

Distance education cost set equal to on-campus courses

BY LINDSAY YOUNG
Senior staff writer

The NU Board of Regents took the final step Friday in assuring the inclusion of distance education in the University of Nebraska's core mission.

The regents unanimously passed a policy that makes the cost of tuition for distance-education courses equal to that of on-campus courses, effective Jan. 1.

In addition, like on-campus courses, distance-education courses will now be subsidized by the state.

For out-of-state students, tuition will be determined by market competition, or what other universities charge, but never will be lower than on-campus tuition. Also, the state will not provide a subsidy for those students.

The policy will make a university education more affordable, and therefore more accessible to all Nebraskans, administrators said.

Students can receive undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees via media such as the Internet and teleconferencing. Some types of courses offered include economics, political science and psychology.

For such courses, prior to the new tuition policy, distance-education students have paid 150 percent of on-campus tuition rates. For business and engineering courses, students have paid 200 percent.

Regent Don Blank of McCook, who raised concern last summer over the cost of distance education, has said that students in the western part of the state don't always have the means to attend class on one of the four NU campuses.

Blank said making the classes more affordable to take in one of the learning centers across the state or via a computer will increase students' accessibility to higher education.

Regent Drew Miller of Papillion said the new policy was an improvement.

Miller voiced his discontent last summer with a cost study distributed by administrators stating distance education cost

Regents

130 to 192 percent more than on-campus courses.

He said the university was "grossly overcharging" its distance-education students and that the administration used only the most expensive courses in the study to find out the cost to the university.

Miller said the price NU charges for distance education "may not be cost-competitive." He said even with the new tuition policy, NU could be lagging behind other universities in the affordability of distance education.

But UNL Vice Chancellor for Extended Education Irv Omtvedt said the university now needs to ask for a subsidy from the state to cover costs previously covered by tuition.

With the regents' approval of the new policy, the university will ask for about \$1.6 million from the Legislature, Omtvedt said.

And if the university can't get that money from the state, he said, it has to look for other ways, such as reallocation, to cover costs.

Because the university already has submitted its budget requests through 2000, it is unknown if it can depend on an appropriation, Omtvedt said.

Miller said he didn't think the university would need extra funding. "I could not see the state giving us any extra money," he said.

Miller said with the new policy, distance-education tuition will be right where it needs to be to cover program costs, and for some courses will be even higher than needed.

Omtvedt, who has been working as vice chancellor for extended education for about a year, said he was glad steps had been made to equalize distance-education and on-campus courses.

"I'm very pleased that we're looking at it holistically," Omtvedt said. "As we look down the road, we're going to see less differentiation between on- and off-campus courses."

Parents Association opposes tax lid

BY SARAH BAKER
Senior staff writer

Although many UNL students have already voiced their distaste for Initiative 413, the parents of those same students have been relatively silent about their feelings on the bill.

But on Saturday morning, parents shared their discontent with the idea and took the first steps toward trying to stop it.

None of the parents in attendance Saturday supported the initiative.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Parents Association discussed Initiative 413, the proposed state tax lid, and began to establish a greater understanding of what the bill means for their children, as well as the stance they want to take concerning the initiative.

Trixie Schmidt, Parents Association president, said the group's main mission is communication.

"This is a critical issue, and we are taking a position against it," Schmidt said. "This could have a major effect on our futures."

The proposed amendment would limit the amount of money the state is allowed to take in through taxes and would also decrease the funding given to UNL by \$10 million, according to university budget office estimates.

John Cederberg, a Lincoln certified professional accountant, came to clarify to parents the meaning of the proposed bill.

Cederberg answered questions from many of the parents interested in learning more specific information.

"UNL is not a business," Cederberg said. "We are going to have to make some tough choices if this happens, and we need to continue to support this cause."

Parents were most worried about how the bill could affect their pocketbooks and also what the university would do if the bill passed.

James Griesen, vice chancellor for

"There is no project that we can cut without creating furor in the state. It won't be a pleasant time if this passes."

JAMES GRIESEN
vice chancellor for student affairs

student affairs, said the university doesn't have a plan as to what would happen if the bill passed, but administrators are thinking about how to approach the situation.

"We won't have across-the-board cuts," Griesen said. "We would protect our areas of excellence and keep our base programs."

