

NU officials prepare to defend budget

BY IEVA AUGSTUMS
Senior staff writer

Because of a production error, this story did not run in its entirety Monday.

With the Legislature's increased focus on tight-fisted spending, university officials are working to convince lawmakers that their budget requests are justified.

However, heightened concern over state spending may impede the university's receiving higher salaries and better technology, officials are worried.

"I sense a strong desire to help the university," said University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor James Moeser. "We are a favored institution in the state, but we are living in an era of reduced flexibility. It's not going to be easy."

Last July, the NU Board of Regents approved the NU 1999-2001 biennial budget request that asks for a 6.8 percent increase for the first year over the 1998-99 budget of about \$355.9 million.

In February, Gov. Mike Johanns will present his budget to the Legislature for the next two years.

Ron Withem, NU associate vice president for external affairs and director of government relations, said the university needs to consider Johanns' recommendation and the Legislature's thoughts, then act on its requests.

"It's going to be a formidable challenge," Withem said. "There is always more needs than dollars to go around."

The university's legislative agenda includes increasing salaries, technology funding and general inflation costs.

Moeser said faculty and staff salaries are currently 5 to 6 percent below the midpoint of UNL's peer institutions.

"We are slipping and our peers are moving away from us," Moeser said. "We need and want to keep our faculty. We need to catch up."

Daughter of victim to speak on execution

BY JOSH FUNK
Senior staff writer

Two days before the scheduled execution of Randy Reeves, professors and people connected to the case will discuss some of the underlying issues.

This afternoon from 1:30 to 3:30 at Cornerstone Church, 640 N. 16th St., speakers will discuss American-Indian adoption, racial discrimination and felony murder, and how they apply to the Reeves case.

"I want people to understand the differences in this case and the implications of state executions," said event organizer Fran Kaye, a UNL English professor.

Reeves, an Omaha Indian by birth, was taken from the reservation at the age of 3 and adopted by a Quaker family in Central City.

In 1980, Reeves murdered Janet Mesner, a childhood friend, and Vicki Lamm at a Quaker meeting house in Lincoln.

Reeves was convicted of two counts of felony murder because of evidence of sexual assault, and in 1981 he was sentenced to death.

After 18 years of litigation, the Board of Pardons denied Reeves clemency Monday.

The clemency plea was Reeves' best chance to stop Thursday's scheduled execution, though there is still one appeal pending with the Nebraska Supreme Court.

Kaye said she wants people to understand how American Indians have been treated in the past and the

But Regent Drew Miller of Papillion disagreed.

"I believe in merit pay, not these ideas of averages," Miller said. "We should reward faculty and staff when and where it is necessary."

Withem said if the budget is passed, the Legislature and all four campuses would form a partnership, allowing each campus to gain a 4.625 percent yearly increase for the next four years.

Along with salary increases, several million dollars are needed for technological funding at NU, Moeser said. "We have to be plugged in and wired to new technology," he said.

Funding would go toward increasing distance learning capabilities throughout the state and will provide improved research possibilities.

Kent Hendrickson, associate vice chancellor for information services, said UNL seeks \$1.5 million to complete a four-year project, reconstructing the technology infrastructure of university buildings. The project is scheduled to end June 30, even without the funds.

All buildings will receive audio and digital technology improvements. However, if proper funding is not received, all buildings will not have the same technological capabilities.

Withem said he is concerned the university may feel some effects of the state's rejecting Initiative 413 last November. The amendment would have cut \$20 million from NU's budget, according to university estimates.

"If 413 would have passed, we would have been in dire need of funds," Withem said. "Now we have to focus on convincing the Legislature that we need this money we are asking for."

Moeser said the university's requests are rational and need to be analyzed thoroughly before a decision is made.

"It costs money to run and maintain a university," Moeser said. "All we want is what the Board of Regents is asking for."

"I've gained an incredible perspective on my life. If my mom had a chance to voice her opinion, she'd be for clemency."

AUDREY LAMM
daughter of victim Vicki Lamm

effects of that treatment.

"I teach Native Studies, and students are always horrified when they learn of the situation," Kaye said. "If people understand this case, they'll be upset."

During the 1950s, approximately 25 percent of all American Indian children nationwide were placed in adoptive homes.

In Reeves' case, family members of both the victims have lobbied to have Reeves' sentence commuted to life in prison.

Audrey Lamm, Vicki's daughter, will attend the teach-in to share her views on the case and her experiences with the Pardons Board.

Audrey Lamm was 2 years old and in the house when her mother was murdered.

