

Student support dwindling, Scudder says

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inating whole programs at the university rather than making across the board cuts.

"We must not continue with this mentality of cut, cut, cut to solve our problems," Roskens said.

The continued budget cuts to the university disillusioned students said ASUN President Chris Scudder.

Three years ago when the legislature was considering a cut in state appropriations to the university, Scudder said, students crowded a

hearing room and the hallways in support of their university.

But Wednesday only 25 to 30 students came to show their support.

"With the continued budget cuts, students feel it's futile to come down," Scudder said.

Support for another endangered university institution came from a much more youthful source:

As the late afternoon sunlight diminished in the hearing room, about a dozen fourth graders poured in from Montclair Elementary School in Millard to support a bill that

would give \$3.9 million to Morrill Hall for renovation and an air-conditioning system.

The fourth graders expressed their concern for the museum's problems with climate control and the deterioration of its exhibits.

"Don't let my dreams turn to dust with the elephants," said Christy Micek.

Joshua Denny said that as pioneers prepared the way for others in Nebraska, "we can pioneer" for the future of Morrill Hall.

Others sought the same spirit of support for the entire university.

Dean: equipment old

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to buy some needed laser, food processing, optical fiber and robotics equipment, Splinter said.

"That sort of technology is where we're falling behind very rapidly," Splinter said.

Ned Ianno, an electrical-engineering assistant professor, said student-teacher interaction is one of the department's strong points. Ianno said, however, that increased cooperation between the engineering departments is needed.

"Shared equipment, shared brains, could really make a difference," Ianno said. "If it was all in a book we wouldn't need to do research."

Ianno said the departments will have to share research more in the future because federal agencies are more likely to finance interdepartmental research groups.

The electrical engineering department has been able to attract money for research, Ianno said, and faculty morale is high. Yet laboratory equipment is "barely adequate" and more instructors need to be hired, he said.

"I'm not going to say this is a utopia," he said, "but my view from the trenches is that I'm happy."

The electrical-engineering curriculum has changed in the last three years to provide undergraduates more practical, "hands-on" experience, he said.

The curriculum change now better prepares students for employment, he said.

Ianno said a good barometer of how the engineering college rates is the number of students who are placed before graduation. About 80 percent have at least one job offer before they graduate, Ianno said.

"They (employers) come and they always take a lot of our students with them," he said.

Patty Sokolik, a senior in industrial engineering, said she would like to see more female faculty members and engineering students. Women account for 12 percent of the college's enrollment, compared to 16 percent nationally. There are only four female faculty members, Liberty said.

"I think the college needs more role models in that area," Sokolik said. "There just aren't that many out there."

Liberty said the Engineering College needs 10 to 12 new faculty members,

higher faculty salaries and above all, increased money for equipment.

The college received \$450,000 in equipment from AT&T this year, including 20 IBM-PC computers and a superminicomputer.

But such gifts can't be counted on, said Ezekiel Bahar, the electrical engineering professor who last year spurred UNL officials to apply for an AT&T computer-donation program.

"These computers enabled us to give the kind of experience that most other state colleges take for granted because of strong state support," Bahar said.

Liberty said the college will continue to function despite money problems.

"Let's face it, most of the action in this state will be driven by technology," he said. "Consequently, this college will have to play a key role."

"We're not satisfied with the status quo," he said. "We're going to have to do better."

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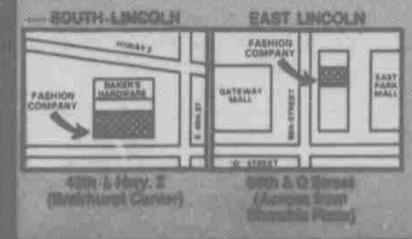
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