

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, I rise in opposition to the Hall amendment. Senator Hall, I think, is rarely wrong, but I do think he is in this case in trying to propose that \$100,000 be diverted over to a dean for the Engineering College. As Senator Wehrbein and Senator Warner have talked about, the President of the university has charted a course. The Appropriations Committee has supported that effort. We're heading in a direction that will positively address the concerns that were expressed by the Omaha business community. We have an orderly, systematic approach that makes sense and we ought to give it time to work. To jump ahead and to talk about a dean and to try and force the issue, I understand why it's being offered, I understand the pressures that are there, but, in my view, the more logical approach, the more reasonable approach is to give some time to this effort, I would say, in the range of a year to two years, and should we fail to adequately address the concerns of the Omaha business community then, obviously, we are in a different position and a different course of action would be in order. I want to emphasize when this issue came up last year I and other Lincoln senators talked to the Omaha senators and we did support efforts to increase funding to engineering programs. Some money was found at that time that President Smith did find some money and put it into engineering. I think clearly we care about engineering programs and want to see them enhanced, but in engineering programs the answer is yes, engineering college, the answer is no. And the reason is exactly why...what we're seeing with this amendment. An Engineering College doesn't, I think truly, accomplish what we want to see done in terms of programs and services. That can be done without a college. What it does add is additional administrative costs, an additional dean and the expenses involved and that's what we're being asked to fund here, another \$100,000 for a dean. Is that what we really need? No, I think what we really need are more professors and more programs, more...more actual people out there, hands on, providing the sort of education that we need for our students and for those that need additional training. That's what we need, not more administration. So this amendment highlights exactly why we shouldn't have the effort to establish a college succeed. What we should have succeed is an effort to address the programs and needs of services in Omaha. Besides the 1.8 million additional funding for programs that's in the budget already, as Senator Wehrbein said, there's capital construction to look at a 25 million dollar additional new building for engineering and