

Editorial

**Daily
Nebraskan**
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Tax 'boomerang'

State must replace revenue shortfalls

An additional revenue shortfall of as much as \$25 million, which was projected by Gov. Bob Kerrey earlier this week, again points out the state's lack of budget planning and inadequate tax system.

Another \$25 million cut from the 1986-87 state budget would devastate NU, state minority commissions and other groups that depend on state money.

Nebraska's annual budget roulette game hurts the state and discourages new industry growth. Legislators spend so much time arguing about the current money shortage that they often ignore other important issues. Nebraska senators even had to schedule a special session last year to finish additional budget cuts.

A new law approved in early March should ease some of the last-minute budget pressures. Under LB258, senators will prepare the budget once every two years, rather than annually.

The new law will help legislators and state-funded agencies plan for the future. Hopefully, with better planning, the Legislature could avoid the frantic, somewhat irrational cuts proposed in recent years.

But better planning isn't enough to solve the state's problems.

An increase in income tax, sales tax or both is the only option.

Because Nebraska's tax rate is tied to the federal system, state revenues have dropped as

federal tax rates declined. Combined with rising inflation, the money shortfall has left the state in a seemingly endless poorhouse.

Nebraskans who oppose a tax increase, like Kerrey, should think of a 1 or 2 percent hike as a tax "boomerang," not an increase. The added money would simply take the state tax rate back to the levels of the early 1980s.

Many senators seem reluctant to call for higher taxes because they fear election defeats. But if the state economy does not improve soon, intelligent voters will seek new representatives anyway.

Politicians who fear election defeats because they told Nebraskans about the state's desperate money situation should try educating voters. If state leaders told people, in various speeches and letters, that the increasing tax rate simply makes up for real tax reductions in recent years, most Nebraskans would understand.

Another possible boost for state coffers would be an increased sales tax. Nebraska's sales tax rate already is lower than that of many other states, so an increase probably would not hurt potential businesses, and income figures show that most Nebraskans could afford it.

Nebraska needs legislators who are willing to increase state revenues. Actions like Tuesday's \$2 million boost will help, but they won't solve the problem. A "boomerang" tax is the only answer.

Idea will hurt NU

Colleges too large to merge

Merging UNL and UNO's teacher education programs won't cure NU's tight budget situation. It's a bad idea that will hurt the NU system in the long run.

Late last month, regent Donald Fricke of Lincoln proposed that the regents study the possibility of merging UNL's Teacher's College and the UNO College of Education. The Omaha college has 1,149 students. Lincoln has 2,098.

The numbers alone show that the idea won't work. Merging a smaller program with a larger might make sense because it would eliminate positions in the smaller college and only moderately increase the size of the faculty roster in the larger college. But the NU system has two large teaching colleges. They both are far too large to incorporate into one. There need be no elimination of positions with a merger. When you double the size of a school, you must double the faculty.

In addition, most of UNO's students probably wouldn't be able to attend school if they had to travel to Lincoln for an education. The median age of a UNO

student is around 25. That means several probably work and go to school part-time.

Nebraska and the United States in the next few decades face a possible shortage of teachers, several studies have shown. Closing one of NU's teacher education programs might inhibit growth in the profession. We need to encourage more students to enroll in teaching.

True, the enrollment of UNL's Teachers College isn't that high right now, compared to previous years. But enrollments, like nearly everything else, go in cycles. Nebraska long has had a strong teachers program. It shouldn't be penalized now simply because fewer students are in the college.

There's no doubt that NU is having a tough time dealing with a decreased budget. But a program that includes more than 2,000 students shouldn't be a priority cut.

For years, NU has been trying to tell the Legislature that education is the most important aspect of long-term economic planning.

Maybe the regents need to be told the same.



The DN really isn't that bad

Student newspaper grooms society's future journalists

Many readers peruse this paper and deliver the same old comment: "The Daily Nebraskan is horrible. It's always filled with a bunch of boring tripe about ASUN, liberal bull about censorship and gay rights or columns that slam the Greeks."

