

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dave Kerr at 1:30 a.m. on January 25, 1995 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
Brenda Dunlap, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Mr. Gene Bicknell, Kansas Board of Regents

Others attending: See attached list

Bill introductions were made by the following:

Senator Barbara Lawrence -- Proposed a bill to change the name of Wichita Area VoTech to Wichita Area Technical College. A motion was made by Senator Langworthy to introduce the bill, Senator Emert seconded the motion, and the motion carried. She also proposed a bill to change the name of Flint Hills Technical School to Flint Hills Technical College. A motion was made by Senator Langworthy to introduce the bill, Senator Jones seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Senator Ben Vidricksen -- Proposed a bill to change the determination of low enrollment weighting. A motion was made by Senator Lawrence to introduce the bill, Senator Corbin seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Gene Bicknell, Kansas Board of Regents, presented confirmation testimony as to his qualifications to be renominated to the Kansas Board of Regents. He earned an undergraduate degree and an M.B.A. at Pittsburg State University; has been an instructor and lecturer at a number of universities; was an instructor for the United States Army; has been a member and President of the U.S.D. 250 Board of Education; and has been Chief Executive Officer of several companies for thirty-three years. (See Attachment 1)

Senator Lawrence asked Mr. Bicknell about his close association with Pittsburg State University, and considering this close association, if he could treat all regent schools the same. He assured her that he had taught and lectured at a number of Kansas schools, and that his children had gone to several Kansas schools, so he could be impartial.

Senator Emert asked for Mr. Bicknell's opinion as a businessman of the efficiency of the regents system. Mr. Bicknell responded that we are fortunate to have such fine universities, and that the regents are doing a good job of educating our young people. However, he feels we need to raise the standards through all levels of education. In addition, we need to observe and analyze all the schools offering the same programs and degrees, compare service needs and perhaps cut some of the duplicate programs. Emporia State University is premier in its Education and Library Science Degree programs, and other schools could likewise concentrate in specific degree areas.

Senator Jones asked Mr. Bicknell his opinion of qualified admissions. Mr. Bicknell responded that we need to recognize we are in global competition for education. We must expect more from our students if we expect to be globally competitive. He does not want across the board qualified admissions, possibly the top two or three schools. Optimally, he would like all of the universities to work together to decide who would take qualified admissions.

Senator Langworthy asked if it was a coincidence that Mr. Bicknell was appointed to the Board of Regents three days after the endorsement of a democratic gubernatorial candidate, James Slattery, or a political payoff, which would be an injustice to the Board of Regents. Mr. Bicknell responded first that he is not for sale, and second that the background search conducted by the FBI had begun three months before his endorsement of

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION Room 123-S Statehouse, at 1:30 p.m. on January 25, 1995.

Mr. Slattery. He was approached by friends of his in Pittsburg, Kansas to see if he was interested in being appointed to the Board of Regents, and the friends spoke to Governor Finney about the possibility of his being appointed. He further stated he did not in any way seek a political payoff as his integrity would not allow that.

Senator Lawrence asked Mr. Bicknell if he had a special role in mind to advocate higher education and if he considered himself someone who was more of a generalist or a specialist. Mr. Bicknell replied that the Regents need to work more closely with the legislature regarding money requests, and they need to be more proactive in communication. He stated further that he considers himself more of a generalist because he wants to work on the "whole picture of education, to take care of the needs of total education." He plans to be as informed as he can be, to watch dollars and spend wisely and conservatively, to emphasize technical training at votech schools versus degree programs at universities. He feels our schools are being run on a cost-effective basis, but improvements can always be considered.

Senator Lanworthy asked Mr. Bicknell if he felt he had made a mistake in endorsing Slattery. He responded that it was hard to support a person who attacked his character and made inaccurate statements about his business', but he does want what is best for Kansas. He wants to work for the betterment of Kansas, so now he wants to make up, and move on with his life.

Senator Hensley asked Mr. Bicknell if he felt Washburn University would be brought into the Regent system. Mr. Bicknell replied that Washburn would inevitably be brought into the Regent system after an extended period of time.

Senator Jones made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19 and January 23, 1995 meeting. Senator Corbin seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 1995.

# SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 1-25-95

NAME	REPRESENTING
Ken Bahr	4th Enrollment USD's
Merle Hise	KACC
David G. Monical	Washburn
Jim Edwards	KCCI
Karen Coulter	Senator Janis Lee
Hershel Poon	Cit
Jill CRUMPACKER	GOVERNOR'S OFFICE LEGISLATIVE LIASON
TIM CARPENTER	LAWRENCE J. W.
John Welsh	Regents
TED D. AYLES	REGENTS STAFF
Stephen Jordan	Regents STAFF
Mary Bicknell	REGENTS HEARING
Pita Bicknell	
Bill Hollanbeck	PSU

**Confirmation Testimony**

**Gene Bicknell  
Kansas Board of Regents**

to

**Senate Education Committee  
January 25, 1995**

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today seeking your recommendation to my appointment as a member of the Kansas Board of Regents. I want to spend a few minutes reviewing my qualifications for this position and commenting on the challenges confronting the Board of Regents and the entirety of Kansas higher education.

My commitment to Kansas is well-documented. Although I have been encouraged to move them elsewhere, I have kept my businesses here because I believe in the people, culture and traditions of this great state. I have reared my five children in Kansas and chose to do so because of the quality of life and educational opportunities available in this state. I have maintained a commitment to Kansas education throughout my career, both in teaching and self-improvement. In my opinion, I have contributed much, as a citizen, to our Regents universities.

I believe that I can bring a number of important qualifications to the Kansas Board of Regents. I earned an undergraduate degree and an M.B.A. at Pittsburg State University. I have been an instructor and lecturer at a number of universities. I was also an instructor

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Attachment 1*

for the United States Army and received a commendation for my teaching. I have also been a member and President of the U.S.D. 250 Board of Education. Finally, I have thirty-three years experience as the Chief Executive Officer of several companies. I am a major employer in Kansas and I hire graduates of our Regents universities.

Kansans are fortunate to have a high quality system of Regents universities. We have dedicated administrators, classroom teachers, classified and unclassified employees. We must do better, however. We are in a truly challenging era of education. We must concentrate on accountability, productivity, creativity and innovation, while meeting the challenges of a truly global and competitive world.

We must continue to review and refine the mission of each of the Regents universities. We must continue to look at the cost of education and the efficiencies we can promote. We must continue to minimize the program duplication and remedial education that exists within the Regents system. Qualified Admissions, for at least some of our Universities, must be considered. The infrastructure of our campuses must be protected by maintenance and upkeep. Our research and instructional equipment needs to be as current as possible in a world of changing technology.

I have participated in four Board meetings, visited all of the campuses, studied our system, and am prepared to make a total commitment to the Board. I am looking forward to working with members of the Board, the universities, the Governor, and the Kansas Legislature to support and improve our state system of higher education. Thank you for your consideration. I am eager to address your questions.