Griesen said it would be difficult for the university to pick and choose where and what to cut back on.

"There is no project that we can cut without creating furor in the state," he said. "It won't be a pleasant time if this passes."

Democrats join in gameday rally

BY TODD ANDERSON
Senior staff writer

With the help of U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey, supporters of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Bill Hoppner kicked off a political rally on campus before Saturday's football game.

Speaking to supporters and Husker fans in front of the Canfield Administration Building, Hoppner and Kerrey stressed their commitment to working for all of Nebraska.

Kerrey, who was wearing blue to show his opposition to Initiative 413, said he wanted to make sure the proposed constitutional amendment is defeated on Election Day, Nov. 3.

Opponents of the measure that would place a lid on state revenue wore blue to Saturday's football game to protest the ballot initiative.

Kerrey said he also wanted to work hard to ensure Hoppner is elected as the first governor of Nebraska for the 21st century.

He said defeating Initiative 413 and electing Hoppner were important goals to make sure government works for all Nebraskans.

"The laws need to be written so the doors of opportunity are going to open for all of us," Kerrey said.

Hoppner emphasized the themes of his plan for

Nebraska if he is elected governor: property tax and farm policy reform, support for quality education and protection of the environment.

During his second visit to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus since the general election began in May, Hoppner said Nebraska needs a leader who will make sure the interests of all Nebraskans are represented by government.

"I'll be the governor who sees the challenges of today from the perspective of the average Nebraska family," Hoppner said.

Hoppner's experiences as a businessman and working with state budgets have trained him to be the next governor of Nebraska, Kerrey said.

Kerrey joked that Hoppner was governor for six months in 1978, when he served as then-Gov. Kerrey's chief of staff. Hoppner also served as a key adviser to former Gov. and U.S. Sen. James Exon.

Kerrey said Hoppner knows Nebraska and how state government can work for all people.

"(Hoppner) is going to be a governor not just for the privileged few but for all Nebraskans border to border."



Reeves' execution date set

Last week the Nebraska Supreme Court set death row inmate Randolph Reeves' execution for Jan. 14.

The court set the execution date over objections from Reeves' attorney.

Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg filed for the execution date in mid-September saying that Reeves is guilty and that there was no reason for further delay.

Reeves' most recent appeal was dismissed by the U.S. Supreme Court in August.

Paula Hutchinson, Reeves' attorney, would not comment on the case.

Reeves, 42, was convicted of the 1980 murders of Janet Mesner and Victoria Lamm, and he has been on death row since 1981.

Both women were stabbed in a Quaker meeting house in Lincoln, but before Mesner died she was able to identify Reeves as her killer.

Second charged in murder

Last week a second man was charged for the 1995 murder of a

Lincoln teen-ager.

Tony Galligo, 19, was charged in Lancaster County District Court for the murder.

Galligo was living in a group home with the victim, Michael Schmade, 17 at the time, and the other suspect, Timothy Hopkins, at the time of the murder.

Schmade's body was found buried in a Lincoln drainage tunnel. He had been stabbed multiple times and beaten.

Hopkins, 20, the other suspect in the case, was arrested and charged in September 1997. Galligo was arrested on unrelated charges in Omaha in April, and a Lincoln detective questioned him.

Deputy Lancaster County Attorney Pat Condon said prosecutors have entered into a plea agreement with Hopkins in exchange for his testimony against Galligo. The agreement has not been finalized, although Hopkins testified last week at Galligo's preliminary hearing.

Compiled by senior staff writer Josh Funk with contributions from The Associated Press

October storm effects linger

STORM from page 1

"The federal officials said they had never seen such teamwork in state agencies before," Robak said.

There were many lessons learned that week.

Without power Nelson said state officials had to rely on cellular phones to coordinate their efforts.

LES has doubled the number of phone lines into its emergency center and stepped up its pole maintenance.

Accurate mapping and records helped LES and University of

Nebraska-Lincoln landscaping crews get to the heart of the problem.

But in the end, the only way to prepare for something of this magnitude may be to live through it.

"We handled it real well. Everybody pitched in as a community," Johanns said.

Now everyone will have to wait and see what this winter brings.

According to the Old Farmer's Almanac, the winter months should be about 1 degree cooler than normal and bring less snowfall than usual.

Barring any surprises, that is.

Warrant

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