

Highered

Continued from Page 1

the present system.

Another repeated concern was whether to include a voting student member on the proposed institutional boards.

Deb Fiddelke, UNL Government Liaison Committee chairman, said that after meeting with university student regents and state college student trustees last week, it became clear that the students of Nebraska support LR239CA.

In less than one week, Fiddelke said, more than 1,300 UNL, University of Nebraska at Omaha and Kearney State College students signed petitions supporting the student-regent vote and restructuring proposal.

"We believe the recommendations bring exciting changes to a system that quite simply isn't working as well as it should," Fiddelke said.

Students think the proposed system would be more responsive to student concerns, she said.

Most importantly, students want voting members on the proposed boards, Fiddelke said.

"Even the most dedicated of board members could not have the firsthand knowledge of campus issues that a student would bring to the board," she said.

Thirty-three states have provided for direct student involvement in policy decisions, Fiddelke said.

Fiddelke said Nebraska students are the future business leaders, senators and governors of Nebraska.

"All we ask for is more than an opinion on what that future holds," Fiddelke said.

KSC representatives supported the bill, which includes changing the institution's name to the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Two KSC students said their institution is worthy of university status because of its diverse curriculum, outstanding professors and growth.

Nancy Whitman, chairman of the KSC Faculty Senate, said KSC is a university because students attend it from all parts of the world, country and state.

Bill Nester, KSC president, said he doesn't see any disadvantages to the proposed seven institutional governing boards.

Nester said local boards are a "viable vehicle" for better cooperation and communication among higher education boards.

Nester said there is no perfect higher-education governance system in the United States, but systems similar to the proposed one have been successful in other states.

Sen. Howard Lamb of Anselmo said he doesn't see the necessity of changing the current structure. Instead, he suggested giving more authority to the Nebraska Post-Secondary Coordinating Commission, which would provide for better coordination of higher education in Nebraska, Lamb said.

If the proposals pass, he said, Nebraska will go through a long period of uncertainty about which boards have authority.

Don Blank of McCook, chairman of the NU Board of Regents, said the board supports improved coordination, but thinks the proposal "goes beyond and dramatically alters" the higher education system.



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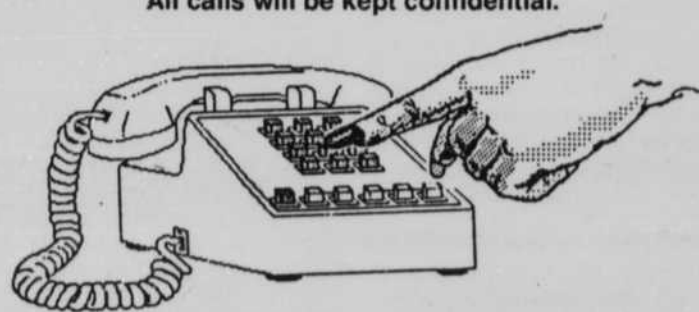
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