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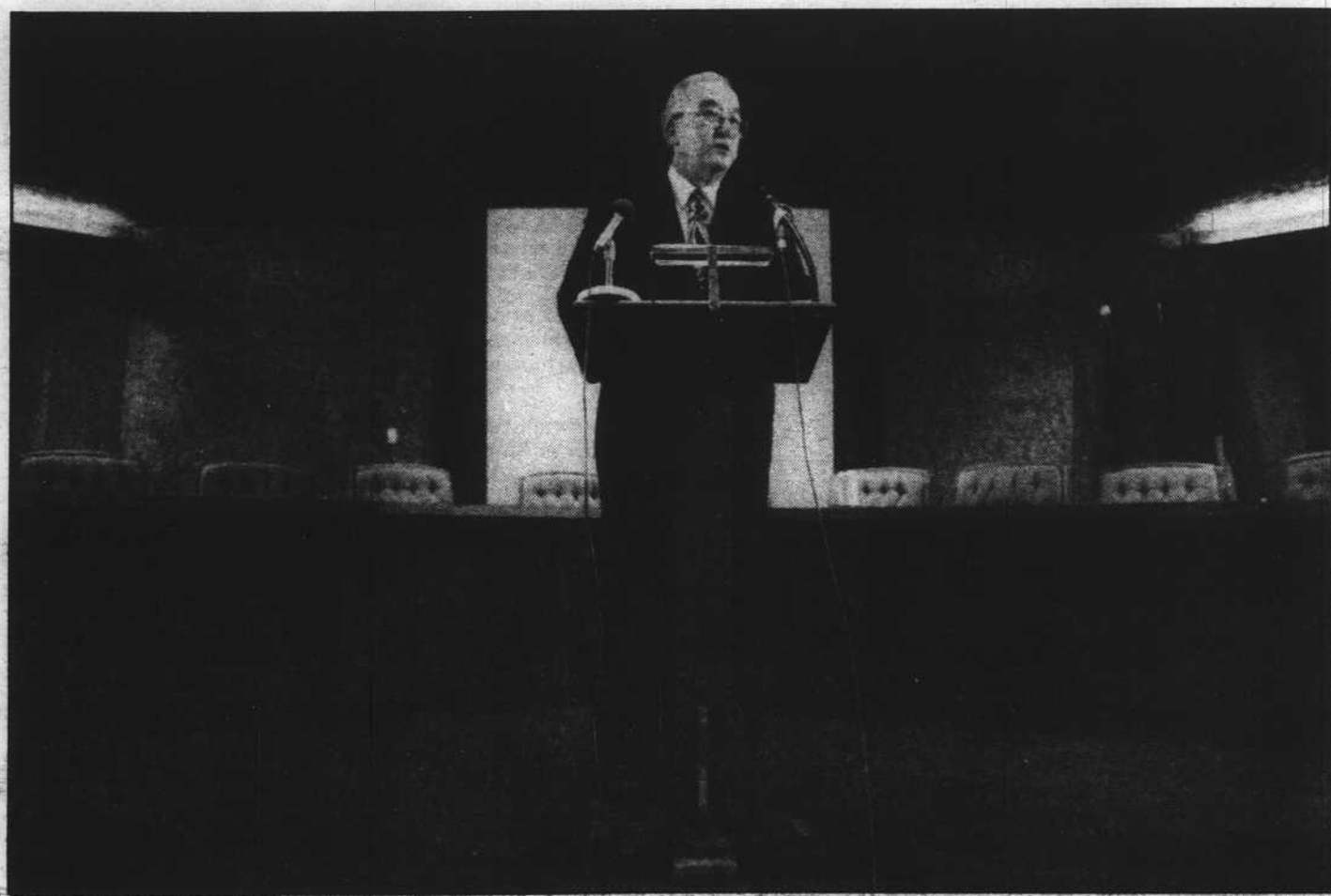
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Smith speaks



Travis Hoying/DN

NU President Dennis Smith presents his recommendations against the addition of an engineering college at UNO during a press conference Thursday.

President: New engineering college not needed

By Matthew Walte
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska at Omaha does not need an engineering college, NU President Dennis Smith said Thursday.

However, Smith said about \$5 million was needed immediately to improve engineering education, and \$1.5 million of that cost would recur annually.

Smith said at a press conference that Nebraska's engineering needs "were not being met."

But, he said, the number of students enrolled full time in the University of Nebraska at Omaha engineering program did not warrant a separate college.

Smith said the current number of 84 students enrolled in UNO's engineering program would have to increase by 300 for a new college to be feasible.

Yet Smith's report did not leave a separate college permanently on hold.

"Clear evidence of increased student demand at some future point could lead to re-evaluation," he wrote.

The recommendations did not come easy, Smith said.

"I agonized over this for a long time, and I'm still agonizing over it," he said. "There is no way, in my view, to make everybody happy."

Smith said, pending regent approval, he would be meeting with administrators to determine where money for his recommendations would come from.

He said he would look first to state, federal and private money. The \$1.5 million a year in additional spending would have to be added to the NU budget, he said.

Tuition increases will be considered if the money for the spending is not found in state, federal or private money, Smith said.

