

discussion on how this is going to impact the students in our universities, and in our state colleges, and in our community college system. Shouldn't we be talking more about that and you are 100 percent right, we should. I think that the students in our state, if this is adopted, will have an opportunity to attend institutions that have a greater degree of cohesiveness and that is of great benefit to the students. I don't know how many of you...there are two concerns that senators hear about the higher education system. One of those is the problem with the professors that are difficult to understand, which is a perpetual problem we probably won't deal with with this situation. But the other one is the ability for people to enter the UNO campus, start their program if they are Omaha residents, and end their program at Lincoln, and be able to transfer their credits; to begin a program at a community college, get a two-year associate degree, and move then into an articulated well-defined program at the four-year institution, whether that be Kearney, Wayne, Chadron, Peru, or Lincoln or UNO. I think the students of the state will benefit greatly if there is a greater degree of competence and coordination. I think the students of the state will benefit a great deal if we have...if we end the unnecessary duplication and we can spend our dollars in a manner in which we can provide the best possible education system for the least possible price, that we have somebody refereeing the turf fights that go on about should UNO be the one to offer a program or should UNL be the ones to offer a program; should Kearney be allowed to do things or shouldn't Kearney be allowed to do things? I think the students suffer when so much of our energy in higher education, our creative thought, appears to be to me, as somebody that referees some of these turf fights, so much of our energy is spent. I think our students will be better off if we have a system in the state that can really articulate how well these learning centers, what should these learning centers be and what should they be doing? I think they will be stronger institutions, better institutions, if we have a coordinating commission that can take the time and have the ability...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...to make a decision on how these institutions should be operating. Because we, as a Legislature, I don't think we have the ability to make those decisions. I know Senator Weihing brought us a proposal. I know Senator Nelson is very interested and concerned, and Senator Peterson and Senator