

daily nebraskan

Bucks for books bill advances to floor

By Randy Essex

The Legislature's Education Committee Tuesday voted unanimously to advance a bill to the unicameral floor that would allow NU to provide certain students with financial aid money during the first two weeks of school for book purchases.

The Committee was told it is "ridiculous" that students are not always able to obtain money for books if they will receive a refund check later for grants and scholarships.

Julie Sterner, a senior English major at UNL, told the committee she has been forced to come up with money for books during the first weeks of school although she has received refund checks in excess of \$100 six weeks later.

"The money (from grants and scholarships) is the student's, and there is no reason they shouldn't be able to get it when they need it," she said.

Sterner and two university officials testified in support of LB248, which would establish a fund for the advance payment of money for books by the Office of Financial Aids. The bill, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Chris Beutler, would apply only to those students with aid in excess of tuition and fees.

The bill would increase the amount of

money the university would retain in its cash fund from \$250,000 to \$300,000

Debra Knight, a grant advisor with the financial aid office, told committee members the university offers a limited amount of money for books now on a first-come, first-serve basis. She said the money is only available to the most needy students.

Knight said 246 students were able to get money through the program this semester, but more than 2,000 were eligible.

She said passage of LB248 would allow the program to be expanded and publicized for the first time. Students would still be awarded the money on a first-come, first-serve basis, she said.

Knight said \$75 has been the maximum amount a student could obtain and that has not always been enough. Sterner agreed, saying that one semester she was able to get \$50, but her books cost \$145.

Sterner said although she has always qualified for a substantial Basic Educational Opportunities Grant, she has not always qualified for book money because of limited funds.

Book loans

She complained that many students

who need the money either don't get to the financial aids office in time or they don't meet the financial aid "cutoff point" established because there is so little money available.

Sterner said she has never been forced to take out a short-term loan for books, but Knight said some students do.

Kearney Sen. Martin Kahle said it is part of a student's education to learn how to handle money.

"In real life you're going to have to (take out loans), and you might as well learn that while you're in school," Kahle told Sterner.

Bob Lovitt, vice-chancellor for business and finance, said the university supports the bill because it would enable the system to help more low-income students.

"The plan would work well in the university system (of accounting)," Lovitt said.

If the bill is passed, students would have the amount of their book advance taken out of their refund checks. Lovitt said the system is safeguarded against fraud if a



Photo by Mary Ann Golon
Lincoln Sen. Chris Beutler

student got the advance and dropped out of school.

Beutler pointed out that the bill would require no extra spending from the state.

Union considers new building for bookstore

By Mike Sweeney

The construction of a new building to house the University Bookstore was discussed at a Nebraska Union staff meeting last semester, the *Daily Nebraskan* has learned.

The staff meeting, open to members of the Union Board, was Dec. 19, after the *Daily Nebraskan* stopped publication.

Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Richard Armstrong, who raised the topic at the meeting, said Sunday the idea of building a new bookstore is "idle speculation" instead of a formal proposal. He said he has not examined the idea closely enough to advocate it.

"Any number of ideas about the bookstore are floated from time to time," Armstrong said. "This is no more significant than any of those."

Armstrong said the idea of building a new bookstore arose out of conversations he had with UNL business manager Ray Coffey.

Consolidate sales area

Coffey said a new bookstore consolidating the three existing sales areas in the Union basement would have better service, labor efficiency and sales volume. A new building would also increase the bookstore's present sales area of 7,000 square feet.

Two possible locations have been discussed. A member of the Central Planning Committee at a September meeting suggested building an addition to the Union in the parking lot east of the building, which

would also include two to three levels of metered parking. At the Dec. 19 Union staff meeting, Armstrong said the parking lot north of the Union might be used.

The construction could be financed by the surplus portion of bond funds that finance repairs of student buildings on campus—the Union, the Student Health Center, and the residence halls, Coffey said.

Paid by sales

He said the funds could be repaid by increased sales at the new bookstore.

"I have no intention of asking for an increase in student fees to build a bookstore," Coffey said.

The Central Planning Committee has not yet discussed building a new bookstore, Coffey said, but may take up the matter if it receives favorable reaction.

The idea met with mixed reactions at the staff meeting, Armstrong said.

"I do not recall the details of the discussion but there were different views about it," Armstrong said.

Union director Al Bennett said he had no comment about the meeting or the bookstore.

ASUN president Ken Marienau said while he welcomed proposals to change the bookstore, he was against funding the building with bond surpluses.

Students should be included in any plans to build or manage a new bookstore, he said.

Student input

Union Board secretary John Kreuzer was also against using bond surplus funds,

he said.

Like Marienau, Kreuzer said he felt that "while there may be some benefit to building a new bookstore, there should be some student input in all aspects of the project."

Constructing a new building joins several proposals to change the management, location, and fiscal policy of the University Bookstore.

Armstrong said he has also considered renovating the basement of the Union to create one sales area.

The Chancellor's Fund B study group report in October recommended that all non-student organizations occupying space in the Union, including the bookstore, pay rent. The University Bookstore currently pays three percent of its gross to the University, but pays no rent to the Union.

Union responsibility

The Fund B study and the Union Board also suggested the bookstore turn over its management and fiscal responsibilities to the Union.

Kreuzer said he would like to see the bookstore subject to student review.

Bookstore profits should benefit all students, he said, perhaps by reducing student fees. If the bookstore turned its profits over to the Union, the Union could reduce the amount of student fee money it annually requests, Kreuzer said.

As a result, he said, student fees could either be lowered or kept at their present level for three to five years.

Kreuzer said at least six other Big Eight school bookstores located in unions pay rent or profits to the unions.

Roskens says 'no comment'

NU President Ronald Roskens refused to comment when contacted Monday afternoon about his interview with the Michigan State University board of trustees Jan. 21.

Roskens is in Vermillion, S.D. working with an accreditation team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools until Wednesday.

The *Daily Nebraskan* reported Monday that allegedly he secretly met with the trustees at a hotel near the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and discussed the Michigan State presidency.

"I have a standard reaction on matters like this," Roskens said. "No comment."

Ed Schwartzkopf, Lincoln member of the NU Board of Regents, said he first found out about the interview by reading it in the *Daily Nebraskan* Monday, and said it did not bother him that Roskens was interviewed by MSU. "I always feel people should be willing to listen," he said. "It would bother me if no one wanted to interview him (Roskens)."

Regents chairman Robert Koefoot of Grand Island agreed.

"It's a free country. If he wanted to be interviewed, that's his prerogative," he said.

Both regents agreed the substantial salary difference between the schools could be a reason why Roskens interviewed at MSU. The MSU presidency pays \$62,000. Roskens' salary here is \$57,500.

"It's a Big Ten institution and salaries are much higher," Schwartzkopf said. "The psychic income here is great but it doesn't help to put meat and potatoes on the table."

inside wednesday

I own Boardwalk: City Council passes bill to require property listing by members. . . . page 6

A sour experience: Food reviewer visits Pickle Bill's Riberia. . . page 8

Strictly analytical: Sportswriters Jack Shockley takes a look at the Big Eight basketball race. . . page 10



"Slip sliding away" . . . as the song goes, so go Lincoln motorists.

Photo by Jerry McBride