



"The University is obligated to spend the \$2 million in surplus savings in order to keep the budget base at the same level it was last year"—Erskine

Photo by Ted Kirk

William Erskine, NU vice-president for administration, takes a moment to reflect on a question posed by a member of the legislature's Appropriations Committee.

NU requests funds to 'win gamble'

The university gambled last year when it spent \$2 million it had saved from state general fund money over several years, and officials went before the Legislature Wednesday to try and win the gamble.

The money was spent on a salary increase for faculty members in fiscal year 1978-79 to supplement the operating budget and to correct an error in a legislative estimate of money in revolving funds.

William Erskine, executive vice president of administration for NU, explained that the university incorporated the money into its operating budget, and needs to have \$2 million reappropriated to keep the budget base the same as this year's budget is based on.

NU President Ronald Roskens explained the situation this way:

If he were paying a person \$100 a year, and then discovered that he only had \$50, he could borrow the money to pay his employee. The next year the employee would expect \$100 in pay, but Roskens still only has \$50 in his budget for that purpose.

The person he borrowed the money from the first year was not around anymore. Roskens said he would have to go elsewhere (like the Legislature) to get the \$50, or would have to cut back in another part of his budget.

When NU decided to spend the money last year, Roskens said they communicated with members of the Appropriations Committee and then Gov. J. James Exon, and told them NU would be back to try to get the \$2 million appropriated in next year's budget.

"The request is no surprise, and it's no sure thing either," Roskens said. "We do not want to engage in any game playing," he told the committee.

Erskine told the committee NU is obligated to spend the money because it is already figured in the budget. Roskens said if the Legislature does not appropriate the money, it will not necessarily mean faculty members will not get their 6.5 percent raise.

"None of these requests are sure things now," Roskens said.

East Campus projects top NU construction requests

By Randy Essex

UNL East Campus projects rate first and fourth in NU capital construction budget requests heard by the Legislature's Appropriations Committee Wednesday.

First on the list of projects is a chiller unit for the East Campus power plant, and fourth is renovation of the Agriculture Engineering building, which has been unchanged for more than 50 years.

Renovation of Bessey Hall is ranked sixth on the priority list, the first project on the City Campus. UNL Chancellor Roy Young told the committee only about 20 percent of the building is usable now.

NU is requesting \$9,443,800 to finance 30 projects.

Regent Chairman Robert Koefoot told the senators it would have been easy to justify much more and the university requested only the essentials.

NU President Ronald Roskens said the priorities submitted to the Legislature

represent legitimate needs and absolute requirements.

Roskens said the priorities were developed first by chancellors of the various campuses, then by administrators on an overall university basis. The regents reviewed the priorities and made the final recommendation.

NU Chancellor Roy Young said the priorities are as close to being agreed upon by the various chancellors as they can be.

Two of the projects met with objections during the hearing. John Parsons, representing ASUN, told the committee ASUN does not think renovation of the Temple Theatre building was given high enough priority. The project ranks 21st on the list.

Parsons said the building has been condemned every year since 1948 by the State Fire Marshall. He called the building a disgrace and an embarrassment to the campus. Parsons said the project will cost more the

longer it is put off.

Mrs. Norman Batt of Omaha appeared to protest the acquisition of four acres of land by UNO. Mrs. Batt said the land is not needed because enrollment has been far below its projection.

She said enrollment is 5,000 below projections. The land UNO wants to acquire, Mrs. Batt said, is in the area determined by a UNO study to be the best place to live in Omaha.

UNO land acquisition rates 11th on the list.

Del Weber, UNO chancellor, argued for the other projects in the request.

Calling the campus "overbuilt and under-utilized," Weber asked approval of an energy management system that would enable officials to tell where energy losses are coming from. The system would monitor energy used on the campus by computer.

Weber said the system would pay for itself in five years through energy savings.

Third on the priority list is an emergency generator for the Medical Center hospital. Tom Smith, executive director for business and finance at the Med Center, said the hospital lacks accreditation from the Joint Hospital Commission because of a deficiency in its emergency generator system.

The generator would cost \$300,000. Smith and Chancellor Neil Vanselow said the hospital would be able to provide electricity in needed areas if public power went out, but air would not move through the building.

Costs for other projects are:
 -Bessy Hall conversion, \$1,000,000
 -East Campus chiller, \$1,100,000
 -Ag engineering renovation, \$1,200,000
 -UNL land acquisition, \$254,000
 -Westbrook Music Library, \$165,000
 -Curtis Animal Holding facility, \$215,000

ASUN . . .

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Another request in the budget would begin to phase out tuition payments for graduate students working as teaching assistants.

Young said NU is the only college he has ever been associated with that charges tuition for those students. The budget requests \$141,310 for that tuition waiver.

This year's request would remit 25 percent of the tuition to teaching assistants. Tuition payment would be phased out in four years, Roskens said.

The budget also requests \$200,000 to help attract quality senior faculty members to NU. Roskens said senior faculty members of national status bring with them a track record of research, allowing the university to increase the number of grants it is awarded.

Other quality professors would also be attracted to NU by the nationally-known people, as well as attracting quality graduate students, Roskens said.

Also included in the budget request is \$50,000 for electronic blackboards, which would allow the university to transmit its classes to other points in the state.

Roskens said the blackboards will allow the university to reach points in outstate Nebraska in a short period of time.

He said the blackboards are far less expensive than closed circuit television, which he said he once thought was the ultimate in remote teaching tools.

Pay increases to university employees were requested at 6.5 percent, the amount requested by Thone for all state employees.

Roskens said the budget request is actually about \$2 million less than \$124,092,069 presented to the committee. He said the first figure was reached when the university wanted to give employees an 8.5 percent pay raise.

Also included in the request is \$189,749 for State Stu-

dent Incentive Grants. Roskens said the SSIG has never been given a specific allocation, and the university draw on tuition remission to supply the money to students.

The total budget proposal, including money generated from tuition and other funds not coming from the state's general fund is \$310,376,231 for the fiscal year 1979-80.



NU President Ronald Roskens testifies at the legislature's Appropriations Committee budget hearing. Photo by Ted Kirk