

on the head. It's exactly the opposite direction, I think, we need to take to any sort of reasoned study of this issue. The first phase of any study that we ought to pursue is the question of where higher education is today in Nebraska, what are its strengths, what are its weaknesses, and likewise tie that into the state in general. Where is Nebraska going as a state, as a part of this nation, as a part of this world? Our higher education system is a function and a part of and a context of a much bigger issue that we have to understand, and I want to get to that point in one minute. But, if the higher education system is part of a much bigger concept and question we must address, then certainly the Kearney State issue is a very small piece of that much bigger puzzle, much bigger picture. And to take Kearney State and lift it out and look at it in isolation, without having the broader review first, is backwards, completely, and makes no sense, in my judgment, whatsoever. I know many of you feel perhaps that we need to specifically get on with the Kearney State question, and there was talk about delays, in 1992, and 1994, before we act, but we have had this system for a long time. Kearney State has been in existence a long time, and it will be there a long time. There is no rush to judgment that we need to pursue at this time. There is no crisis that we are facing at this time, unless it's self-generated among the 49 of us. Unless you decide that we are in a crisis, unless you decide that we are in a rush to act on this issue, I think we are not in that situation. You self-create that crisis, that pressure. I don't feel that pressure, and I think most of the state doesn't feel that pressure. I think what they understand is a concern that has been expressed and heard. For those of you supporting Kearney State being brought under the university system, we have heard you, we understand what you're saying. We want to deal with the issue, we want to look at the issue. But let's not isolate it, let's not bring it to the forefront, above and beyond all of the other considerations that we need to look at. Now what am I talking about in those other considerations? In my view, we had David Osborne up here talking about the new age of the economic future of our state and our nation, a new competitiveness around the world that we must understand. And that new competitiveness says it's based on intellect and research and brain power. And that is what we've got to develop in this state, further than we ever have in the past, an excellent education system. But is it adequate to meet the tests that we're facing in competition with other states and in competition with other nations? Because of the need for this vision, this idea, this concept of where our