

A necessary asset

Cuts shouldn't hinder Beadle funding

At long last, the foundation for construction of UNL's George W. Beadle Center for Genetics and Biomaterials Research is being finalized.

For more than a year, the project has hung in limbo, waiting for enough financial backing.

But after committee negotiations ironed out wrinkles in a congressional bill last week, both houses of Congress this week should approve the final \$4.5 million in federal funds needed for construction to begin.

Barring an unlikely veto by President Bush, that means construction crews will start work on the building next summer. It probably will be located on Vine Street between 19th and 20th streets.

The funding comes as good news for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The research center could make UNL the nation's leader in biomaterials technology.

Last spring, Irv Omtvedt, vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, explained the significance of the center, saying it "brings together three concepts: biochemists from East and City campuses, engineers and core facilities for a biotechnology thrust. No other university has pulled together these three components."

Perhaps realizing the significance of the center, the Nebraska Legislature approved \$6.5 million for its construction last spring. Including the newest proposed allocation, Congress has approved a total of \$22.45 million for the center. Omtvedt said another \$5 million would have to come from reallocation within UNL.

At a time when both the state and the university face severe budget shortfalls, the Beadle Center could be viewed as an unnecessary addition.

Instead, it should be viewed as a necessary asset.

When the center becomes operational in 1994, it will include among its duties the spawning of economic growth through new technology. That will help both the university and Nebraska.

With the impending approval of still more federal funds, the Beadle Center looks to have the foundation it needs to build on.

But the funds to start the project are not the only ones the center will require. Last spring, Omtvedt estimated the center's annual operating budget at \$1.4 million.

That means a yearly battle to garner enough funds to keep the center operating is a possibility. That \$1.4 million looms large for a new entity at UNL when other areas may be facing the ax.

As all areas of UNL are facing the budget shortfall, so, too, should allocations for the Beadle Center be carefully examined. But the budget crunch should not be used as an excuse to keep UNL from developing a unique area of excellence.

-J.P.

UNO senator sets record straight on reference debate

I wish to thank the Daily Nebraskan for covering the issuance of our resolution ("UNO students move for change of UNL name," DN, Sept. 27). However I wish to set a few items straight.

First we, as the Student Senate of UNO, did not instruct all campuses in the university system to change the University of Nebraska-Lincoln reference. We voted to have the Student Senate change the way we refer to Lincoln's campus. We can and did urge other campuses to follow suit. We, unlike UNL, realize there are limits to what we can do for (or in your case to) other institutions.

Second, at no time did I or any of my colleges (sic) on the Student Senate ever attempt to create equality between the campuses of NU. We did attempt to enforce the equality that is already supposed to exist between the four equal campuses of the University of Nebraska system, U of N for short. To our knowledge, there is no NU! I was most adamant in stressing this point to your senior reporter, Jeremy Fitzpatrick. Apparently Fitzpatrick was being less than attentive when he was interviewing me. This comes as a little shock since the good people of the Daily Nebraskan have not listened to the consensus of their fellow University of Nebraska students in the past.

Finally I would like to thank the Daily Nebraskan for making our case

for us. Aside from the general tone of your editorial and the use of initials rather than the name of the author, (I have never been afraid to sign my work,) the last paragraph says it all.

"Calling the University of Nebraska-Lincoln the University of Nebraska at Lincoln fosters the opinion that UNL wants to stoop to UNO's level. In our ongoing quest for educational excellence, we instead urge UNO to strive to reach that same level." Check that verb reference, kids — you just urged us to strive for the level where we already are. No thanks, we'll go higher, and as for UNL having to stoop to our level, we weren't aware that you could stoop up. Your final sentence says when we reach a level of parity with UNL, then we can use UN-O. Thanks, guys — send up the sign painters.

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Editor's Note: As explained in the Daily Nebraskan editorial policy, editorials represent the opinions of the editorial board and are initialed by the author. The names of board members are printed at the top of Page 4.



ERIC PFANNER

Ideology wins elections

Throughout the spring of 1988, up until several months before the presidential election, Michael Dukakis led George Bush in the polls.

