

Hassebrook

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"It's vital now that the Board of Regents play an active oversight role in making sure those policies are enacted," he said.

Regents' role

Hassebrook said the Board of Regents' purpose was to make decisions on important issues, such as the mission of the university, the accessibility of higher education to all Nebraskans in terms of cost and the quality of that education.

"What is the fundamental mission of the university?" Hassebrook said. "Where is this institution headed? Those are the kind of issues the Nebraska Board of Regents should be concerned with."

Though the regents should be able to make decisions on those issues independently, Hassebrook said, they also should cooperate with NU President Dennis Smith.

If elected, Hassebrook said, he looked forward to working with Smith.

"He's a very capable man," Hassebrook said. "Sometimes I agree with him, and sometimes I don't."

Budget

Hassebrook said he agreed with Smith's decision earlier this year to take more control of the NU budget.

In recent years, the Legislature has assumed control of NU's budget, specifying how state money should be divided among each individual campus.

Under that system, representatives

from each campus lobbied the Legislature for their campus' own budgetary needs.

With Smith's announced change, the president will deal with the chancellors of each campus and then decide the budgetary needs of the entire system, giving the Legislature only one person to consult.

Hassebrook said he supported that plan.

"He's not taking authority away from the regents," Hassebrook said. "He's taking authority away from each individual college."

Hassebrook said NU campuses should not compete for state funds by lobbying the Legislature independently.

Hassebrook said the Coordination Commission for Post-Secondary Education should act to oversee the individual campuses to make sure they were not competing with each other.

One university

Hassebrook said the regents should view the university as a system — not as four individual campuses.

"We need to think of the university as a system that provides education to people across the whole state."

Hassebrook said he opposed the creation of a second engineering college at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The university should provide additional engineering classes and faculty at UNO, but, he said, creating a second engineering college in Omaha would only shift the university's resources from education to administrative bureaucracy.

Vrbricky

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Vrbricky also said the university should acknowledge excellence in teaching by encouraging faculty to return from the research lab back into the classroom.

"Students' learning has to be our first priority," he said, "not only in Nebraska, but across the country."

All university campuses should strive for excellence in higher education, Vrbricky said. But, he said, in order to keep education affordable in Nebraska, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus should be the state's research campus.

Engineering

Vrbricky said he opposed the creation of a second engineering college at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. UNL currently houses the university's only engineering college.

"I don't believe that we can afford duplication," he said. However, he said, the quality of the engineering program at UNO should be improved.

Vrbricky said the role of the Coordinating Committee for Post-Secondary Education was to prevent the kind of duplication that would occur with the creation of a second engineering college.

He said it was not the coordinating commission's role to micromanage the university.

"For the committee to really be effective," he said, "it needs to prevent duplication and stimulate the cooperation between our different

campuses and between our different entities of higher education, both private and public, in the state."

Vrbricky said the Board of Regents and the coordinating commission must have a working relationship in order to be effective.

Budget

Vrbricky said he believed NU President Dennis Smith was committed to improving the quality of higher education in Nebraska.

"He's dedicated to the fact that quality on our campuses should be job one," Vrbricky said.

Vrbricky said he supported Smith's plan to place control of NU's budget in the hands of the university president instead of in the hands of the Legislature.

Under Smith's plan, the president will deal with the chancellors of each campus and then decide the budgetary needs of the whole system.

Vrbricky said Smith's plan made sense because the separate campuses should not compete with each other for funds.

"That isn't the way to do business," he said.

In order to ensure that the percentage of state funds for the university doesn't continue to decrease as they have in recent years, Vrbricky said, the regents must communicate the importance of higher education to members of the Legislature.

"I plan to be very involved in communicating with our Legislature and in emphasizing to them how important higher education is to our students," he said.

Chuck Hassebrook

Born and raised in Platte Center, Hassebrook received his bachelor's degree in university studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. After graduation, Hassebrook spent 10 months working with the impoverished as a vista volunteer.

Since 1978, Hassebrook has been a program leader for stewardship and technology at the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill.

Hassebrook serves on the board of directors for Bread for the World, a national Christian anti-hunger organization. He also serves on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Science and Technology Review Board.

In addition, Hassebrook serves on the UNL leader team for Nebraska Network 21, an organization created to redesign UNL's agriculture and food programs for the 21st century.

Keith Vrbricky

Vrbricky, who was born in Columbus and raised in Clarkson, received a bachelor's degree in arts and sciences from Creighton University in Omaha. He received a medical degree from the University of Creighton Medical School, where he later worked as a faculty member.

For the past 10 years, Vrbricky has been with a private medical practice in Norfolk. He serves on the Norfolk Catholic School Board and is a member of St. Mary's Parish in Norfolk.

Vrbricky also served as chief of staff at Lutheran Community Hospital from 1989-91.

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Jeff Haller/DN

Jeff Bliss, left, of Albany, N.Y., and Will Costin of Aberdeen, Scotland, hang out and share stories at the hostel in the basement of Cornerstone in Lincoln Saturday night.

Lincoln's hostel gives travelers place to rest

By Joel Strauch

Senior Reporter

When most people think of the low-cost, short-term housing called hostels, they think of half-starved students hiking across Europe.

In fact, around 220 hostels exist in the United States. Lincoln has been home to the only hostel in Nebraska for more than 20 years.

Located in the basement of the United Ministries building, the Cornerstone Hostel has been catering to people from around the world who have been traveling across America.

Jennifer Frye, one of the house managers for the hostel, said many international travelers came to Lincoln.

"They come from everywhere — South America, Europe, Asia," she said. "We get mostly Europeans. Since hosting started over there, they know how to use it more."

"They are really kind; we love to have the Europeans here," Frye said. "Most of the people we get are travelers, but we do get some transients coming through."

Christa Joy, the study abroad coordinator for International Affairs and a member of the board of directors of Hosteling International, said the hostel in Lincoln was remodeled just two years ago.

"It now has shower and laundry facilities in addition to the kitchen facilities, bunk beds and the common area," she said. The hostel has eight beds and can bring out mats to accommodate others.

Joy said hostels were ideal for people looking to travel light. The

Cornerstone hostel has that covered. Patrons can stay for as little as \$8, if they are members of Hosteling International. Nonmembers pay \$10.

"Hostels cater to people who travel under their own steam and the idea is to keep it as inexpensive as possible," Joy said.

Lincoln's hostel, however, is not used as much as hostels that offer more services in larger cities, Frye said.

"We're used less frequently because we're a supplemental hostel as opposed to a full-service hostel," Frye said. "A full-service hostel is larger and has more facilities than a supplemental hostel."

Joy said the Cornerstone hostel housed 250 to 300 travelers each year. Most of these patrons come through during the summer, the high travel seasons, which Frye said was still going.

"We're still pretty busy now," Frye said. "It'll taper off when the snow comes and pick back up in March or April."

Travelers in Europe get around mostly by train. Travelers in the United States have a few options for transport.

"Most people take Greyhound, and a few use Amtrak," Frye said. "There is also a service that rental-car companies offer where travelers can return cars that have gone one way, and all they have to pay for is the gas."

Joy said each hostel was unique. "Each one is different," she said. "There are free-standing hostels, home hostels and in California there is even a hostel in a lighthouse."