

Student leaders: State allocations will benefit students

By Jana Pedersen
Staff Reporter

Two student leaders at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln said they think the decisions of the 1989 Legislature were generally beneficial to students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Debbie Fiddelke, 1988-89 student lobbyist for the Government Liaison Committee, said the approved university budget will benefit students by allocating more money for faculty

wages and the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

Fiddelke, current GLC chairperson, said the budget was good simply because the Legislature had more money to work with.

A key improvement in UNL funding came in the area of OSFA, Fiddelke said.

After a request for more funding came from the NU Board of Regents, the Legislature appropriated \$166,500 for the office next year.

Students have continually com-

plained about delays in receiving financial aid in the past, Fiddelke said. Last year there were even more complaints, she said, because the office had to adjust to a new computer system.

But Fiddelke said the most significant reason for delays was that the amount of financial aid coming into the office had increased ten times more than staff capacity.

The new funding for the office will be a big help in combatting the overload problem, she said.

ASUN President Bryan Hill agreed that increased funding for the OSFA was a significant improvement in this year's budget.

"The funding is really important because that office was being financed through energy savings, which is a very unstable source," Hill said.

Energy savings is money that UNL saves when weather conditions don't require costly use of snow removal equipment, heat or air conditioning.

The Legislature's appropriation will create a more stable income for OSFA, he said.

An increase in faculty salaries was another big gain for UNL, Hill said.

The Legislature approved an 11 percent increase in faculty salaries for this year, which is a "very respectable figure," Hill said.

Originally, the university requested a 12 percent increase, he said. Hill said he hopes the Legislature will provide money for the additional 1 percent next year.

Fiddelke said she also was happy with the salary increase but will wait to see if the Board of Regents gives its full approval to the raise.

Hill said one disappointment for the university was Gov. Kay Orr's veto of a \$1.9 million appropriation for instructional equipment at the university.

"That was a vital area that we need money for," Hill said. "I'm just afraid that we're going to need twice as much money next year."

To make up for the lack of funding, Hill said, the surcharge for engineering students may have to be doubled to 40 percent of tuition.

The surcharge would average out to about \$18 per credit hour, according to Hill's formula. But Hill said he would oppose such an increase because it may cause the university to lose good engineering students.

"We can't expect engineering

students to pay that money to barely maintain accreditation," Hill said.

A better option, Hill said, would be to use some flexibility in the university budget by taking money out of some programs and re-distributing it for instructional equipment. No decision has been made on the matter, he said.

Another Legislative decision that could have been a disappointment for the university was the passage of LB651, Hill said.

In its original form, the bill would have provided more state financial aid for students attending private institutions, which generally charge higher tuition rates than public institutions.

But the bill became a "a compromise" between supporters of LB651 and another bill, LB468, which would have favored students in public institutions, Hill said.

The adopted bill creates two funds, one that takes into consideration the cost of the institution and one that considers a student's need.

The only concern Hill said he still has with LB651 is that poorer students now may not be able to attend any institution.

Both Hill and Fiddelke have adopted a "wait and see" point of view on the issue of adding Kearney State College to the NU system.

Hill said if the promise of making the addition a change in governance and not a change in role and mission is kept, there should be no big problems.

But Fiddelke said questions about the constitutionality of the change could result in the need for a public vote before the addition can occur.

Attorney General Robert Spire has said KSU cannot become part of the NU system without an amendment to the Nebraska constitution. If Spire is correct, Nebraska voters must approve the change.

NU sub-units got most tickets

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ees with the rest going to students.

The Sports Center began taking requests on a first-come, first-served basis at 8 a.m. Friday and the tickets were gone at about 9 a.m. that same day, he said.

Bush will speak at the Bob Devaney Sports Center at about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday afternoon, after touring the Engine Technology Center on East Campus.

Laura Smith contributed to this story.

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