

UNL budget plan calls for salary increases

By Steve Miller

NU's Five-Year Plan made the major assumption that "Nebraskans will continue to support a high-quality university and will be committed to its improvement through adequate operational appropriations."

But because appropriations in the past fell behind the inflation rate, some senators and university officials believe an 18 percent increase is justified. Two other recommendations were made in the plan to better use money and to solicit more contributions for the NU Foundation.

According to Edward Hirsch, vice president of the foundation, the foundation

did proceed with the recommendation, and improvements have been made.

Hirsch said a \$25-million campaign was launched after the plan was made and a total of \$43 million was collected this year.

When the plan was written, total gifts to the foundation each year totaled \$2.2 million. At the close of the 1979-80 year, total gifts amounted to \$13.5 million, Hirsch said.

"We've improved greatly and we're doing much more for the university," Hirsch said.

Develop programs

The Five-Year Plan went on to say that "the university aspires to the development

of certain selected programs to the rank of national prominence."

"This can only be carried out if there are special increases in funding for faculty and facilities in order to raise the level of support for these selected programs to a level commensurate with that at the country's leading universities."

Steve Sample, NU vice president of academic affairs, said appropriations had some catching up to do because of the rapid rate of inflation.

Sample listed areas of special concern like faculty salaries, stipends for graduate students, library spending, maintenance and scientific equipment.

Legislative appropriations committee members Shirley Marsh, Lincoln; Donald Dworak, Columbus, and education committee member Gerald Koch, Ralston, responded to the question of whether appropriations and faculty salaries had kept up with inflation.

"We have not been generous with the university," Marsh said. "We should think of the university as an investment in the future."

"It pays us dividends by educating persons of Nebraska who remain as human resources."

Marsh said she would support an 18 percent increase in appropriations to the university.

Low salaries

"It hurts to make the statement, but the university probably is not as competitive as it was in 1975," Marsh said.

"We've lost a lot of good people because of low salaries. We can't expect them to stay on for good will."

Dworak said he questions the credibility of some of the reports he has heard and seen about the competitiveness of university faculty salaries.

"When we isolate salaries, we don't talk about anything else," Dworak said. "But then they run around buying land and making all sorts of plans."

Dworak said he was concerned about the quality of the university and he thinks there are problems.

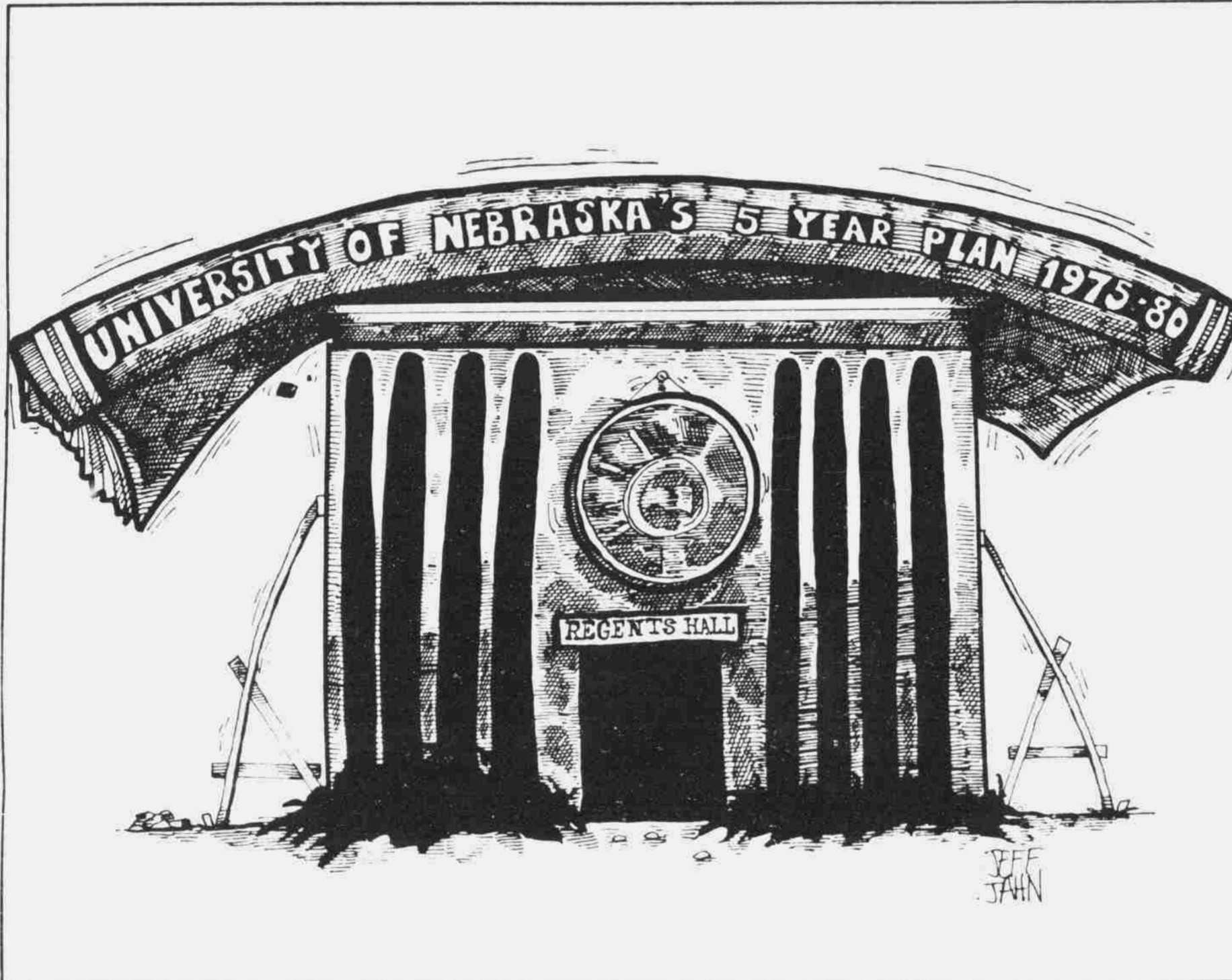
He said he was hindered as an appropriations committee member because he could not vote on how much money to give the university, but not on how it would be used.

