

Among the topics to be explained will be lessons of the Dust Bowl, soil and watershed problems, climatic influences, agricultural issues and prospects, water management issues, energy and environmental problems, demographic characterization of the Great Plains and responses to social-economic realities.

The symposium will be the third in a series presented annually under the auspices of the Center for Great Plains Studies in the UNL College of Arts and Sciences.



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Simmons consistently has opposed any remedial courses at the university, while maintaining the university's open admissions policy.

"I hope this board doesn't adopt Mr. Stroh's attitude that the University of Nebraska at Omaha is a kind of garbage bag," Simmons later said. "I hope we don't assume the Omaha campus is a different quality institution."

Simmons asked UNO officials to respond to his accusations later in the meeting.

UNO Chancellor Del Weber said UNO students are older and have lower incomes than UNL students.

"There is a correlation between age and ACT scores. There is also a correlation between income and ACT scores," Weber said, noting that the test's developers scknowledge those differences.

Different kinds of students

UNO's students tend to be more vocationally oriented, Weber said.

"I'm not suggesting our students are inferior. They're less intellectual. They're a different kind of student," Weber said.

Simmons attack of grading and graduation policies was contradicted in the press last week by representatives of the four school districts named.

The task force report also recommended against the use of mandatory minimum competency tests in Nebraska.

The 41-member Task Force on Student Progress was jointly formed by NU President Ronald Roskens and State Commissioner of Education Anne Campbell and consisted of a variety of administrators, teachers, counselors, and students on the elementary, high school, and college levels.

Chairwoman Martha Fricke, second vice president of the Nebraska School Board told the regents that better communication would help school systems better prepare students for college.

She also said in-service training for Nebraska teachers is inconsistent and would be helped by better communication.

Roskens told the board it needs to formally reaffirm the open admissions policy before the task force recommendations could be used.

No action was taken at Saturday's meeting.



Photo by Bob Pearson Regent Robert Simmons

## Experiment canceled

Unforeseen technical problems have caused the Great Plains National Instructional Television Library to cancel a planned national Public Television Satellite previewing experiment scheduled for late January and early February

Great Plains National's Director Paul H. Schupbach explained that "some of the video tape recordings which were to be used in transmission of the previews did not meet the blanking width standards of the Federal Communications Commission."

GPN, a service agency of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, had planned the satellite experiment to test the cost-effectiveness of instaneous previewing as opposed to the present method of previewing — that is, the physical shipment of video tapes and films to their point of use.

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