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daily nebraskan

ED SCHWARTZKOPF
Lincoln Regent

Dear Daily Nebraskan,

More than 110 years ago our ancestors in a time of severe deprivation committed their hard-earned dollars to establish the University of Nebraska. They perceived the wisdom of investing in higher education. They fully recognized the costs of not making the commitment to the future.

Yet today, like then, it is oftentimes difficult to spell out in specific terms the contributions which a state-supported University makes to society in general and to its supporters specifically. As a Regent of the University, I have been able to witness first-hand these contributions.

First, there are the so-called intangible ways that our University of Nebraska contributes to the general good. These are benefits that are difficult to measure in purely statistical or economic terms. For example, what kind of cost-benefit ratio can be affixed to the ability to think lucidly and write clearly? What "start-up" costs can be attached to the special interaction between teacher and student that sparks the imagination?

The University, in the normal sense, does not produce a consumable product. Its products are its graduates; and their skills are "consumed" by their communities, their families, their employers, their churches and schools. But how does one quantify such "consumption" in fiscal terms?

During its history, the University has granted more than 160,000 degrees. Fifty-two percent of all active physicians in Nebraska are graduates of our Medical Center. Likewise, more than half of the practicing attorneys, dentists, teachers, nurses, architects and county agents in the State are University graduates. These intangible products of the University are impossible to measure in purely economic terms.

Second, there are ways to measure in concrete terms the potential worth of University-sponsored research. For example, our Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources has assisted economic savings. It is estimated that the computerized irrigation scheduling program developed and refined by the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service has saved Nebraska irrigators approximately twenty-three million dollars over the past two years. Other dollar figures could be developed for research breakthroughs in feed additives for cattle, various varieties of such crops as wheat and alfalfa, and cures for costly animal diseases.

Research has its other benefits, too. It is no accident that a number of high technology and electronic industries have located in Lincoln and Omaha.

As a citizen of Lincoln, I fully recognize the economic impact that the University has on my community in addition to its influence in the arts and government. A recent study conducted by the Bureau of Business Research at UNL estimates that the Lincoln campus generates $262.5 million annually in Lincoln's economy. This constitutes 16% of Lincoln's personal income. Lincoln area credit base is expanded by an estimated $35.3 million and more than $6.4 million of revenue was received by local area governments alone due to the University presence. A similar study conducted in Omaha evidences the University's contribution in economic terms to that community. An economic ripple effect carries benefits throughout Nebraska.

Thus there are tangible and intangible contributions that the University makes to the State of Nebraska. It is essential that we continue the fine tradition of maintaining a first-rate public University in Nebraska.

Simply stated and stated simply, as the University of Nebraska goes - so goes the State of Nebraska. As the University of Nebraska prospers so prospers the State of Nebraska.

Ed Schwartzkopf
Lincoln Regent

Dear Daily Nebraskan,

Much has been said concerning the fiscal state of the University. In fact the term "fiscal crossroads" has become cliche. Extrapolating the ramifications of this cliche on the citizenry of Nebraska and the students of this university is becoming an easy task. Let me elaborate.

Faculty salaries at UN-L rank 7th in the Big Eight and in the 20th percentile nationally. Those salary levels plus grossly inadequate operating and research budgets have pushed faculty morale to the point of frustration. This frustration has caused many faculty members to either move to another institution or to an industry. What is most disturbing about this is that the faculty members that are leaving are the ones that are most qualified. So, not only are we losing faculty, we are losing the best faculty. The effects of this on the academic setting of the University are obvious.

Computer budgets have become depleted. Classes in the college of Business Administration, the College of Education, and the College of Arts and Sciences have had to either decrease or eliminate the use of computers. In society that is becoming so dependant upon the use of computers, developments such as the curtailment of computer use in the university is alarming. Alarming for those who are obtaining an education and alarming for a state that must keep a competitive position relative to other states.

I can go on and name instance after instance of how a certain segment of the university has been affected by budgetary cunnches. However, my purpose here is to neither to grovel for more state appropriation nor to berate in any manner the educational excellence of the University. My purpose is to try to show the effect that a second-rate university can have on the livelihood of the state of Nebraska. The output of a post-secondary institution is increased future productivity. Without, adequate facilities, and technologies the universities ability to produce that output is impaired. Therefore, the state of Nebraska will suffer in terms of economics and in terms of standard of living.

This is but a short and personal perception of the academic setting in which we reside. I urge you to offer you version of University of Nebraska's role in the state to the Daily Nebraskan. The reward is there and I'd certainly hope the interest is too.

