

Rally

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UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier joined student marchers to demonstrate concern over the budget cuts. Many groups have pleaded their cases to the committee, but Spanier said it wasn't his job to determine who gets cut.

"We're not here to argue anything to be taken away from anyone else," Spanier said. "We are quite aware of state problems."

Spanier said the student turnout was good to see, but he said most students were in class where they should be.

Chuck Ostrom said the problems in Nebraska were serious, but not in comparison to his home state of Michigan. Ostrom is a Fellow from the American Council of Education.

"Michigan State is very much worse off (than) here," he said.

Ostrom has worked in the chancellor's office for a year and had positive things to say about UNL.

This is a "very efficient university," he said. "A lot is accomplished here with not much funding."

Jodi Arvin, a freshman child development major, said she was afraid of what would happen in her remaining years of college if the budget cuts were approved. Arvin said raising taxes was one possible solution to the budget shortfall.

"I know that my parents would be willing to pay higher taxes," she said.

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Hearing

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sary to survive," he said. "It's getting to be pretty old."

Jennifer Newhouse, the student regent from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, agreed.

"We're sending the wrong message to our high school students," she said. "We're telling them this state isn't committed to higher education, and that they should seek other states and other universities to fulfill their needs."

Newhouse, a junior history major, said she has been turned away from registering for classes because of closed sections — the result of underfunding. That, she said, has interrupted her academic schedule.

"These cuts may look like they're going to solve problems, but they're only going to crush the hopes of many of our students," Newhouse said.

NU President Martin Massengale agreed, and added that past cuts have been painful.

"Absorbing the cuts internally, without a lot of publicity, seems to have left a dangerous impression," he said. "It looks as though you can just set a number and tell the university to cut, and we'll do it, and you'll never know the difference."

"Just because the pain has been inside doesn't mean it hasn't been real."

Massengale said even a 1 percent cut would mean having to eliminate jobs from the NU system — a fact NU Regent John Payne of Kearney called "unfair."

"(Further cuts) will serve only to weaken the university, which you and we have worked so hard to build for the state's future growth and strength," Payne said.

He said the state's budget problem, which necessitates the cuts from the university's budget, is a direct result of rising costs in federal mandates, particularly Medicaid.

"What we're being asked to do is take away from our young people



Travis Heying/DN

UNL Student Regent Andrew Sigerson waits for his turn to speak before the Appropriations Committee Tuesday at the Capitol. University of Nebraska students spoke to the committee about a proposed 5 percent NU budget cut.

and their education, and our own business and agriculture future, in order to deal with a health-care issue," Payne said. "The situation with Medicaid belongs to society as a whole. It would not be addressed either on the backs of students through higher tuition, or through the loss of their academic programs."

Sally Wise, UNL's Academic Senate president, compared NU to a gemstone losing its luster.

"With further cuts, the university will not sparkle as brightly," she said.

Del Weber, UNO's chancellor, said his school's continued growth makes more cuts impossible to take.

"The problem is simple," he said. "The demand for education has increased, and will continue to rise. Now, in the face of recent enrollment growth and chronic underfunding, we're looking at another cut."

"We just can't take it."

UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier brought a 35-year-old microscope from one of UNL's biology labs to illustrate his point.

"This model wouldn't meet the requirements of most high school biology classes in this state," Spanier said of the outdated microscope. "It costs \$1,400 for a replacement, and we need several hundred of these on campus. You can't do 1990s science in 1930s buildings with 1960s technology."

The testimonials continued, with students from all four NU campuses referring to closed and cancelled class sections, outdated equipment, six-year college careers and increasing difficulty to make ends meet.

Nester said any further cuts would be disastrous for the entire NU system, particularly at UNK — for students and non-students.

He said he, too, was tired of fighting for NU's money every

year.

"It's like your favorite waltz," Nester said. "We take one step forward, one step back, and always seem to end up in the same place."

"The students are not going to go away. They'll always be here. Higher education is a vehicle to a better life. With further reductions, that dream is becoming impossible."


As the wind continued blowing through the room, Sen. David Bernard-Stevens of North Platte recalled what he learned from one of his college professors about wind.

"He explained the high- and low-pressure systems, and how they affected each other," Bernard-Stevens said. "Basically, he told us that we would be correct in saying, simply, that 'wind sucks.'"

"Are you saying that all of what I've been saying is just hot air?" Nester asked, laughing.

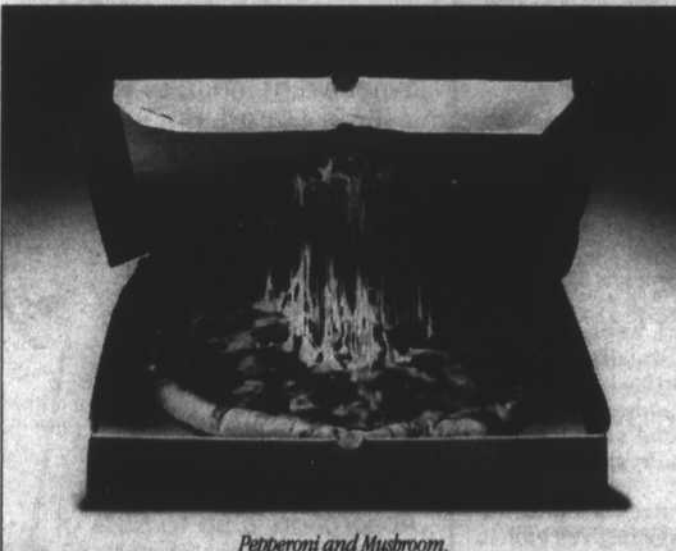
But only a few committee members laughed with him.

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