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Lincoln senator says students need to lobby for higher NU budget

By Eric Peterson

Sen. Steve Fowler of Lincoln said students need to give their opinions when the NU budget is formulated. His comments came Tuesday at a breakfast meeting sponsored by the ASUN Senate's Government Liaison Committee and the College of Business Administration Advisory Board.

"Students have an important role as consumers of the service," Fowler said. He said students are one of the few objective sources that Nebraska legislators have to inform them of the university's needs.

One frustration of student lobbying is the paternalism of some senators, Fowler said.

"You might be asked if you want to close this building to pay the faculty more money," he said about the Nebraska Union, where the breakfast was held. "Other interest groups don't get asked that. I think it's perfectly fair to say the state needs both things."

Fowler said it is essential for student groups to build up a definite group of supporters in the Unicameral.

"If you have some influence with even five or six senators, it can swing a crucial issue. I guess what I'm saying is you don't need all 49."

More supporters needed

The senator said UNL needs more supporters outside the Lincoln and Omaha legislative districts. He said the recently formed Nebraska State Student Association, which may eventually represent all four-year state-funded institutions, is a major step in the building of a statewide student power base.

Fowler said one of the most visible effects of student lobbying is the renovated Temple Building.

"The theater arts project would not have been built without student lobbying," he said.

Fowler said student efforts moved the project from 20th priority for university capital construction to a project that was actually worked on.

"It was some of the most sophisticated lobbying I've ever seen," he said.

The senator said his proposal to raise the state cigarette tax 4 cents, earmarking the revenue for capital construction for higher education, was unpopular with smokers in the state.

"It doesn't seem too likely that the Revenue Committee will let it through," he said.

Fowler said capital construction is a subject often ignored.

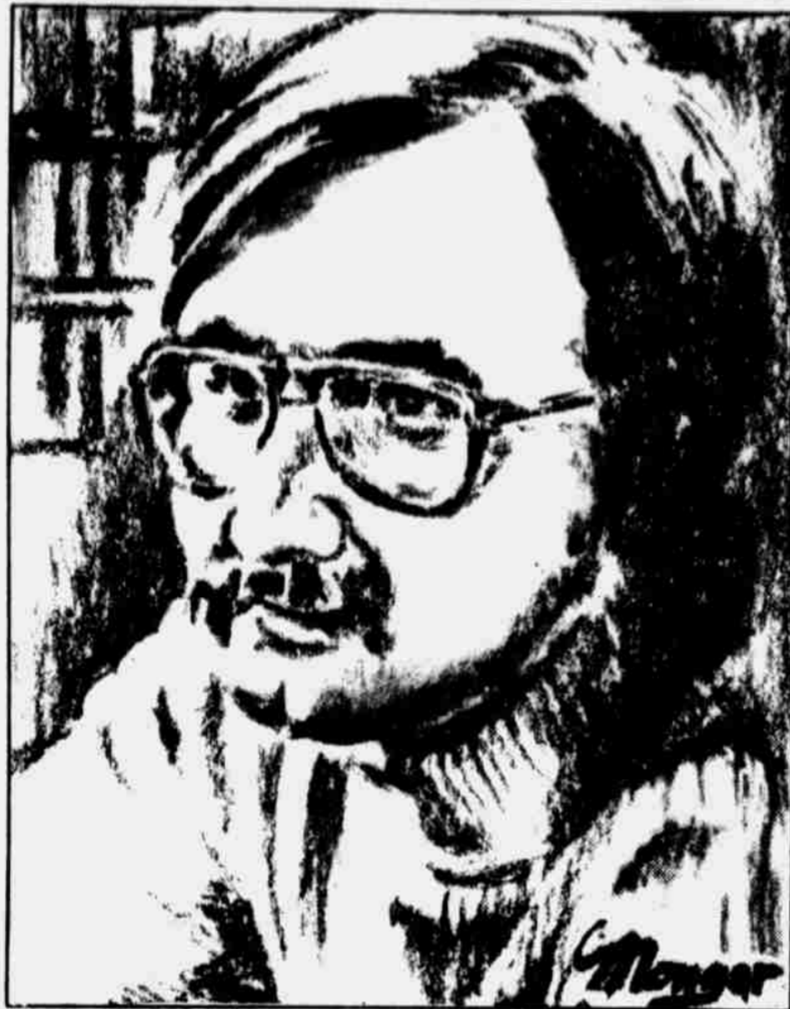
"I think there's a surprising number of the legislators who have never been in those buildings."

Research the key

Fowler said student lobbyists should research legislative records.

"The key to good lobbying is to understand every senator as an individual," Fowler, a former president of UNL's student senate, said continuity of concern was the biggest problem student leaders had when he was in school.

"If you can build up a pool of information about each



senator's history, it would help. One of the most successful lobbyists said he even knew where senators got their hair cut," he said.

Students have a responsibility to defend their interests, Fowler said.

"A lot of decisions, both nationally and locally, are being made with a callous disregard to the needs of education," he said. He said educational underfunding was due in part to senators' wishes to be re-elected, but also to their genuine convictions.

"Most legislators feel they are fulfilling a mandate to cut government. They think they should stop the growth of government — wherever that was. It certainly wasn't in Nebraska," he said.

Lobbying efforts on behalf of government programs have slowed recently, Fowler said.

"People are shell-shocked by the federal cuts. They don't even know where to begin. We don't hear from enough people." Faculty members, for example, don't talk to legislators enough, he said.