Bud Cuca
ASUN President

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ASUN President

Dear Daily Nebraskan,

It is no accident that we are known as The University of Nebraska. As the only publically supported, comprehensive university in this state, the University of Nebraska occupies a unique and essential place in the good life of Nebraska. Through its charter, the University of Nebraska has been inextricable linked to the welfare of the people who conceived it.

Many of the benefits of the University to the state are obvious. The basic function of educating our youth permeates all of the University's efforts and is a touchstone against which citizens conceptualize Sun Bowl and evaluate our efforts. Undergraduate education at the University level is now and always has been a highly valued-element in the life of this state. A bachelors degree from the University is, for Nebraskans, a prized and respected accomplishment. Moreover, while the degree itself remains a goal to be sought, the citizens of this state have also come to appreciate the process which leads to that degree, the stimulation of thought and honing of intellect which are the inevitable byproducts of a well rounded university education. While in many ways intangible, it may well be that this impression in the liberal arts and basic sciences and the traditions which this University can make to this are the most significant contributions which this University can make to this state and its citizens.

In addition, through research and public service the University provides Nebraska with many of the new materials from which its social and economic prosperity are fashioned. As a citizen of an agricultural state, we understand and appreciate the vital contributions which the University makes of every stage of the growth and marketing cycle. Absent the programs of the University, it is doubtful that Nebraska could have achieved the international preeminence which it enjoys as a source of food and technology in a hungry world. In less visible but no less important areas, the businesses also benefit: in brief, all of its schools and its medical and social services also benefit: in brief, all of the varied components of our communities and fives draw upon the graduates of the University and the resources of its faculty and staff.

Nebraska, which is a large in area, small in population, is a state within which the people are close to one another and close to the land which they have transformed from inhospitat wilderness to serene and comfortable home. Nebraska is a community within which the University of Nebraska provides the linkages that connect our people to their dreams.

Ronald W. Roskens
NU President

RONALD ROSKENS
NU President

Dear Daily Nebraskan,

The visitor who leaves his car to view the scenic splendor along Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park is requested by signs to stay on the marked trails. The alpine tundra on either side of these trails is quite fragile. Damage can be done to it in a matter of minutes which will take years, for nature to repair.

Like the alpine tundra, a University is also a fragile living system. Its vitality depends on having a faculty which is enthusiastic and excited about its academic pursuits. This enthusiasm and excitement in turn depends on faculty morale.

Faculty members do not join University staffs in order to make lots of money. Nor do they expect to find themselves surrounded by luxury in their offices, labs, or classrooms. They do expect to be rewarded if they do a good job and to be supplied the necessary support to do that good job.

Indeed, it is the kinds of support that a University can offer which attracts a faculty member in the first place. Such things as library facilities, computing facilities, research and teaching support, intellectual and cultural atmosphere, are the things which draw a faculty member to a university.

During this past year, it is these very kinds of support which have been drastically affected by the eight budget here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This comes on top of ten years over which the average faculty member has seen his purchasing power diminish by about ten percent. Like the alpine tundra, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is in real danger of long lasting damage.

The damage will be to the spirit, to the faculty morale which is so vital for getting that extra effort which keeps the teaching, research, and service at a high quality level. Like the tundra it takes years to develop quality in programs. It takes time to hire and then encourage and support faculty in a program so that program achieves a high level of performance and recognition.

As President Roskens has stated, the University is at a crossroads. But the University is not a detached and noninteracting part of the State of Nebraska. It plays a vital role in the intellectual, cultural and economic health of the State. Thus, I would argue that it is the whole state which is at a crossroads, for the state's future is unavoidably tied to that of the University.

It would be sad indeed if in the zest of the moment to establish artificial spending lids we do long term damage to our only state university.

William B. Campbell
Associate Professor of Physics
and outgoing President of the
Faculty Senate

WILLIAM CAMPBELL
Outgoing Faculty Senate Pres.

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Letter Writing Contest

Theme: How does the University of Nebraska contribute to the state?

Prize: 15 hours of resident undergraduate tuition at UNL for the 1980-81 school year.

Deadline: Noon, March 21. Entries must be no longer than 400 words and submitted to the Daily Nebraskan at Room 34, Nebraska Union, 1400 R Street, Lincoln, Ne. 68588.

The Daily Nebraskan reserves the right to select letters for publication. Daily Nebraskan staff, judges, contest promoters and their families are ineligible.
Letters become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Judges:
Ruth Thone
State Sen. Jerome Warner
Robert Hunter, Hastings Tribune
Dale Young, Pres.
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
Jack Pollock, Keith County News
Robert Schrepf, Lincoln Star
Roy Young, UNL Chancellor
Daryl Hall, Scottsbluff Star-Herald

Decision of the judges is final.