

purpose. Can you imagine if we do this study without the obvious change of Kearney? And they're going to come into that study and they're going to say to Senator Withem, well, Senator, you know it's going to be one way. If Kearney is in the university which probably it looks like it should be, but we don't know that you're going to do that or not, here's what we do. But if Kearney isn't in the system, here's what we think the study ought to show and so the study is going to take off on two tracks. It's going to be a "what if" and a "what if not", and quite frankly, that will dilute the study that I think Senator Withem wants to have. Senator Withem also has gone a long way in really a bill that was designed to look at this entire state, to deal with the most obvious problem and put it in the long-term context that he has. What is the issue of this amendment that Senator Wesely wants to strike out? Well, the key issue is what is the nature of Kearney and the key issue is the governance of Kearney and at this point it is a university. Whether you call it that or not, it is acting as such and Nebraska, quite simply, doesn't need two competing systems. We don't need two systems going after the same programs and the same sorts of dollars and cents that we could have under one coordinated head and that would be central administration. This isn't an issue of hurting UN-L, not at all. In fact, I think you're going to find that UN-L and UN-O have a lot more in common with Kearney and actually they are all going to benefit in the long run as will the three remaining state colleges because they have a lot of things in common and it is through that commonality that they're going to benefit. Briefly, what are the facts? The facts are that Kearney has more than 9,000 students. There is 600 universities in this country that are smaller, 600. There are only five four-year colleges which are larger. Do you know that Kearney is bigger than Southern Methodist University? It's bigger than Rice University. Those are names you hear every day. We have 32 undergraduate programs, 19 graduate programs, but the most amazing statistic of all, in the last decade Kearney has grown 70 percent, 70 percent. And we all know that our high school enrollments are decreasing. During that same period of time when we have enrollments in high school decreasing, Kearney has grown 70 percent. We have students from every one of the counties in your districts, every one of them. It isn't the issue either today of tuition and whether it's good for Kearney and the allegation is that Kearney will regret the day they made this move and this attempt. The real issue here is how best to structure higher education.