

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Time to show cards

Regents need to take stand on report - now

It's high time the NU Board of Regents came out with an opinion on the consultants' report concerning the future of Nebraska's higher education system.

It's been two weeks now since Widmayer and Associates submitted the interim report on Phase I of the post-secondary education study to the Nebraska Legislature's Higher Education Committee. In the report, consultants recommended major changes in the state education system, including abolishing the current board of regents.

In its place, the consultants recommended establishing a new board of regents with more limited powers, but which is responsible for coordinating the collective activities of the University of Nebraska campuses and state colleges.

Seven newly-established boards of trustees would, according to the interim report, be responsible for governing each of the three NU campuses and the four state colleges.

The State College Board of Trustees, which would be eliminated under the consultants' proposal, already has endorsed the recommendations in a report released last week. The report, written for Wednesday's Higher Education Committee hearing, states that prolonging uncertainty in Nebraska's higher education structure would only delay "getting about the business of improving education's needs."

The board's chairwoman, Celann LaGreca, said Tuesday that "while we don't want to move too quickly, we feel it's important to move forward."

The college board's prompt and supportive response of the consulting firm's recommendations is an appreciated sign that members are ready and willing to change.

Meanwhile, the NU Board of Regents continues to drag its feet in taking a stand. Chairman Nancy Hoch said Wednesday that thorough analysis of the report requires more time. The proposal recommends dramatic changes and deserves careful consideration. But board members have had ample time for a preliminary review.

The time has come for a full and frank discussion of the report. If the regents are opposed to the proposed recommendations, they should speak now.

The regents' failure to react publicly to the proposal would be acceptable if it reflected a true desire to better understand the implications of the report.

However, it appears that this is not the case. The tone of Hoch's testimony Wednesday along with previous remarks made by other regents last week suggest that the board is opposed to the recommendations.

The board's evasiveness implies that regents may be looking for ways to avoid the death knell sounded by the report while, at the same time, not antagonizing powerful leaders in the Nebraska Legislature.

The regents have been playing games all semester. It's time for them to lay their cards on the table and take an active role in solving Nebraska's higher education problems.

-- Lee Rood
for the Daily Nebraskan



'89 roller-coaster year at NU

Student leaders will face challenge to dream, change university

OK folks, brace yourselves.

No, some of you are saying, it can't be. Not another "I'm graduating next week and here's my last article, so happy trails" column.

But yes, people, that's exactly what it is. I do graduate, in fact, next week -- not a moment too soon, as far as my parents are concerned.

And this is indeed my last column, an opportune time to reflect back on all the things I learned at the University of Nebraska and to leave you all with some pearls of wisdom.

Ah, the hell with it. Forget the pearls of wisdom. Let's talk politics. This, of course, has been a very exciting year for the University of Nebraska. From the July firing of NU President Ronald Roskens to Wednesday's LB247 study committee hearing, the wonderful world of university politics has been like a roller coaster, filled with twists and turns.

So what's next on the old roller coaster? Is there another big dip just ahead? Or will the tracks suddenly run out, throwing us all to our doom?

Well, as I ride off into the sunset, let's pull out the old crystal ball and take a look at some of the people, places and things I've written about this semester. Let's wrap the year up by taking a last, longing look at:

● THE NU BOARD OF REGENTS. The regents, folks, have got troubles. After firing Roskens, they appear to have been successful in seizing control of their university from the system president and central administration.

But at what cost? Some regents in recent months have seemed to lack the background and perspective necessary for running a university.

And the regents as a group still seem to lack the openness in decision-making expected of a public board. This fact was made crystal clear at Wednesday's hearing, when state Sen. Ron Withem asked Regent Nancy Hoch how the regents came up with the criticisms Hoch gave of the

LB247 study report.

Withem observed that while the other groups testifying before the committee had developed their statements in public meetings, nothing that Hoch said was even hinted at in the news accounts and minutes from the last regents meeting.

Hoch never really answered Withem's question.

All the recent suggestions and criticisms aimed at the regents may become irrelevant, however. If the Legislature and Nebraska voters enact the recommendations made by the LB247 report, the university system as we know it will cease to exist. And we won't have the NU Board of Regents to kick around anymore.

Brian Svoboda



● THE ASSOCIATION OF STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA. ASUN, too, has troubles. But nobody really seems to care. Like some sort of Greek tragedy (no pun intended), ASUN is going through the same motions it has for years -- mid-term senate resignations, frustration with an apathetic student body, preparations for another campaign, and so on.

Some things may happen to liven things up, though. The formation of a self-described Coalition Party for the ASUN elections, led by a group of campus activists, could throw a big wild card into the race and raise some serious issues, too.

And if ASUN President and student Regent Bryan Hill continues to be outspoken before the regents on issues like the alcohol policy and the demolition of the Woodruff Building, there may be some pretty interesting things happening on the stu-

dent side of the Board of Regents.

The bottom line, however, lies with the student body. ASUN will see changes only if students get out and vote for a party that is willing to make them. That's not an easy answer to ASUN's problems, but it's the only one.

During the last four months, I've written a lot of things about this university and its politics. Many of those things have been very critical, prompting administrators, student government leaders and even regents to wonder just who the hell I am and why I'm writing such nasty things about them.

Well, I am a student of the university -- for nine more days, anyway -- and I care deeply about this institution. The university is one of the best things that ever happened to this state. And although I didn't think so when I first got here, it's one of the best things that ever happened to me.

It is for this reason that I wanted to leave this campus a better place than it was when I got here. It bothered me that I could get a degree and have never been taught by a person of color. It bothered me when students felt alienated by their government, and didn't even want to vote, let alone get involved.

And it bothered me that elected officials such as the regents could make decisions affecting student and citizen lives, and yet fail to include students and citizens in their decision-making.

These are the challenges that face tomorrow's student leaders. As Robert Kennedy said, "Some men see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I dream things that never were and ask, 'Why not?'"

If we are to make this university a better place, we must be willing to dream, and to turn our dreams into reality.

As for me, I'm outta here. Happy trails.

Svoboda is a political science and Russian major, and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Reader says Apel's criticism misses the point

Nebraska's men's basketball team has problems, anyone can see that. But I think Jeff Apel is missing the point when he further criticizes an already beleaguered program.

I do agree with some of the things you said, Apel, so don't get hot under the collar yet. NU is a bad road team and Nee is not a great coach. But so far this season (only eight games old) all the Daily Nebraskan has done is rake Danny Nee and the struggling Huskers over the coals. Let's look at

some of the positive points for change.

First, it did take a lot of courage on the part of Richard van Poelgeest to say what he did in front of his teammates. And better to have him do it to their faces than to backstab. Second, you are right in saying there is talent on this team but wrong in saying this is the "saddest aspect about this whole scenario..." And finally, Nee didn't exactly inherit a wonderful program from Moe Iba and Moe didn't exactly go to the NBA to coach

(TCU actually). Let's face it folks, Nebraska hasn't had a good team in a long, long time.

The saddest aspect about the story, Apel, is the fact that all anyone does anymore is criticize. How about a little support for once? Sure the basketball team is not very good, but what do you expect, the New York Knicks?

Brian Gordon
junior
general studies

editorial

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