

Seven UNL representatives picked for bioethics group

By Kimberly Sweet
Staff writer

Seven scholars from UNL will soon be pondering bioethics and how it relates to research at the University of Nebraska.

Three months after announcing he would form a bioethics committee to review potential research, NU President Dennis Smith announced his appointments on Monday.

Twenty-three Nebraskans were named to the committee, which will review potential biomedical research and recommend a set of principles to guide the ethical conduct of research at the university.

Of those Nebraskans, seven are from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The committee contains scholars in a variety of areas.

Experts in biological research, law, medicine, medical ethics, philosophy and theology and social and behavioral sciences will sit on the panel.

Three members of the general public will also sit on the committee.

Members who come from UNL who have expertise in biological

research are John Janovy, a professor of biological sciences, Marjorie Lou, a professor of veterinary and biomedical sciences and Anne Vidaver, director for the Center of Biotechnology.

Linda Crump, director of affirmative action and diversity programs, as well as chairwoman of the Nebraska State Bar Association House of Delegates, will share her expertise in law.

Josephine Potuto, a professor of constitutional law, will also sit on the committee.

Robert Audi, a professor of philosophy, has been chosen to share his expertise in the philosophical and theological areas.

Gloria Gonzales-Kruger, an assistant professor of family and consumer sciences, is a representative from the social and behavioral sciences.

Janovy said he was honored and excited to discuss the issues that will come up in determining the research of potential research.

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NU president

Smith appointed a committee that has breadth and diversity.

Smith said he was happy to get a group of well-rounded and distinguished scholars and said the committee will spur public dialogue over issues concerning biomedical research.

"This field is advancing very rapidly, and substantive efforts must be made to ensure that legal and ethical aspects of the research are adequately addressed," Smith said.

Research bill advances

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he said, and the Legislature ought to be involved.

Sen. Patrick Bourne of Omaha said he didn't know why the Legislature should overrule the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

The regents unanimously voted to support the fetal tissue research being conducted at UNMC on Dec. 11.

"It seems to me that the people who are more involved with this and have more knowledge on this have spoken," Bourne said. "Are we going to micro-manage every entity in the state? Where do we stop?"

Bourne said research using fetal tissue has been going on since the 1930s. That research led to the cure for polio and the vaccine for Hepatitis A, he said.

UNMC is using the fetal tissue to study Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and AIDS.

"This all boils down into a fight

between pro-life and pro-choice," Bourne said. "That's unfortunate."

Sen. Ron Raikes of Lincoln agreed that UNMC was conducting high-quality research.

There should be certain standards, he said, but banning the use of fetal tissue for research is not a solution.

"You cannot stop this research without hurting all other research," Raikes said.

Sen. Donald Preister of Omaha said he supported advancing the bill.

"We do need to do research, but we can do it with other means and other tissue," Preister said.

This issue is dividing the public, Brashear said, and it is the Legislature's job to come up with a solution.

"I hear the issues and the questions," he said. "I'm not certain we have all the facts."

"The issue will not go away. It's not good for the university, and it's not good for us."

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