Bush, not yet the popular, apparently unbeatable colossus he has proved to be, was still fighting the wimp factor and struggling to come out from under Ronald Reagan's wing.

Then, during a televised debate, Dukakis said the election was not about "ideology" but about "competence."

He couldn't have been more wrong, at least in the eyes of American voters.

Now several new Democrats are getting ready to take on the Reagan-Bush magic. Unless they learn from Dukakis' mistake, they will face a similar fate.

Bush's presidency has proved that politics in the United States, more than anything else, is about ideology. Congress has proved that politics has nothing to do with competence.

While Bush's approval rating has dropped somewhat since the Persian Gulf War, it remains unnaturally high. At the same time, a majority of Americans think the country is headed in the wrong direction. In other words, ideology beats competence — or incompetence — hands down.

One Democratic candidate seems to have picked up on this dichotomy. The minute Bob Kerrey entered the race for his party's nomination, he became the most credible challenger to Bush.

Never mind Jerry Brown and Paul Tsongas. Both have about as good a chance as Gary Hart does of winning the nomination.

Instead, Kerrey's battle will be with Tom Harkin and Bill Clinton, unless one of the Democrats' heavyweights does a sudden about-face and enters the race. Of the three, Kerrey is the only one who can give Bush a run.

Harkin has gained some surprising early notoriety with his fiery populism and Bush-bashing. Notoriety, however, does not translate into votes.

For a demagogic appeal such as Harkin's to work, the electorate must be extremely disgusted with its leaders. In attacking Bush, Harkin makes this fundamental mistake. Americans, for the most part, like their president. In campaign appearances, Harkin



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has made fun of the president's and vice president's names, lampooning their silver-spoon sucking, Brooks Brothers-wearing implications.

Rather than appearing indignant and class-conscious, however, Harkin sounds jealous that he doesn't have a "Danforth" or "Herbert Walker" in his name.

What Harkin fails to realize, too, is that Americans like their leaders to be from the upper crust — or, at least, to sound that way.

Americans enjoy royalty. Britain's Princess Di is more popular here than in her own country. And Dan Quayle is the Princess Di of American politics.

Clinton is a more serious threat to Kerrey's campaign. He comes into the race with a successful managerial record as governor of Arkansas for more than a decade.

Like Dukakis, however — and unlike Kerrey — Clinton has held no national office. He threatens to turn the campaign into one about competence.

Only Kerrey has the tools, and perhaps the vision, to fight Bush on his own political ground — ideology. Sure, campaigning in New Hamp-

shire on Saturday, Kerrey sharply criticized Bush for his flip-flop on taxes.

But he has been careful to avoid the ad hominem attacks that have marked Harkin's campaign. During his announcement speech in Lincoln, Kerrey almost praised Bush's handling of foreign policy.

On health care, an issue that is sure to divide the Democrats, Kerrey differs from the hedging approaches of Clinton and Harkin.

Instead of merely admitting that health care reform is needed and pledging to do something about it without spending more money, Kerrey promises that his plan would cost billions. Then he goes on to tell people why they need to spend the money. In effect, he is proposing a totally new government ideology in dealing with one of society's most pressing problems.

Similar was Kerrey's positioning on the gulf war resolution. Many Democrats hemmed, hawed and fussed about Bush's escalation of U.S. troop deployments. But when the vote came, when their political hides were on the line, they went along with the administration.

Kerrey, on the other hand, voted against the resolution authorizing the use of force and told others why they should, too.

Kerrey's focus on ideology comes across most clearly, however, in his personal appeal for a new activism and interest in America.

"I am running for president because America urgently needs better, bolder leadership that will build for greatness again," he said in his announcement speech.

His ideas, of course, are not new. Surely it is no accident that he has modeled his rhetoric after John F. Kennedy's.

Like Kennedy, Kerrey is young, charismatic and interested in an American renewal. Like Kennedy, Kerrey is a decorated war veteran.

Most important, though, like Kennedy, Kerrey only can win if he focuses his campaign on ideology, not competence.

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