

Higher education bills debated

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grams, he said.
 "It tends to dilute that particular role and mission," Haller said.
 Kristensen said similar fears arose when Kearney State College joined the NU system 10 years ago. That fear was never substantiated, he said.
 "When Kearney came into the system, there was some worry from the Lincoln campus that you could dilute their degree," Kristensen said.
 The University of Nebraska at Kearney worried that "the big dog will swallow us," Kristensen said.
 Neither one of those things happened, Kristensen said.
 NU Regent Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo spoke in favor of the bills Monday, but said the NU Board of Regents had no official position.
 O'Brien recognized strong support in Nebraska for streamlining government after Initiative 413, a constitution-

al amendment that would have limited state spending, was rejected by voters in November.
 "With recent debate over 413, we think this change is inevitable," O'Brien said.
 The "super board" of higher education representatives would eliminate competition for funds and resources, while at the same time reducing operating costs incurred by three governing boards, Kristensen said.
 But Harrison Sen. Bob Wickersham needed proof that the mergers would save money.
 "I am going to want to find out how either one of your proposals saves anything," Wickersham said.
 Rick Kolkman, chairman of the State College Board of Trustees, testified in support of the bills, but had concerns.
 Kolkman wanted assurance that the state college mission would remain intact, university colleagues would welcome state college professors as equals and Peru State College would remain a state college.
 Eric Seacrest, chairman of the coordinating commission, said the commission was neutral on the NU merger, against turning Peru into a

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FLOYD VRTISKA
 Table Rock senator

community college and against abolishing itself.
 Table Rock Sen. Floyd Vrtiska, a passionate Peru supporter, said he was sick of the state flip-flopping on what to do with Peru.
 "When are we going to make a decision as to what's going to happen?" Vrtiska asked. "It really bothers me that the body won't make a firm decision."
 Kristensen said moves to streamline higher education were not meant to subtract from its importance, but were a necessary evil.
 "Is that because we think less of higher education?" Kristensen asked. "Perhaps not. It's because we have other competing needs in the state."

Legislature advances bill limiting smoking

SMOKE from page 1

Ord Sen. Jerry Schmitt introduced LB211 to save the decaying, stained architecture of the Capitol, shield children and tourists from viewing smoking and take a general stance against smoking.
 Smoking is allowed in the Capitol cafeteria, senators' offices and the senators' lounge.
 State buildings such as prisons, most University of Nebraska buildings and various state offices already have self-imposed smoking bans.
 Norfolk Sen. Gene Tyson, who smoked for more than 40 years

before quitting, introduced the successful amendment that would extend the smoking ban to all state buildings.
 Tyson said the bill was fair in that it limited rights, but did not eliminate them.
 "We're not taking away their right to smoke," he said. "This merely says, 'You want to smoke - go outside and smoke.'"
 In other legislative action: LB366, introduced by Omaha Sen. Deb Suttle, was advanced 30-0 to Select File. The bill would allow post-doctoral intern psychologists to charge for their services under their own licenses.

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