Regent Rosemary Skrupa, of Omaha, said Smith's decision was a "big-time disappointment."

Skrupa said the decision would have a chilling effect on the Omaha engineering community. Money pledged by Omaha businesses for a new college will disappear, she said.

Also, Skrupa said, Nebraska has lost the high-tech industries that a new college would have attracted to Omaha.

"It's going to keep us in a North Dakota Syndrome, she said. "We're back to

the cows and corn economy."

Regent Robert Allen, of Hastings, called for calm in the debate.

"If there was ever a time we needed to pull together, it is now," he said. "If we can get our act together and focus on what's needed, Omaha's chances of improvement are so much better."

Allen said a separate college, even with the president and the regents' blessing, would have had a hard time getting past the Coordinating Commission for Post-Secondary Education and the Legislature.

If NU is to receive budget increases, Allen said, it needs to move away from a "turf war" mentality and make a unified request.

Allen predicted Smith's recommendations would win enough support from the board to pass.

Stan Liberty, recently removed as the dean of the College of Engineering, said he was pleased with Smith's recommendation.

"These are precisely what needs to be done to enhance statewide engineering," he said.

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Autopsy on Renteria calls death accidental

By Brian Sharp
Senior Reporter

Although autopsy results released Thursday classified Francisco Renteria's death as an accident, the special prosecutor in the case said it did not clear the police officers involved.

The announcement came at a press conference called by Special Prosecutor Robert Bartle. About two months have passed since the autopsy was conducted by the Lancaster County assistant coroner.

Renteria, 28, died Oct. 1 following a struggle with police. Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady, two officers and a fire captain have been indicted in connection with the incident. All stood mute in answering to charges during their arraignments Monday.

Bartle said the term "accident" was neutral and would have no effect on how he prosecuted the case, or how a jury would read the report. As a prosecutor, Bartle said, he was only concerned with the type and cause of Renteria's injuries.

Members of Lincoln's Hispanic community disagreed.

"Not guilty, that's what it sounds like," Elliot Rivas, the administrative assistant director of the Hispanic Community Center, said after the press conference.

"It sounds like there's no fault," he said.

Bartle said Matthias Okoye, who performed the autopsy, had the choice of labeling the manner of death as suicide, homicide, accident or undetermined.

The report found the cause of Renteria's death was suffocation resulting from breathing his own vomit and from compression of the neck. Renteria suffered severe lack of oxygen to the brain, causing an irregular heartbeat.

Bartle said one of the police officers' tragic misconceptions was that Renteria's vomiting was alcohol-induced.

The autopsy found no trace of alcohol or drugs in Renteria's system, with the exception of Lidocaine, a medication used while paramedics tried to revive him, he said.

Bartle said the prosecution would attempt to determine the time Renteria lost consciousness. The assistant coroner couldn't determine whether that occurred before Renteria was placed face-down in the back of a police cruiser.

The jury will decide whether the police actions that resulted in Renteria's neck injuries were appropriate at the time, Bartle said.

Renteria was mistakenly identified by a university officer as a man violating a protection order.

Bartle said the prosecution also would question whether police used a neck restraint properly, kept the hold for too long and whether other police contact to Renteria's neck area could have caused the injuries.

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Loudon says he's made much progress on promises

By Matthew Walte
Senior Reporter

Almost a year after the student government election, Andrew Loudon still has a copy of his party's platform taped to the top of his desk.

The one-page document, its corners tattered by wear and tear, has been there since the first day he took office.

Opponents battered and ripped the list during the March elections. They said it was "too lofty" and "unattainable."

But the list of 20 promises endured the elections, and all but five are in

the works or have been met, Loudon said.

Accomplishing his goals has been tough, Loudon said. With the debate about a separate engineering college in Omaha and the upcoming budget debate, he said time had not been a luxury for his administration.

Loudon, who is the University of Nebraska-Lincoln student regent, said his administration had had to prioritize its goals.

In line with five of the platform promises, most of Loudon's time this semester has been spent preparing for the upcoming session in the Nebraska Legislature, Loudon said.

The Government Liaison Committee, the lobbying wing of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, has been aggressive this year, he said. Loudon, who was GLC chairman last year, said he and the group had been making their way around the Capitol, meeting with state senators.

One of the first things Loudon did when he took office was meet with the members of the Legislature's ap-

propriations committee, he said. The committee sets the university's budget allotment.

Loudon said revenue figures from the Legislature were better than expected — a projected budget shortfall has been upgraded from the initial estimate of \$150 million to the current estimate of \$30 million to \$40 million. He said the university still would have to lobby to prevent cuts.

Loudon said his planning had garnered students the lead spot in the university's budget testimony in the spring. He said he convinced the chancellor that because students had

a large stake in the budget, they should speak first.

Also, Loudon said, he has received a verbal commitment from University of Nebraska President Dennis Smith that students will take no more than a 10 percent increase in tuition if the university takes a budget cut.

Without that pledge, Loudon said, students could have faced a double-digit rise in tuition. He said Smith's commitment came in exchange for a full commitment from students to lobby the Legislature.

"Students do a hell of a lot to lobby

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