"I've gained an incredible perspective on my life," Lamm said. "If my mom had a chance to voice her opinion, she'd be for clemency."

Union now student-friendly

■ New hours, services and improved facilities await students this semester.

BY SHANE ANTHONY
Staff writer

Students returning from break might have noticed a different Nebraska Union on Monday.

While the project's completion lies on the somewhat distant horizon, a number of new services await students, according to Nebraska Unions Director Daryl Swanson. The changes, he said, represent a switch from a facility geared toward daytime use to one that offers more evening services.

"We're trying to break out of the 8 to 5, Monday through Friday mold," Swanson said.

Just up the spiral staircase — which opened Monday — from the building's north entrance, Tom Dake, an assistant director for Student Involvement, worked the office's first late shift.

"I didn't want some of our new staff to panic, so I thought I'd be here," he said with a laugh. The outer part of the office with its glass front will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Dake said.

Swanson said all students can use the area, but student organizations will probably benefit most. A meeting room and resource library will be available, he said, and organizations can keep more permanent addresses by using a wall of 300 metal mailboxes.

The copy center also experienced a big change. It has a new address.

Brenda Norquist, copy service coordinator for University Services, said the old center's address used to be "lower level, back of the bookstore." Now it will be room 121, just inside the west entrance.

"(Students) can't miss us now. We're pretty visible," Norquist said.

Operating hours changed, too, she said. The center used to close at 5 p.m. Closing times will change to meet students' needs, she said, and the center will eventually be open until the union closes at 11 p.m.

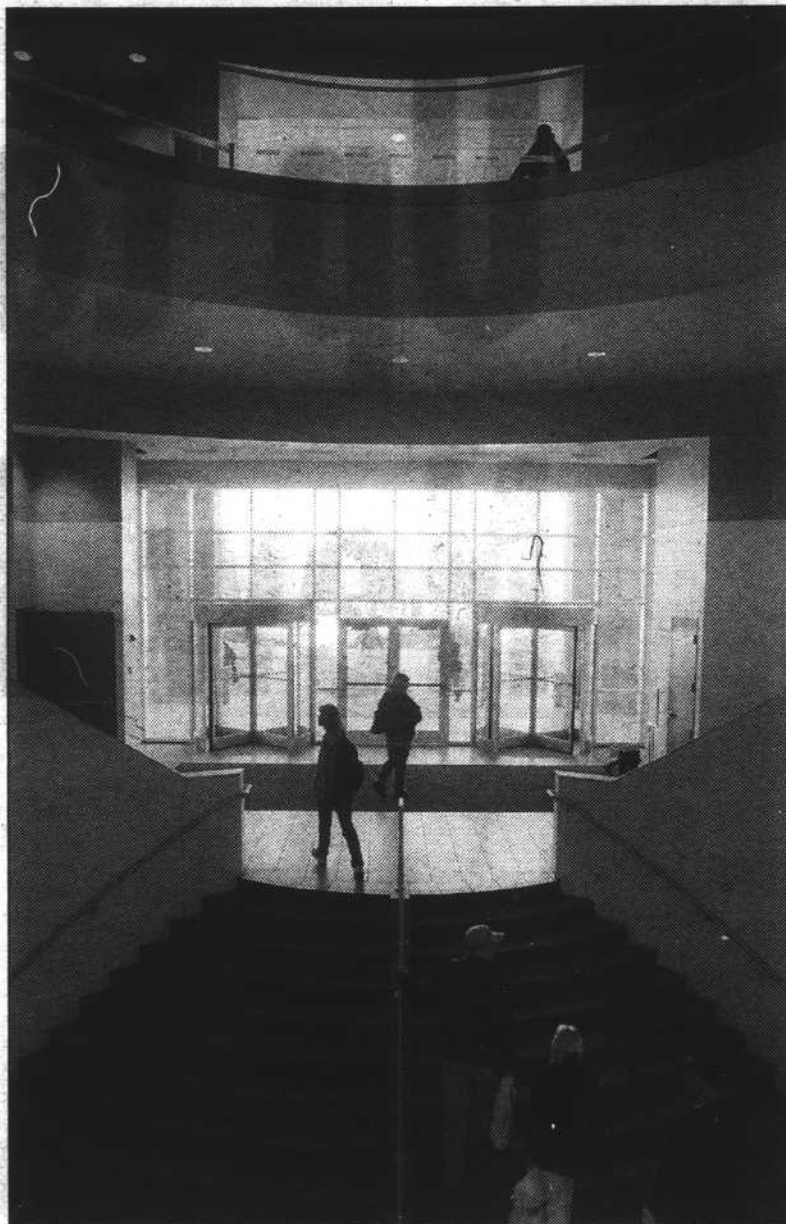
Students can make copies at the center now, she said. But the room lacks furniture.

