

Daily Nebraskan

Wednesday

WEATHER

Wednesday, mostly sunny and mild, high in the mid-50s, south wind 5-15 miles per hour. Wednesday night, partly cloudy, low in the mid-20s. Thursday, partly cloudy and cooler, high in the low-40s.

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Education restructuring receives support



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

State Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly gives testimony before the Legislative Education Committee on Tuesday.

By Jennifer O'Clarka
 Staff Reporter

The Nebraska Legislature's Education Committee on Tuesday heard mostly supportive testimony on legislation that would restructure state higher education.

After about six hours of testimony from educational administrators and leaders and Nebraska citizens, the committee adjourned without acting on LR249CA and LB1141.

While explaining the bill and resolution, Sen. Ron Withem of Papillion, co-sponsor of legislation, said the restructuring proposals recommended by the consulting firm Widmayer and Associates "opened eyes" that governance and coordination are "radically different."

Until now, he said, that difference has been ignored, so money spent on the study of Nebraska higher education was "well, well worth it."

The bill and resolution propose a coordinating Board of Regents for Nebraska Higher Education and governing boards of trustees for the seven state higher-education institutions.

Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly,

another sponsor of the legislation, answered senators' questions about how governance and coordination would be distributed.

Under the proposal, Warner said, the new board of regents would have control over the structure of the budget so that individual budget concerns would not be brought before the Legislature.

"I strongly believe that now there is no structure," he said. "There is nowhere in the system today where a single entity is looking at the system as a whole."

James McShane, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Faculty Senate president, said the Faculty Senate supports the proposal. But professors think nonvoting faculty members should be included on the institutional governing boards, he said.

McShane said he didn't ask for an official faculty vote because he thinks participation is more important than voting power.

Allen O'Donnell, president of the State Colleges Education Association, said the association at its Jan. 27 meeting also recommended that LR239CA include nonvoting faculty members on the eight new boards.

O'Donnell, a professor of political science at Wayne State College, said including faculty members on those boards would "close a large gap" in

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Committee adjourns without passing resolution

Testimony on student-regent vote heard

By Jennifer O'Clarka
 Staff Reporter

The Nebraska Legislature's Education Committee adjourned Tuesday without taking action on a resolution that would add a student-regent vote to the current higher education governance system.

If a bill and proposed constitutional amendment to restructure higher education governance fail, LR240CA would provide an official vote for one of the three student members of the current NU Board of Regents.

In testimony Tuesday, Sen. Scott Moore of Seward said arguments in favor of the official vote include concerns over poor student services, such as financial aid and poor computer

services for students.

Moore, who introduced the resolution, said one reason these issues are not addressed is that student regents "aren't paid attention to" by other regents.

Moore said that in the past, regents have attempted to keep student regents out of meetings when they considered controversial issues.

"Go out and watch a few regents' meetings," Moore said. "The regents could really care less about what the students are saying."

Moore said the restructuring proposal, LR329CA, which calls for institutional governing boards and a statewide coordinating board of regents, should include voting student members on the seven institutional boards. The resolution calls for nonvoting student members of those boards.

Student government today encourages student leaders to "suck up to the people in charge" because that's the only way they can achieve anything, Moore said.

Moore said that takes away students' ability to think for themselves.

Bryan Hill, University of Nebraska-Lincoln student regent, said he thinks denying student regents a vote ignores student needs.

Hill said the addition of student members to the board was based on the belief that student views and ideas are crucial.

But without official votes, Hill said, those members are kept from involvement in policy-making. Student regents often are left out of the "information loop" of regents lobbying for their positions, he said.

"As I've said before, if you don't have a vote, you're not a player," Hill said.

Because student regents don't have a vote, Hill said, administrators occasionally don't deal seriously with their concerns.

"During the past year, there have been two situations in which I believe administrators purposely withheld public information from

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Environmentalist pleads for national forest preservation

By Ann Manchester
 Staff Reporter

An environmentalist brought a plea to the Nebraska Union Tuesday to preserve what is left of national forests in the Pacific Northwest.

Lou Gold, a former professor of political science turned "overnight environmentalist," is trying to gain support to help pass the National and Native Forest Protection Act of 1990. He said he hopes 100,000 letters will be sent to congressmen by Earth Day, April 22, in support of the act.

Gold told an audience of more than 100 that timber industries are harvesting the natural forests and replacing them with new trees to be cut down again, then repeating the cycle.

That strips the natural minerals in the soil, making it infertile.

"This is not nature's way," he said. "There is a balance between life and death (of a forest)."

Nature's way of replenishment is through fires that burn away the "litter" on the floor of the forest, making room for new vegetation, he said.

Gold said forests are being destroyed by a technique called clearcutting, in which machinery cuts everything in its path even if the materials cut aren't going to be used. Only 50 percent of the material cut is used, he said.

When trees go down, animals and vegetation also are hurt, he said.

"In the natural world all things are interconnected. A forest is just more than trees," Gold said.

Natural forests are not protected by law from logging, he said, but he is not totally opposed to logging if it is done "carefully" and "respectfully."

But industries must agree not to take too much, he said. In the past 15 years, cutting of timber has increased 28 percent nationwide, Gold said.

Thirty-five percent of national forests are used for timber, while only 2 to 3

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Downtown Dillard's to close doors despite efforts by Lincoln officials

By Doug Isakson
 Staff Reporter

Dillard's downtown department store, 13th and O streets, will close despite efforts by Lincoln officials to keep it open, said the chairman of Miller & Paine, which leases the building.

Bob Campbell, who spoke Tuesday at a press conference at Mayor Bill Harris' office, said Dillard's officials notified him Monday of their decision.

Campbell said Dillard's decision to move was based on "complexities" during negotiations with Miller & Paine. Those complexities concerned "cost-of-space reductions" and "fixture changes," he said.

Efforts to keep the store open included proposals by Miller & Paine to reduce the size of the store and the rent Dillard's pays, according to Bert Harris, Lincoln economic development administrator.

Campbell said he guessed the closing would take place in about two months. He said it is time to go ahead with other plans for the

building.

"I think it's very important that we get on with it quickly," Campbell said. "One of the good sides of this is that it does remove some of the doubt" about whether Dillard's would leave.

Plans for the building include using the basement, first and second floors for retail space and the floors above for office space, and building an entryway on the second level connecting with a new downtown Skywalk.

Campbell said he doubted that Miller & Paine would use the building for major retailing again. The company owns a few small businesses there, including a restaurant, hair salon, diner, food court, bakery and candy store, he said.

Harris said Dillard's decision represents a national trend.

"The retail market has changed dramatically in the U.S.," Harris said. "And part of that change has been the exodus of the traditional downtown retail to more suburban-type malls. Now that's reality. And it's a reality that we are facing in Lincoln this very day."

Harris also said the Dillard's decision elimi-



Brian Shellito/Daily Nebraskan

nates some uncertainty about the development of the downtown area and that he looks forward to new projects in the Miller & Paine Building.