

Chancellor found

Spanier can make his impact immediately

After more than two years without a permanent chancellor, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln finally has its new leader.

The NU Board of Regents Friday unanimously approved Graham Spanier for UNL's top administrative post. He said he would make a rapid move from Oregon State University to take over Nov. 1 at UNL.

Spanier has indicated that once he arrives, he plans to take equally quick action on some important UNL issues. He is currently visiting Lincoln and will be in town a few times before November to familiarize himself with UNL's campus.



Even so, Spanier may arrive too late to significantly affect the most important UNL issue — how to cope with mandatory budget cuts. That process begins today, when vice-chancellors present proposals for 3 percent budget reductions to a committee.

But on another issue, the number of vacancies at high UNL administrative positions, Spanier can make his impact felt right away. He eliminated the need for one interim position — the chancellor — simply by accepting the permanent job. Now he must work with other UNL officials and committees to find three other officials: a vice-chancellor for research-dean of graduate studies, vice-chancellor for academic affairs and assistant to the chancellor-university relations director.

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Spanier has promised not only to fill the openings but to look beyond the jobs at the entire UNL command structure. In a Lincoln Journal-Star article, he said he planned to examine UNL's administrative framework and make recommendations about any proposed changes and consolidations by early October.

To learn about UNL's administration in one month is an ambitious goal. Many students find the task daunting in four or more years.

Still, at a time when UNL is looking for any possible excess baggage to drop in order to meet the budget requirements, Spanier's motivation is sound.

In other ways, too, the new chancellor figures to shake things up a bit at UNL.

Spanier's commitment on minority and gender-equity issues has been cited throughout the chancellor search process.

Oregon State, he said last month, is considered to be in the forefront on such issues, with committees to promote hiring of women and advancement and retention of minorities.

At UNL, he comes into a climate that is in earlier, although promising, stages on such matters.

The 43-year-old Spanier also promises to bring youthful leadership to UNL. His energy should be tested by the tough decisions that will have to be made relatively early in his administration. Based on praise for UNL's new chancellor from past and former colleagues, he appears to be up to the challenge.

—E.F.P.



THE FALL OF THE OLD GUARD

JAMES ZANK

Voters need to think again

The approach of the next presidential election has made some people think, but they are a minority.

A majority of Americans appears oblivious to this political ritual. A large part of the problem is that most people don't know whom they want as a leader, and possibly they don't recognize what qualities make for a good one.

One quality, sorely lacking in the last few administrations, is honesty. OK. Stop laughing. I forgot that we are talking about politicians. No one really expects honesty from them.

Honesty is one of those uncomfortable masks every politician tries to wear during the campaign only to be removed once in office.

We have elected ludicrous politicians such as Ronald Reagan, who babbled, "Gee, I don't remember," about the Iran-contra scandal, and then retired in peace with the wife, the dog and the astrologers in tow. I can't see a better use for truth serum.

Both the Reagans and the Bushes have far too much money to understand what Mr. and Mrs. Joe Six-Pack are enduring living in America.

It's just swell to fight illiteracy and to tell children to say no to drugs. It's quite a different thing to worry about whether your own kids are going to be shot by a drug dealer en route to school or slip through the public school system unable to read because of lack of funding for education.

The average American has to struggle to have health insurance and often endures financial hardship when catastrophic illness hits. George Bush becomes a media sensation when he has heart problems. Nancy Reagan makes the front page of USA Today with schematics of her breast cancer surgery.

They never seem to have any problems paying their medical bills.

Past administrations also have had problems communicating what their goals are to the American people. Bush confused people during his campaign by calling himself the "environmental president" and the



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"education president."

Most Americans were confused because they thought these statements indicated that Bush intended to make the environment and education priorities. He must have thought that by being president, he would aid the environment by raising peoples' awareness through such means as helping industry to drain wetlands, developing a national energy policy emphasizing non-renewable resources and pushing us into a war resulting in the spilling and burning of oil.

Instead of saying "environmental president," Bush really meant to say, "pawn of big business interests."

At least he has tried to do some-

thing for education. His education goals are intended to make the U.S. public education system sound good — in theory:

No drugs in schools and higher graduation rates — all this by making no real changes in how the schools operate and not allocating more money for education.

Instead of saying "education president," Bush should have said "president willing to keep the population as ignorant as possible."

Bush also confused most of the country with lofty ideas such as wanting "a kinder, gentler nation." Americans must not have realized that he only meant this in reference to internal affairs.

This statement didn't apply to our dealings with other nations, such as Panama and Iraq.

Another quality we should look for in leaders is their ability to care. Caring has to go beyond sympathetic looks when declaring a region a national disaster area.

We haven't seen that kind of caring in a long time in the Oval Office. During his final months in office, Reagan said homeless people lived on the streets because they wanted to.

Never mind the hundreds of thousands of people pushed out of mental health care facilities because of budget cuts during his first term.

They wanted to be there, wanted to live in cardboard boxes, in the park across the street from the White House.

Bush at least feigned compassion a bit more convincingly. In the spring of 1989, right after his inauguration, he expressed deep concern for the problems of the homeless in America. Has it been a priority of his for the last three years? No.

So, just what do we need in a national leader? Someone who relates to us as people, not just as voters. We need people who care about the country and what they can do to help it, not what the presidency can do to line their pockets.

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