"I just wish we were all pretty like we're going to be," she said.

The center's future also includes color and black-and-white laser printers for the computer lab.

Swanson said the lab should open Feb. 1. Eventually, it will be open 24 hours, he said. Students will use their identification cards to gain access after regular union hours.

But the lab can't open for round-the-



MATT MILLER/DN

STUDENTS CAN NOW enter and leave the University Bookstore through the north doors. The bookstore also includes a convenience store that sells snacks, drinks and school supplies.

clock use until construction crews finish the west entrance, he said. That will be one of the last phases completed he said, hopefully by spring break.

The original completion date was Aug. 15. The contract contained no penalty or incentive clauses for missing the completion date, he said, and the bid from Builders Inc. provided no room for overtime to make up for lost time.

Contractors and university officials have disagreed about reasons for delays in the past, Swanson said, but arguments over the \$13.5 million project can't be won or lost.

"We just kind of called it a draw," he said.

One student interviewed Monday evening had no objections.

Joshua Fry, 23, a senior business administration major from Houston,

said he started frequenting the union more when study lounges opened. He noticed few of the most recent changes, but said he approved of the building's changes.

"I think it's better," he said. "I never used to like to come here in previous years."

According to Swanson, other recent changes included:

■ The Regency and Heritage rooms are open for use, as are two round-table meeting rooms and an auditorium with 240 theater seats and 66 rolling chairs at eight tables.

■ A convenience store next to the bookstore. It will stay open after the bookstore closes, Swanson said.

■ A recreation area with video games and pinball should open by the end of the week.

New senators take their seats

BY JESSICA FARGEN
Senior staff writer

Out with the old, in with the new — and in 1999 the Legislature is seeing a lot more of the new.

Nine new senators joined the Legislature this session, replacing legislative veterans including Sen. David Maurstad, who is now lieutenant-governor, and former Sen. Kate Witek, who is now the state auditor.

Former Lincoln Sen. Don Wesely said he plans on running for mayor of Lincoln.

Ewing Sen. Merton "Cap" Dierks said because of the large turnover this year Nebraska lost some valuable lawmakers, but assured there will be several more anxious to move up.

"I suppose that (nine new senators) will make a difference," Dierks said. "The people that left for those higher offices are qualified, but I'm sure there will be people in this body who can step up and fill the gap."

Ideologically, the new senators may appear to lean more toward the right, Dierks said, but party-affiliation

and campaign promises do not always indicate how a lawmaker may vote.

Dierks said he was one of 10 new senators in 1987, which, to his memory, was the last time such a large number of senators joined the Legislature.

Dierks, Plattsmouth Sen. Roger Wehrbein, Hebron Sen. George Coordsen and Stanton Sen. Stan Schellpeper are the remaining senators of the 1986 class.

Gering Sen. Adrian Smith, 28, is part of the class of 1999.

Smith replaced 8-year former Sen. Joyce Hillman, but said he plans on meeting with her to get a historical perspective on the job.

"It's a huge responsibility," he said. "That is affirmed every time a new bill pops up."

Smith, who is a former Gering City Council member, said involvement in government there prompted him to seek a higher office.

He said getting his constituents more involved in state government was one of his goals during his term.

The following is a list of new state senators:

■ District 8: Patrick Bourne, an

attorney in Omaha, replaced Eric Will.

■ District 12: Pam Redfield, Omaha, who is executive director of the Omaha-Millard Rotary, replaced Chris Abboud.

■ District 16: Matt Connealy, a Decatur farmer, replaced C.N. (Bud) Robinson.

■ District 26: Marian Price, a registered nurse in Lincoln, replaced Don Wesley.

■ District 30: Dennis Byars, Beatrice, who is director of community support and government relations at the Martin Luther Home Foundation, replaced David Maurstad.

■ District 31: Mark Quandahl, an Omaha attorney, replaced Kate Witek.

■ District 34: Bob Kremer, a farmer and cattle feeder from Aurora, replaced Jerry Willhoft.

■ District 44: Thomas Baker, Trenton, who is president of an oil exploration/production and agricultural production corporation, and owner of a convenience store, replaced Owen Elmer.

■ District 48: Adrian Smith, a real estate agent from Gering, replaced Joyce Hillman.