

Massengale agrees with report

By Tabitha Hiner
Senior Reporter

A proposal to raise admissions standards at UNL as recommended in a report to the Nebraska Legislature deserves careful study, NU President-elect Martin Massengale told the NU Board of Regents Saturday.

Changing admissions standards may be "timely and appropriate," Massengale said.

The report was issued Nov. 20 by the consulting firm Widmayer and Associates of Chicago to the LB247 study committee. The committee was

set up by the Nebraska Legislature to conduct a comprehensive study of higher education.

The admissions proposal and other changes suggested in the report should be examined to preserve the balance among institutions, Massengale said.

Duplication among institutions could arise with the development of liberal arts curriculum on community college campuses, Massengale said, if the programs were similar to those offered at state colleges and universities.

If requirements at UNL are raised, Massengale said, a higher level of

competence will be expected in classwork, and transfer between institutions could be difficult.

Yet transferability between state institutions is suggested in the report, Massengale said.

James McShane, president of the Academic Senate, said UNL already is considered "moderately selective" and that if admissions standards are changed, the changes should be made with "extraordinary care."

"It does not seem to me that UNL belongs in the category of selective admissions standards with Harvard and Stanford," McShane said.

Officials: Label doesn't apply to UNL

By Tabitha Hiner
Senior Reporter

Although a report from the National Endowment for the Humanities suggests American educational institutions are tyrannical machines, officials say that's not the case at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Ellen Baird, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, and James O'Hanlon, dean of the Teachers College, said UNL does not have the problems mentioned in the report, "Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Practices Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right."

The report, recently issued by NEH Chairman Lynne Cheney, said institutions need to create alternative ways to train and reward teachers and to measure students' academic ability.

Jerry Martin, assistant NEH chairman for programs and policy, said, "A lot of educational practices do not work, and there is widespread agree-

ment that they don't work."

While Martin said teachers need to be educated with fewer theory-related classes and more practical instruction, O'Hanlon said the diversity of students in schools requires teachers to have more theory classes to understand those students' difficulties.

Students have different language skills, home backgrounds and mental and physical abilities, O'Hanlon said.

"Too often, critics like her (Cheney) think about what it's like to teach the able students," O'Hanlon said.

Also in the report was a recommendation that professors be awarded more for their teaching abilities.

"The question is, 'If a person is an outstanding researcher and a poor or mediocre teacher, can he get tenure?'" Martin said. "The official line is that they are both counted."

Baird said UNL professors are not evaluated on one aspect such as teaching. They are evaluated by their teach-

ing, research and service work combined, she said.

"If a faculty member is 90 percent research and 10 percent teaching, then it is possible, but not a foregone conclusion," that the teacher could get tenure, Baird said.

To better measure students' academic ability, the report suggested, tests such as the American College Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test should be replaced.

One replacement would be the National Assessment of Educational Process, Martin said, which examines students on mathematics, literature, history, geography and biology.

Martin said such tests would give colleges an idea of whether high school students had learned basic things like the year Christopher Columbus sailed to America.

Baird said she didn't think there were any perfect tests, but that the ACT and SAT were among the effective measures of college ability.

Budget

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"Then, as the legislative session goes along, we can get a better idea of what particular packages are possible for the University of Nebraska," he said.

Phil Gosch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln student regent, also supported the delay.

"If Ben Nelson is interested in tightening the purse strings, then we need to work with him," he said.

While regents postponed voting on budget issues, they did approve a \$300,000 request to help Kearney State College's transition into the NU system. KSC will become the University of Nebraska at Kearney on July 1, 1991.

The funds will create a computer communications network between the Kearney campus and the NU main processor. Additional staff, as well as other administrative transition costs,

will be financed.

The regents also approved a \$3.5 million addition to the UNK budget request over the next three years.

The funds would go to such areas as additional faculty members, instructional equipment, the library, the physical plant and retirement benefits.

In other action, the Board of Regents voted to approve the following:

- The establishment of a Center for Sustainable Agricultural Systems at the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UNL. The center will help meet goals of existing units within IANR and provide people and resources to promote efficient farming and ranching systems.

- The creation of a Center for Rural Community Revitalization and Development which will help rural communities. The center will help the communities gather information, develop human resources and mobilize financial resources.

UNL official has faith in staff pension funds

By David Burchell
Staff Reporter

Despite criticism that the performance of university employees' pension funds may slide, a UNL official said he has faith in them.

Gregory Clayton, director of insurance and benefits, said the two largest pension companies — the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association and the College Retirement Equities Fund — have experience handling retirement money.

"They've been in the pension business a long time," he said.

A recent article in Barron's, a weekly financial paper, criticized TIAA-CREF, which handles UNL and other universities' retirement money, and questioned whether the funds will continue to perform well despite changes in the economy.

Clayton said he can't predict whether the funds' performance will be better or worse in the next two years.

"I don't think anyone can tell you that," he said.

Although the depressed economy has weakened the performance of university pension funds, Clayton said, similar funds also are down.

Faculty and staff members who have been employed by the university for more than two years, work half-time or more and are at least 26 years old are eligible to participate in the pension plans.

Investors in the funds have their choice between TIAA, a fund dependent on the interest rate for its performance, and CREF, a stock fund that follows the Standard and Poor Index, a list of 500 companies' stock performances that is used as a benchmark for pension fund performance.

Barron's also criticized TIAA-CREF for not allowing the transfer of dollars from TIAA into CREF.

Clayton said the reason for the restriction is the long-term nature of the stock fund. If investors were allowed to transfer funds, he said, the investments would have to be based on short-term returns.

New money contributed to a fund, however, can be redirected each month, he said.

Clayton said there are no figures for the total amount of money handled for UNL employees by TIAA-CREF. Each employee has his or her own account with the pension fund company, he said, so statistics for the entire institution are not readily available.



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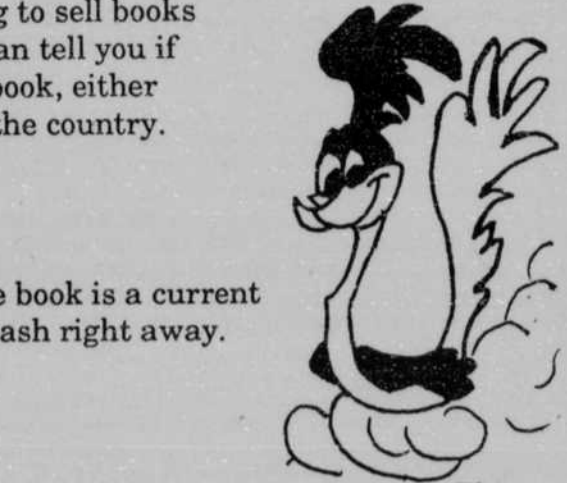
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