

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Payne
FROM: Bill Nester
RE: Kearney State--University of Nebraska merger
DATE: October 31, 1988

I. GOVERNANCE

Of the alternatives stated, the best would be for Kearney State alone among the four state colleges to be merged, as a separate campus, into the University of Nebraska system.

Kearney State should certainly not become a branch of any existing U of N campus. KSC is simply too large and has too much to offer the U of N system as a separate campus. Following are some good reasons for KSC to be merged into the U of N system as a separate campus.

A. KSC MERGER SECURES A MAJOR POPULATION AND POLITICAL RESOURCE.

The tri-city region is the only major population area in Nebraska not directly served by the U of N system. In addition to Kearney, KSC offers courses in Columbus, York, Grand Island, Hastings, Ogallala, North Platte, McCook, Holdrege, Ord and Broken Bow. KSC's approved service region is from York (east) to Ogallala (west) and from the Kansas border (south) to the South Dakota border (north).

Twelve (12) state senators represent the area served by Kearney State.

B. KSC HAS PROGRAM BREADTH AND DEPTH AND ACCOUNTS FOR MAJORITY OF STATE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT, UNDERGRAD AND GRADUATE.

Kearney State, according to the Carnegie Institute, is one of three Comprehensive One universities in Nebraska (The others are Creighton and UN-O). This is good evidence that KSC's curriculum has evolved from one of primarily teacher education to one which provides comprehensive programs in a variety of subject matter.

KSC's enrollment is 60% of the total enrollment in the

state college system. A Kearney State--U of N merger would place nearly all graduate education within the U of N system, because the 6,000 graduate students who attend KSC comprise about 75% of the graduate students in the state college system.

If KSC leaves the state college system, the other state colleges would be free to be themselves, rather than attempting to become "mini-Kearney States."

C. MERGER WOULD REDUCE U OF N PROGRAM DELIVERY COSTS TO AREAS CURRENTLY SERVED BY KEARNEY STATE.

The University of Nebraska will incur significant costs in delivering programs to greater Nebraska (ie., the "500-mile campus"). Merger of KSC into the system would allow for more economical delivery of those courses within the KSC service region and would remove some political heat from UN-L for a perceived lack of responsiveness to the needs of greater Nebraskans. (See discussion in A. for cities where Kearney State currently delivers courses).

It will be costly for U of N to compete with Kearney State in the areas where KSC is entrenched if a merger does not take place.

D. MERGER ALLOWS EASIER JUSTIFICATION OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS.

There has been criticism in certain political circles of perceived high costs of central administration. Economies of scale would provide for an illusion of greater economy, based on the addition of KSC's enrollment.

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

A. ADDITION OF KSC WOULD NOT DENIGRATE "QUALITY" OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SYSTEM.

The percentage of PH.D's on the KSC faculty has improved considerably in recent years. The figure is now more than 63%. Many departments (examples, chemistry and biology) are almost 100% PH.Ds.

Our honors program continues to draw outstanding students to Kearney State. Our average ACT scores of incoming freshman compares favorably to UN-O.

With the authorization of 50 new faculty positions by the legislature in 1986, faculty/student ratios have been reduced to less than 22-1.

B. TENURE AND TERMINATION OF FACULTY

There are no significant differences in policy between KSC and the U of N system.

C. TRANSFER OF CREDITS

The major difference is that KSC's credit transfer policies are applicable to the entire institution, while U of N's policy is on a college by college basis. If KSC becomes part of the U of N system, it is assumed that current articulation agreements would be subject to review.

D. ADMISSIONS POLICY

Kearney State has an identical admissions policy to UN-L and UN-O.

E. LIBRARY

KSC'S library budget has doubled since 1985. There is still a need for additional resources and for library automation.

F. FACULTY ORGANIZATION

Kearney State's faculty is currently organized for collective bargaining (NEA). It is unknown whether the faculty would reorganize if KSC joined the U of N system.

G. ROLE AND MISSION

Kearney State should be allowed to offer M.A., M.F.A., and M.S. degrees and would continue to pursue that authority. There is a need for those course offerings within KSC's region of service. No other expansion of current programs is anticipated.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATED TO INCORPORATION OF KSC INTO UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SYSTEM.

(i) Computer Hardware and Software

a. ADMINISTRATIVE

Funds have been appropriated and installation of hardware is continuing at KSC for administration. Additional resources are needed, but current equipment is compatible with U of N.

b. ACADEMIC

Plans for enhanced academic computing are currently being prepared by the state college system for consideration by the legislature during the 1989 session.

(ii) Budget

The state college board has requested a budget increase of 49% for KSC for the next biennium, based on the NCHEMS study. The request is the first half of a four-year plan to put KSC into the mid-point of the funding of its peer institutions.

Both Kearney State and UN-O rely heavily upon cash funds for their operations. The cash/general mix is approximately the same, but UN-O has more money per student because of its higher tuition and the commensurate increase in general funds over Kearney State.

Kearney is at a particular disadvantage for tuition remissions and scholarships, because the general fund support is insufficient to properly fund its academic and administrative programs.

(iii) Physical Plant

Faculty and classroom space is at a premium on the Kearney State campus. Improvements are expected with the current \$11 million construction project (Cushing) which is scheduled for completion in 1990. The proposed third-floor addition to Founders Hall is the first priority of the Board

of Trustees and should be approved during the 1989 session.

Other campus priorities include Copeland Hall renovation and renovation of the West Center Building. Repairs and maintenance of existing facilities have gone well, and the campus beautification project has been a great success.

(iv) Telecommunications

KSC has excellent studio facilities for telecommunications. Fiber optic cabling has been completed both north and south of Kearney.

(v) Benefits

There are no major differences regarding employee benefits at KSC and U of N. The state college board recently approved a proposal to request from the legislature authority to increase retirement from 6 to 7 percent of gross salary, which is the same as U of N. KSC does offer tuition benefits for dependents, an option not offered by U of N.

IV. CONCLUSION

Kearney State is an institution which is certainly comparable to UN-O in breadth and depth and quality of programming. We will never be in the business of offering doctoral programs and have no desire to do so. We do believe we have much to offer the University of Nebraska system and believe the state of Nebraska would benefit greatly if we were to become part of the University of Nebraska system.