

NU Regents candidates discuss platforms

By Victoria Ayotte
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska needs to concentrate on excelling in specific programs instead of maintaining all programs, NU Board of Regents candidates said.

Eight candidates are running in four districts in the regents race.

The Omaha district has three candidates running in the primary, so one will be knocked out in Nebraska's May 10 primary. All other candidates will move on to the November race.

James Moylan is the incumbent for the Omaha seat. Moylan has been on the Board of Regents for 18 years and has been an attorney in Omaha for 31 years.

"Right now I think the university system is in good hands," Moylan said.

NU is in good shape

But, Moylan said, NU needs to "concentrate on teaching what we do best."

"We will have to make some changes," he said.

Moylan said the biggest problems facing the university now are declining enrollments and finding adequate financing.

NU needs to look at the demand and possibly consolidate courses, he said, but overall, NU is in good shape.

Moylan said he supports keeping the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis open at this time.

Running against Moylan are Omahans Rosemary Skrupa and Bob Schropp.

Skrupa has been an attorney for 25 years and is the president of the Omaha Public Power District's Board of Directors.

More money for UNO

"We have to go to our strong points," Skrupa said, referring to ways to improve the university. Skrupa said the College of Agriculture and the College of Law are strong points.

Skrupa said she would generally like the university system to gain more programs, but "we can't be all things to all people."

Skrupa also said she would like to improve the Curtis school.

But Skrupa said the biggest thing she would like to do in office is get more money for the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"The UNO campus is getting short-changed," Skrupa said.

Schropp agreed with Skrupa that UNO's interests are not being represented well enough.

UNL is flagship of system

"The Lincoln campus is the flagship of our university system," he said, but UNO has a large campus population so should be better represented.

Schropp has been the owner of an employee-benefit plan consultant firm for 22 years. He was also the district manager for Northwestern Bell Telephone for 12 years.

Schropp said there needs to be a "full-blown objective study by people outside the system" on how to improve the university.

"Based on the consensus of that study, we would have a clearer vi-

sion," Schropp said. "Nobody knows now where the university should go.

"It's kind of like a ship floundering from one port to another hoping they're doing something right," he said.

Priorities needed

The university could develop a five- or 10-year plan from the study, he said.

Schropp said the university needs to determine its priorities. Three or four programs need to be identified as excellent programs and be improved.

Schropp said he has doubts about whether the Curtis school should remain open and "how the school at Curtis could fit into the long-range plan."

Incumbent Nancy Hoch of Nebraska City and Robert Prokop of Wilbur are opponents in the district four race.

Hoch has been on the Board of Regents for six years and has been president of the River Country Industrial Development Corporation since August.

Hoch said the main thing the university needs to do is invest more in people instead of buildings.

The university needs to continue

the commitment to salary increases, she said.

Hoch said she doesn't know if some programs should be cut to benefit other programs.

"The main thing is that we need to support those areas that are particularly strong, but remember that we are the university of the state of Nebraska," Hoch said.

NU also needs to attract and keep outstanding students and faculty, she said.

"We need to concentrate more on our excellence," she said. "We're kind of at a crossroads where we have to concentrate on our strengths and build on them."

Hoch said the role of the Curtis school has been determined, and the regents need now to "be sure that it offers quality education."

Hoch said the NU administration is maybe a little smaller than those of similar universities, so it should not be cut.

Prokop disagreed with Hoch on that point.

If anything at NU should be cut, it should be administration, he said.

Prokop has been a physician in Papillion for 21 years and served on the Board of Regents from 1971 to 1983.

Prokop said he doesn't think his position as a regent would enable him to improve education at the university because only those who actually teach can improve education.

"There's very little one individual can do to propagate change," he said.

"The major problem is that in regard to the delivery is that we have graduate teaching assistant(s) teaching classes, Prokop said. "The individuals (teaching) should be those that have a vast amount of experience."

Prokop said he can't answer the question of whether certain programs should be cut to improve other programs.

If programs have to be cut, he said, the programs should be ones that focus on service instead of education, such as the extension programs.

"Education programs should remain at the expense of service organi-

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