Koch said he hopes the Legislature will decide to improve faculty and staff, and continue areas of excellence for another five years.

Koch said exceptional faculty members need to be rewarded and that salaries have fallen behind.

"Professional staff deserves more now than they've gotten in past years," Koch said.

"We lose good members to other schools. Because they aren't paid well enough, they start to look around for something better and I certainly don't blame them for it."



Officials call for specific student involvement

By Patti Gallagher

Among the recommendations in the 1975-80 outline for university growth was the statement that "the policy of involving students in academic review and decision-making should be continued and strengthened as a stimulus to achieve higher levels of academic excellence."

According to two student leaders and two administrators, student involvement in decision-making has increased in recent years. Whether or not the increase is due to the Five-Year Plan, however, is not evident, they said.

Within the plan, entitled "Toward Excellence," approximately one-half page was devoted to increasing student participation. It said, in part, that because students are involved at levels of the university from academic departments to the Board of Regents, they should be involved in shaping academic policy.

According to David DeCoster, dean of students, more specifics should have been included within the plan to insure that students were involved. He said "global terms" such as "involving in decision-making" do not provide the "exact tasks which should be fulfilled" to meet those terms.

DeCoster said, however, that the primary use of a plan such as "Toward Excellence" is to serve as "an endorsement of plans on lower levels."

But, he said, "specifics should be included to judge whether progress is being made."

A great deal of impact

DeCoster said that he did not know if students were involved in the planning stage of the 1975-80 plan because he took his position in 1978. However, in the plan being drawn up for the coming five years, students have had a great deal of impact, he said.

In a recent meeting of members of the Student Life department, three ways of increasing student input in the composition of the new plan were determined, DeCoster said.

They included conducting a survey of students, faculty and administrators, by departments, to have them prioritize the goals for student affairs, contacting student groups appropriate to each division within student affairs

to develop objectives for the plan, and having interested student groups assist DeCoster in finalizing those objectives.

Although these three points will guide DeCoster in his recommendations on the plan, he said he is fighting against time to get student input. The recommendations are due to the regents in February, he said.

According to the assistant vice chancellor for student affairs, Suzanne Brown, student input has increased in recent years. But Brown said that she did not know whether the Five-Year plan was the impetus for the increased participation.

One program that increased student input in academic decisions was, however, instituted at about the same time as the plan was drawn up, she said. At that time an academic decision was, however, instituted at about the same time as the plan was drawn up, she said. At that time an academic review process began in which students were involved. The process, in which academic programs are evaluated on a rotating year basis, is still in effect, Brown said.

Budget task force

Additional channels of student impact in the last year have been through a budget task force, and the ASUN Academic Planning Committee, Brown said. Another means of student input has been through frequent meetings between Interim Chancellor Robert Rutford and student leaders.

Although Brown said she thinks student input has been increasing, she said there is a problem in the low number of students who are involved. She said it is important to include as many students as possible in decision-making, but said the "students who tend to be interested are perhaps too small in number."

ASUN President Renee Wessels agreed that the ASUN committee has been instrumental in getting student opinion to the administration. The committee has been involved in drawing up the guidelines and assumptions in the plan and has brought their recommendations before the ASUN Senate, Wessels said.

One recommendation of the committee was that the plan be approved on the academic department level, she

said. She said that previously the plan was only required to be approved by college deans, but going down to the department level would allow more student involvement, she said.

Although Wessels said she thinks that students have become increasingly involved on the academic level, she said they are excluded in the university budget process.

"The budget-making process is unexcusable on this campus," she said. Although money is overall well-spent, Wessels said, the process for allocating money and requesting increases "desperately needs improvement."

Consumers of education

"Students are very much the consumers of education," Wessels said, because they contribute one third of the total dollars to the budget. "But the decisions of how that money is spent has been irresponsible."

Wessels said the 1975-80 plan should have included specifics of student participation. Because it does not spell out how students should be involved in decision-making, "it makes it that much easier to exclude them," she said.

According to Bud Cuca, who served as ASUN president in 1978-79, student input in the Five-Year Plan was obtained indirectly through his role as a student regent.

He said, however, that it would have been an excellent idea to bring the plan before the student senate for its opinions. As it was, Cuca said he did not even see the plan until about four months into his term as president.

Cuca also said that the plan should have been more specific. Cuca called the portion of the plan devoted to student participation "rhetorical feed," and said that to have any real input students must have representation on the committees that make decisions.

During his term in ASUN, Cuca said the senate proposed that the members of all decision-making committees be at least half students and faculty. The proposal "didn't take too kindly" and was never initiated, he said.