

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Okay, because as I...and I look on page 31 and perhaps Senator Wehrbein can help me but I...as I look at the university budget, in particular, just on page 31, we're actually showing a percentage decrease in the amount of aid sent over in the '96 fiscal year; '97, we have a small increase in the amount of aid but I assume it's operations that you're most concerned about and that that's less than a 6 percent increase coming in there. So I just want to make sure I got the record straightened out about what those percentages were of the increase. And then I guess a policy question is, if we're going to start making those cuts, I mean, that's...I suppose that's fine but, philosophically, who do you start with and why wouldn't you start with the larger General Fund users first? Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute. Thank you, Senator Kristensen. Senator Wehrbein, on the Avery amendment.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Madam Speaker and members, I'm going to rise to oppose this and understand Senator Avery's good intentions. The committee thought education was an investment, basically. The actual figures, by the way, for the universities and colleges is about 5.9 one year and 5.7 the other, which is about in line with their increase in the overall budget. There are...there are many areas here that we have had some expansions. Part of it has to do...part of it, I say, recognize part of it has to do with the increase in UNO Engineering College that we've added some faculty, that we've made an attempt to...faculty at all three institutions. We've added some additional faculty at UNO for the engineering. We've added some support to that issue, that's about 1.8 million there. We...after we went through the budget, we felt that it was appropriate to do this. Now I can accept that there's a difference of opinion. Actually, I don't think if you're going to make a cut, the right way to do it is to make it across the board. I...it probably ought to be more selective if that was to be done. But with the...there's also an effort to try to hold the tuition increases down. There was a significant increase taken last year. We can't control what the Board of Regents will do in terms of a tuition increase, but certainly adequate General Fund support will restrict or at least deter a major increase in tuition, if at all, which would be certainly helpful and hopeful. So we just felt that this was a responsible way to approach the university's budget, and I