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Academic forum panelists say UNL needs flexible faculty, more money

By Matt Olberding
Staff Reporter

Faculty members at UNL need to be more flexible to adapt to changes on campus, a panelist said at the 1994 Academic Senate Forum on Thursday.

Randolph Ferlic, chairman of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, compared the faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to elephants — slow, stubborn and becoming an endangered species.

The two-hour forum, which also featured state Sens. LaVon Crosby of Lincoln, David Bernard-Stevens of North Platte and University of Nebraska Regent Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo, focused on UNL's future. The event was held at the National Bank of Commerce, 1248 O St., and was cosponsored by the UNL Academic Senate and the bank.

Ferlic said problems such as demographic and technological changes, a loss of professionalism and a crisis in leadership faced UNL and other universities. If not addressed, those problems could

compound in the future, he said. But Ferlic said UNL was lucky, because it had a strong faculty and the excellent leadership of Chancellor Graham Spanier and NU President Dennis Smith.

Crosby agreed with Ferlic that change was necessary. However, she said, change comes slowly.

"As human beings we cling to the old way of doing things," said Crosby, chairwoman of the Legislature's Committee on Committees and a member of the Appropriations Committee.

UNL is the role model for other NU campuses, she said, and it should set the precedents in higher education that those campuses should follow.

O'Brien said UNL's mission was to be the primary cultural and intellectual resource and center of research for the state. That role probably will never change, she said, but the way the mission is fulfilled will have to change.

Bernard-Stevens, vice chairman of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, said his biggest concern for the university's future was money.

He said the state's budget was \$97 million short for the next biennium, and he was afraid many cuts would be made in the area of edu-

1994 Academic Senate Forum

Thursday, Aug. 18

Dr. Randolph Ferlic, chairman of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

- Faculty members need to adapt to changes in education.

Sen. LaVon Crosby of Lincoln

- University of Nebraska-Lincoln should set precedents for the other NU campuses in higher education.

Regent Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo

- UNL is the primary cultural and intellectual resource and center of research for the state and must have changeable goals to fulfill its mission.

Sen. David Bernard-Stevens of North Platte

- Money is the biggest problem facing the university. The decreased amount of state money and emphasis on education will challenge the university.

The state has been spending less for education in the last few years, and Bernard-Stevens said he was worried that education was becoming less important. Many city bond issues to raise money for education have failed recently statewide. "Education does not seem to be the top priority anymore," he said.

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Education candidate is selected

By Melanie Brandert
Staff Reporter

A search committee recommended Friday that David Powers be named executive director of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Eric Seacrest, chairman of the search committee, said the 11-member commission would meet Wednesday afternoon via a statewide video teleconference to determine whether to hire Powers, executive director of the Minnesota Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

The four-member search committee, which consists of members of the postsecondary commission, has been searching for a replacement for former Executive Director Bruce Stahl since April.

The commission is a body established by the Nebraska Legislature to oversee higher education in Nebraska so that duplication among institutions is prevented.

Powers has served as the senior vice chancellor for academic affairs for the West Virginia Board of Regents and as vice president for academic affairs at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., Seacrest said.

Other members of the search committee were Dick Davis of Omaha, Randolph Ferlic of Omaha and Jane Hood of Lincoln.

1995 Farm Bill to be discussed at conference

From Staff Reports

Governors and officials from 13 states will meet in Lincoln today for the 29th annual Midwestern Governors' Conference.

Featured speakers today include Sen. Bob Kerrey and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy. Both will provide their views on the 1995 Farm Bill. Kerrey will speak at 9:45 a.m. at the Cornhusker Hotel. A governor's round-table discussion will follow the speech.

At noon, Espy will talk about the Clinton administration's view on the bill. He also will speak on the reorganization of his department.

The conference will run through Tuesday.