"We hear a lot more from students than from faculty."

Campus rules change slowly

Fowler said the alcohol policy recently proposed by the Residence Hall Association should emphasize a student alcohol safety program to help reduce drunken driving.

He said any change in campus rules is a slow process, referring to a revision made in the residence hall visitation policy during his term as senate president.

"The (visitation) changes were ridiculously slow in coming," he said.

The senator said denying the senate president and student regent a salary is "a classic small-minded action of the regents. They wanted to show who was in charge."

When asked if he is considering running for mayor of Lincoln, since Mayor Helen Boosalis is not seeking re-election, Fowler said he has not decided. He said he hopes for student involvement if he runs. "I've never been disappointed about student support when it comes time for re-election."

Faculty Senate gets research report

By Jeff Goodwin

The UNL Research Council reported to the UNL Faculty Senate Tuesday afternoon that the council's budget may have to be cut as much as \$3,000 next year.

The council's annual report, which covers the fiscal year 1980-81, said federal cutbacks are likely to increase the number of applicants to the research council.

As a result of this, the number of successful applicants will drop.

The council has also requested UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale to forward the council's request for funds for a new Professor-in-Residence program to the NU Foundation.

Under the program a professor from another school would be brought in for a month and perhaps even up to a semester, to consult with faculty and students, lecture, and aid the department's research program.

The council reported that a study of three of its programs, Grants-in-Aid, Summer Fellowships, and Semester Leaves, had proven very successful in generating outside funding many times the value of the funds appropriated by the council.

The report of the Convocation Committee was also presented to the senate.

Thomas Myers, a member of the committee, reported that \$2,160 had been spent in the 1981-82 school year to

bring speakers to campus. The committee's budget is \$3,000, leaving it \$840 for the rest of the year.

Myers said the Convocation Committee also has responsibility for administering the Avery Lecture Fund, which currently has a balance of \$2,706.93.

Myers urged senate members to devote more time to bringing speakers to campus.

"We have no real limitation on what can be funded," Myers said. "The only expectation we have is that an individual coming to campus would speak to an open convocation."

Myers said the Convocation Committee often uses its funds in conjunction with other groups to bring speakers to campus.

In other committee reports the Central Planning Committee said it was not being consulted enough on capital construction projects, as is required in the university by-laws.

The committee urged that all proposed capital construction projects be planned as early in advance as possible and that input be sought from all interested parties, including the CPC.

The Academic Planning Committee report said the committee was reviewing UNL's Five-Year Plan.

The committee's recommendations will be presented to the Chancellor's Planning Group who are planning to prepare an updated plan this spring.

Railroad officials say overpass could solve trespassing problem

By John Goecke

Officials are considering the feasibility of building an overpass above the railroad tracks south of Harper-Schramm-Smith Residence Complex as a possible solution to students climbing over trains parked in the area.

Representatives from UNL, the Missouri Pacific Railroad and the residence hall's student government discussed the issue Monday for the first time at a meeting in the State Office Building. The Nebraska Public Service Commission organized the meeting.

In January, Harold Simpson, Public Service Commission chairman, reported to railroad officials that students were endangering their lives by climbing over trains parked outside the complex on North 14th Street and Avery Avenue. The railroad owns a track that cuts through the university and crosses over 14th, 16th and 17th streets intersections. The section of track is used to assemble trains and activate air brakes.

Students cross the track as a short cut when walking to and from classes, and officials say they are concerned someone will be hurt while climbing on a train that suddenly starts moving.

Bob Skochdopol, attorney for Missouri Pacific, said the railroad will examine the cost of building and maintaining an overpass and will report to the university in 30 days.

Skochdopol said he doubts whether an overpass is the best solution because students have not developed one clear short cut. More than one overpass may be needed, he said.

"This is a situation where we will have to have some cooperation from students and the university," he said.

Students often climb over trains because they block intersections and students cannot bear to stand in freezing temperatures for 20 minutes, said Jim Gerndt, Harper-Schramm-Smith Complex program director.

Although law states that an intersection can only be blocked for 10 minutes, the railroad sometimes exceeds the time limit, Gerndt said. In the last month, he documented three incidences when trains blocked 14th Street for more than 10 minutes. In one incident, the train blocked the road for 43 minutes, he said.

If railroad officials could establish a set time during the day when trains would cross the track and guarantee they would only park for 10 minutes, students would be less likely to climb on the train, said Bill Flack, president of Harper's government.

Flack agreed to work with students to make them aware of the danger of climbing the trains.

Grant could replenish libraries' book supply

UNL will receive \$50,000 for library books if the NU Foundation can match the amount. The dean of UNL libraries, Gerald A. Rudolph, is confident it can.

"The University of Nebraska Foundation is attempting to solicit large amounts of money from its sources," Rudolph said. He said corporations, individuals and other foundations are possible targets for funds.

The challenge grant, offered by the Cooper Foundation Board of Directors, can only be used to purchase humanities and social sciences books, Rudolph said. Because of budget limitations, the library has been acquiring more periodicals and fewer books. Rudolph said the Cooper Foundation acted soely on its own initiative by offering the money to replenish the declining supply of books in the humanities and social sciences.

Rudolph said this was the first challenge grant the library has ever received. He said challenge grants are a "good way of having everybody participate," letting others help out as opposed to just the Cooper Foundation giving the money to the library.

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