

Several regents appear skeptical about SSA

By D. Eric Kircher

Some members of the NU Board of Regents think a statewide student lobbying group would be ineffective. Students approved allocating fees to the proposed State Student Association in the March 4 ASUN election. The idea now must be approved by the chancellor.

Regent Robert Simmons of Scottsbluff questioned the SSA's value.

"I don't think they (SSA) are going to accomplish much," he said. "I really don't know exactly what their objective is."

"I don't remember any time when the students asked for anything different than what the administration asked for," Simmons said.

If state senators don't see a difference between student wants and the NU administration's requests, students won't benefit, he said.

Regent Robert Prokop of Wilber said he wouldn't support the SSA "economically." If students are worried about student fee increases, he said, they shouldn't vote for a "waste of money."

"The SSA has no place in the educational system,"

Prokop said. "Obviously, I don't think it will be effective. I think financially it is uncalled for."

Prokop said the election showed that students didn't want the association. The nearly 20,000 students who didn't vote in the election obviously opposed the SSA, he said.

"I figure they're opposed to it," he said. "Those people who didn't vote for it, obviously are not in favor of it."

About 58 percent of those voting (1,281 students) voted for the SSA allocation. About 3,000 students signed a petition to place the question on the ballot.

Simmons also said that student referendum votes don't carry much weight.

"I don't think the regents pay much attention to what the students vote on," he said.

The regents require students to approve Fund A fee allocations every year for ASUN salaries, UPC Talks and Topics and the Daily Nebraskan. The SSA allocation of about 50 cents per student each semester will be voted on if UNL Interim Chancellor Robert Rutford approves the allocation.

The regents mandated the yearly fee votes last May. Regent James Moylan of Omaha said he didn't know

what the effectiveness of the proposed SSA would be, "but basically, I'm against mandatory student fees."

"I'm not for any association that goes for student fees," he said. "I'm not so sure that it isn't watering down your present student government."

Regent Robert Koefoot of Grand Island said the SSA will have no bearing on the university's attempts to influence the Legislature's NU budget appropriations.

Regent Edward Schwartzkopf of Lincoln said students have other ways to lobby without spending student fees.

"I just don't think that the money would be well spent," he said. "Here, plain and simple, is an additional cost."

"When you get to lobbying individual senators, students don't have the knowledge," Schwartzkopf said.

Students are not familiar with the total needs of the university, he said.

Regent Kermit Hansen of Omaha said the SSA is entirely a student concern.

"I think if the students want it, fine, but I find no particular value or interest," he said. "I'm not overwhelmed by what I've heard about it."

Regent John Payne of Kearney said he had no comment on spending student fees on the SSA, but he didn't oppose it.

"It might be effective," he said. "If the students would organize statewide and they handle it properly, it could very well help the situation."

Regent Kermit Wagner of Schuyler said he hadn't read about the SSA.

"I didn't want to comment on it. I don't know enough about it," Wagner said.

Lobbying meeting prompts actions

By Patti Gallagher

Even if students across campus are sluggish going into the last week of classes, at least 10 members of student government at UNL said they were recently invigorated by a trip to Washington, D.C.

The students, half of them ASUN members, returned from a four-day trip to Washington last Tuesday, with a "contagious enthusiasm," according to Sen. Nancee Shannon, and a realization of the need to start communicating with students and the state, according to ASUN Sen. Dan Renn.

The enthusiasm prompted the organization of Student Action Day, highlighted by a rally today at 11 a.m. by the Broyhill Fountain.

The students attended the National Student Lobbying Conference while in Washington. They participated in workshops on lobbying and other student issues, and met with staff members of the Nebraska Congressional delegates.

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Photo by Mark Billingsley

A Tree Grows in Lincoln . . . Members of the UNL grounds crew lower a young tree into its permanent site during the Arbor Day observance at Maxwell Arboretum on East Campus.

Advanced farming methods save pig farm energy

By Alice Hrnicek

It will take more than just the average farmer to run the pig farm for the UNL field lab near Mead.

The 160-acre experimental farm will integrate such well-tested, energy-saving methods as solar heating and grain-drying with less-tried alcohol production for running irrigation pumps and microcomputer monitoring of operations.

Financed by a grant of more than \$800,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy to be matched by private donations through the university, the project is expected to be in full-swing early next year, according to the coordinators from UNL's agricultural engineering department. Much of the equipment will be built this summer, and pigs for the tarrow-to-finishing operation will be bought by January.

The farm will be "almost a living laboratory for energy use," Project Coordinator Dennis Schulte said.

The major product will be about 750 pigs a year, project engineer Brad Rein said, which will be housed in buildings heated by active and passive solar energy. The pigs will provide manure to make methane gas for electricity to run the buildings.

Excess heat from the hog barns will be funnelled to a family-sized greenhouse, Rein said. This will receive carbon dioxide from an alcohol still to enhance plant growth.

Conservation methods

The 6,000-gallon-a-year alcohol still will generate

electricity to run irrigation pumps for about 130 acres of crops. About 20 acres of sweet sorghum will provide the alcohol base.

Seventy acres of corn will be fed to the pigs and 45 acres of soybeans will be developed into a fuel which can replace diesel. The grains will be air-dried in solar heating bins.

Conservation tillage, which minimizes the number of trips made across a field, will conserve fuel, soil and water, Schulte said.

Soil fertility testing will give an accurate idea of how much fertilizer is needed, he said. For crops planted next year, he said, hog manure will provide about one-half the fertilizer.

The soil at Mead was found to be quite fertile, he said. Most farmers use more fertilizer than required because they do not check the soil.

Photoelectric cells, which produce electricity from sunlight, are used on the farm this year to fuel irrigation pumps, dry grain and produce nitrogen, Neil Sullivan, manager of the farmsite, said.

The cells produce an average 100 kilowatt hours of electricity a day, he said, or enough to power five energy-efficient homes. In tests of the cells, he said, he has found they can provide almost 30 percent more energy than originally predicted.

Quick-thinking microcomputers

Monitoring the entire project will be microcomputers, which Sullivan says are becoming more common on farms.

The microcomputers will collect data and increase fuel efficiency by shutting off certain motors when there is danger of over use, he said.

"They (microcomputers) think so much quicker than a person can think," Sullivan said, adding that the system

"takes care of itself better" than if a person were monitoring the processes for failures.

Because many parts of the project are independent, their efficiency is higher than if each idea were attempted by itself, Rein said.

"Many of these ideas themselves wouldn't stand up too easily," he said. "When they are integrated in a total system, their feasibility improves."

Economic feasibility of the farm will be closely studied in the next few years, he said. The alcohol still and the photoelectric cells are somewhat costly, but could become competitive within five years.

Schulte said the project required the university to cultivate relations with private industry to create technology to be tested on the farm. Once the farm is in operation, it will be accessible to the public for viewing, he said.

The farm is one of eight similar energy projects in the United States financed by the Department of Energy. It is the largest of eight, Schulte said, and the only one with irrigation.

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