



January 24, 1989

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Dear Tip:

I'd like to share a few thoughts about lobbying for LB 160, the bill to add KSC as part of the University system. You've no doubt thought of all these arguments, in which case you can just throw this away. But just in case any of these ideas are useful. . .

The main argument against this bill will no doubt come from Lincoln, and perhaps also from Omaha. They're afraid we'll draw money away from UNL and UNO. I think this argument can easily be made to look like what it is--- selfish and short-sighted. Lincoln senators, not satisfied with 80% (or whatever the figure is) of the state budget already being spent in Lincoln, seem to be objecting to even a small amount trickling beyond the western city limit.

Herb Schimek told me that the Board of Regents recently heard from a consultant from North Carolina who told them that consolidation of institutions within a state into a single statewide system has invariably resulted in increased funding for all schools within a system. (They come in with a single, unified voice.) If this can be substantiated with hard data, the opposition should effectively be laid to rest on this point.

But the real resistance will come in the form of study proposals, as Governor Orr has already demonstrated. I wish I knew where to get a copy of every study that's ever been done on coordination of higher education in Nebraska (along with the total amount spent). I'd plop them all down, one by one, on the table of the Education Committee hearing, citing all statements or conclusions that acknowledged the role or uniqueness of Kearney State College. We need to support Senator Warner's basic argument that it's already been studied to death, never with any action. The best time for action may have already passed in the early 1970's when the state system of community colleges was formed and Terry Carpenter proposed adding Kearney to the university system.

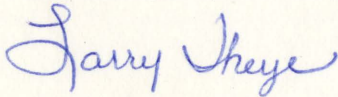
The argument that must carry the day is that this bill will benefit the state as a whole. When I try to take a broad, statewide perspective and envision the ideal university in Nebraska (given where we now stand), this proposal makes perfect sense. A single flagship campus and research center in Lincoln with a medical center in Omaha and separate branch campuses in the major metropolitan center and the major rural population center that focus primarily on teaching and service best addresses the state's needs. Research on urban problems would center in Omaha and research on rural economic development and

perhaps agriculture would center in Kearney. Lincoln would retain all current professional and doctoral programs. I'd think the UNL faculty would welcome a proposal that might draw some of the 24000 students away, reducing their teaching loads and giving them more opportunities to concentrate on research.

Kearney State already serves the entire state (show county-by-county enrollment maps) and functions as a university. (I'd be sure that all Omaha senators know how many Omaha-area students attend Kearney State.) This proposal simply acknowledges what we already have and offers the benefit of better statewide service, accessibility, planning, and coordination under a single board.

I'd be happy to help in this effort in any way I can.

Sincerely,



Larry Theye  
Business Department