Those assumptions are true to some degree, but they overlook the two main things that make student newspapers worthwhile: experience and experimentation.

I dropped my journalism major after taking two classes in the college because I found them useless. The classes I took consisted of such educational tasks as making up obituaries for famous people as punishment for making minor typos. I decided to change majors because I felt I could focus my scholarly attention in a broader area while I learned vocational journalism skills at the D.N.

According to an article in a recent issue of Rolling Stone, Newsweek's Jonathan Alter said that many big city newspapers now are more willing to hire writers with degrees in English, economics, political science or speech who wrote for their college papers as undergraduates.

"(T)he mechanical skills often learned at journalism schools can be picked up on a good college paper put out by students who aren't journalism majors," Alter said. "The thinking and analytical skills of other majors —

tremendously useful in professional journalism — are harder to learn as an extracurricular activity than how to write an article."

Those who disparage student newspapers' credibility often overlook the fact that these publications are staffed by student reporters and editors who are learning to interview and quote sources, write headlines, assign stories and lay out pages for the first time.



Scott
Harrah

However, acquiring skills is only one of the minor aspects of gaining experience on a student newspaper. One also learns how to deal with deadlines, with people who give "yes" and "no" answers, with irate readers who've been affronted by articles, with hard-headed editors who demand accuracy instead of creativity, and with trying to make mundane events seem somewhat interesting.

There also are moments of ecstasy, like being allowed to review (and slaughter) the latest Bo Derek masterpiece, interviewing a provocative person or convincing an incredulous editor that a story on a plastic toy poodle film star would be newsworthy.

Six ideas suggested

Censoring of 'Hail Mary' scandalous, action needed to overturn decision

Respect for free expression within the university is central to the nature of the integrity of that institution.

It is scandalous that the censorship of Jean Luc Godard's film "Hail, Mary" has not been overcome through concerted, effective acts of resistance. The cancellation of the film through alleged pressure from the Legislature represents yet another example of how the university is for sale, that political expediency is triumphant, not an uncompromising commitment to the pursuit of truth.

What is gained if the UNL budget is shored up by making the university more palatable to conservatives and reactionaries in the Legislature? What is the wisdom of protecting the university by destroying its fundamental freedoms? What is called a victory will in fact be a great defeat — the ruination of the very fabric of the freedom of the university itself.

When will the members of university say an emphatic, "no" to those whose bottom line is the bottom line? What is basic to the very vitality of the univer-

sity is the freedoms of the university, not how well funded it is. For all my wanting the university to be properly funded, its freedoms are the transcendent issue. The freedom of the university is non-negotiable, no matter how important various careers may be.

Guest Opinion

I strongly call on continued efforts to overturn the censorship of the film "Hail, Mary." The film should be shown as it was scheduled at the Sheldon Film Theatre. If it is not shown as it was scheduled the following actions are justified.

1. Action should be taken to get the resignation of George Neubert, director of the Sheldon Art Gallery.

2. The film should be shown "officially" in another university theater.

3. An anti-censorship teach-in should be held on the steps of the Sheldon Art Gallery on the day the film was originally scheduled to be shown in May. The rally should be robust and unfet-

tered — and a clear repudiation of the reprehensible act of censorship that has taken place.

4. A three-day fast should begin on the day the film was originally scheduled to be shown to draw attention of the grievous wrong that has been done. Black arm bands should be distributed to students to protest the censorship on the Monday after the teach-in.

5. A commitment should be made to create a university organization called the "Banned at the Sheldon Film Theatre." This organization would make a commitment to show the worthwhile films that are not shown at the Sheldon Film Theatre because "they may be blown out of proportion." The censorship that has occurred at the Sheldon Art Gallery must not be allowed to stand, to go unresisted — that censorship simply must be overcome.

6. I invite people of good will to join in these efforts to non-violently and prudently overcome the serious damage that has been done to the reputation of this university.

Ron Kurtenbach
graduate student