

Candidates for regent stress agriculture, budget

By Jim Faddis

Editor's note: We regret that a photo of 6th District candidate James Zimmerman was not available.

How NU serves the agriculture community of Nebraska is the main concern for candidates running for the 6th and 7th District seats on the NU Board of Regents.

In the 6th District, which includes most of western Nebraska incumbent Robert Simmons is being challenged by James Zimmerman. Both are Scottsbluff attorneys.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy in Nebraska and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is the most important part of the university to people in the 6th District, Zimmerman said.

"The whole reason for the existence of the university is the agricultural college," Zimmerman said.

Simmons also said that the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is the most important part of the university and that he would like to see it strengthened.

Simmons and Zimmerman also sing the same song when it comes to the NU budget.

NU'S REQUEST for an 18 percent increase in state support for the 1981-82 academic year is "very unrealistic" and "a disillusionment in thinking we will get it," Simmons said.

He said the university should have a 7 percent budget increase that it can plan with instead of asking for an amount it won't get and being forced to cut salaries.

Zimmerman said the 18 percent request is "ludicrous" and that "the university has an obligation to taxpayers to come in with a budget as near to the 7 percent lid as possible."

Zimmerman said he would like to see

some cuts in the university's administration.

"There is too much money going into running the university and not enough going into educating students. Instead of paying money for administration, it should go to research, education and increasing faculty salaries," he said.

The university needs to be run like a business and it is not being run like one now, he said.

"When the university is run on a blank check, there is no reason to economize," Zimmerman said.

SIMMONS ALSO said there is too much NU administration. He said there should be just one administration running the entire university and not a chancellor's office at each campus.

Small classes should be eliminated and the number of faculty members reduced so that the faculty that remains can be paid more, Simmons said.

Simmons, 62 and a graduate of the NU Law College, has been a regent for six years. He said tuition costs will have to keep increasing as long as NU's operating expenses do, and that he is against a voting student regent, positions with which Zimmerman agreed.

Zimmerman, 33, graduated from the NU Law College in 1972.

IN THE 7th District, which comprises parts of central Nebraska, Don Blank, a McCook dentist who is presently mayor of McCook, is running against Kearney furniture businessman John Payne for the seat being vacated by Robert Raun of Minden.

Serving the agriculture community should be the university's highest priority, Payne said.

He said the university's request for an 18 percent increase in state support is "quite adequate," but he declined to say



Payne



Blank



Simmons

where it was too much or too little.

If budget cuts needs to be made, remedial courses that are taught for no credit should be dropped, he said.

Blank said that NU should continue to excel in areas that pay direct benefits to the state, such as agriculture.

But NU's 18 percent budget increase request is too high, he said.

Blank said that if NU's financial condition gets worse, cuts should be made in programs that are the least beneficial to the state.

HE FAVORS making cuts in certain programs instead of making cuts in all programs that would give the university "mediocrity across the board," Blank said.

NU's faculty should be paid what they are worth, Payne said, with worth being measured by how many hours are spent in the classroom.

Payne, 40, graduated from Kearney State College in 1962. He said that he would strive "to keep the university at a level where all Nebraskans can be proud of it."

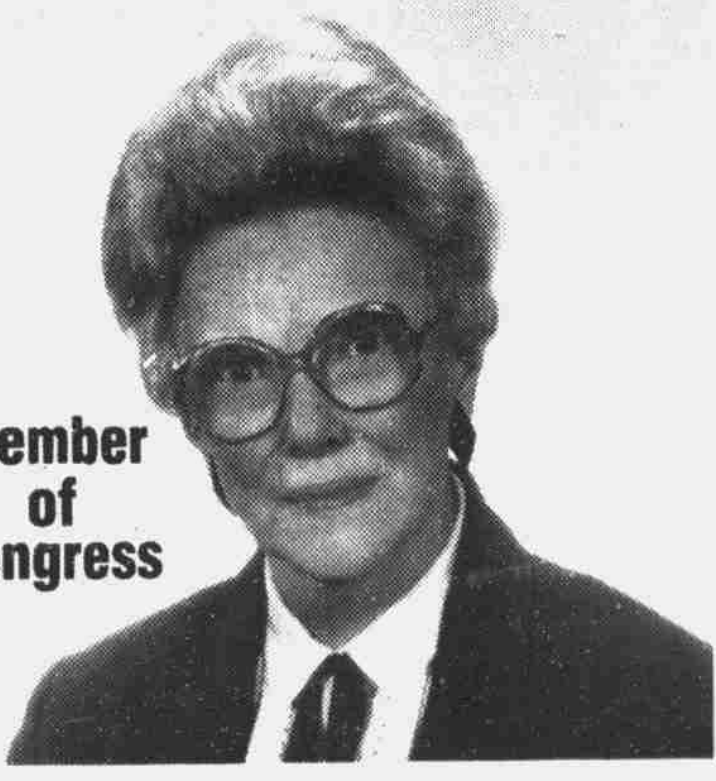
The next 10 years are going to be trying times for education, Payne said, adding that he thinks his business background will be helpful in setting good policies.

Blank, 44, graduated from th NU Dental College in 1960. He is a member of the Dean's Advisory Council at the Dental College.

Blank said he wants a quality university in the fields that serve the state. He said that he would like to see the elimination of some of the duplication of services between NU and other colleges in the state "so that tax dollars can be spent more wisely."

Both Blank and Payne said they were against allowing student regents to vote and that tuition costs would have to continue to increase as long as inflation did.

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