

Discounts discussed by Senate

■ Faculty families may receive tuition discounts to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

BY IEVA AUGSTUMS
Assignment Reporter

The UNL Academic Senate Tuesday voted unanimously to begin working on a proposal to give tuition discounts for dependents of faculty members.

President James Ford said the University of Nebraska-Lincoln provides tuition remission benefits for its faculty, but it does not provide the same discounts for dependents of faculty.

Eight of UNL's 12 peer institutions already provide dependents of faculty with at least a 50 percent tuition discount on academic courses taken. Ford said he would like UNL to offer this benefit as well.

"What we would like to have is the tuition remission benefits that faculty members receive to be transferable to their spouses," he said.

Don Jensen, a professor of psychology, said having the benefits for dependents of faculty was a

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wonderful idea, but for him, a little too late.

"A tuition remission benefit would have been nice when my wife and three children were in college at the same time," Jensen said.

Finance Professor Thomas Zorn said he noticed that many outside of the university falsely believe dependents of faculty members already get the discounts.

"I think it is appropriate for us to ask for what people think we already receive," Zorn said.

Former Academic Senate President Peter Bleed agreed.

"It is appropriate for us to ask for this," Bleed said. "However, the senate does need to have a sense of what is politically feasible."

Jensen reminded the senate that it needs to practice practical politics.

Although UNL faculty deserve the best "package deal" possible, Jensen said the Senate's Benefits Committee should research the tuition benefits of UNL's peer institutions, then present a proposal at their next meeting.

On March 3, the Academic Senate will vote on the motion the Benefits Committee presents on the issue.

Ford said if a decided motion carries, Academic Senate will send its proposal to the NU Board of Regents for approval.

In other Academic Senate business:

■ Richard Edwards, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, presented information regarding academic rigor and grade inflation. Edwards said last semester's overall university GPA was 3.02. This is less than one-tenth a point increase from the 1978-79 overall university GPA of 2.96, he said.

"We very much want to focus on the actual grading policy," Edwards said. "This is mandatory when we want to determine the level of academic expectations students are expected to demonstrate."

The senate voted and elected journalism professor John Bender as a member of the senate's executive committee. Bender will serve as a member until April 1998.

Bender said he will use his committee membership to work on strengthening the role of the Academic Senate in reaching decisions on controversial issues.

Regents and College Board may merge if bill passes

BY BRIAN CARLSON
Senior Reporter

Creating a single, governor-appointed board to govern the state's postsecondary educational institutions would lead to greater efficiency, supporters of LR308CA said Tuesday.

But in a hearing of the Legislature's Education Committee, proponents acknowledged it may be awhile before the idea is ready for voter approval.

The proposal would merge the NU Board of Regents and the State College Board of Trustees to form a single governing body for all the state's public postsecondary educational institutions, with the exception of property-tax-supported community colleges.

"In these days when we're facing greater challenges, this would cut out one level of bureaucracy and provide for some greater efficiencies," said Speaker of the Legislature Doug Kristensen, sponsor of the proposal.

The governing board's members would be appointed by the governor and approved by the Legislature, and they would continue to be reimbursed only for expenses.

Nebraska is one of five states where regents are elected.

The Legislature would determine the number of members on the board, ranging from seven to 15, and the length of their terms, ranging from three to nine years.

If approved by the Legislature, the measure would be placed on a general election ballot for voter approval.

The proposal was based on recommendations by the Constitutional Review Commission, which recently completed its task of recommending changes in Nebraska's constitution.

Dick Herman, who served as commission chairman, said the bill's strength was the flexibility the Legislature would be allowed in forming the board.

"We think this is a better arrangement, a more flexible arrangement and a more efficient arrangement for the governance of higher education in the 21st century," he said.

But Herman acknowledged the measure probably would not reach a general election ballot until 2000, at the earliest.

No senator has prioritized the bill during the short 1998 session, and a ballot measure for this fall's elections would be difficult to put together, he said.

No opponents testified, and the committee took no action on the proposal.

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