



Lieuallen

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The problems facing higher education are similar also. In 1961 Lieuallen inherited a furious word battle over program planning between members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee and the former chancellor. Now, he finds himself in a similar spat with legislators. Lieuallen and the state board have been criticized for not dealing realistically with budget cuts, program reductions and unnecessary program duplication in the system.

"I'm tempted to believe that there may be some kind of structural reason why this sort of reaction occurs near the end of the tenure of a chancellor," Lieuallen says. "In 1961 it was line-item budgeting. In 1981-82 it is inadequate long-range planning and inadequate program reduction." Some legislators are trying to excuse their lack of fiscal commitment to higher education by criticizing the system, he adds.

Part of higher education's problems with the Legislature may be Lieuallen's style, some critics say. University Pres. Paul Olum criticized Lieuallen recently for not only the way he has handled program cuts, but also for his lobbying style.

"Lew, by his own choice, hasn't been a person to organize a strong lobbying effort," Olum says. Politically, Lieuallen has been defensive, rather than aggressive, Olum adds, cautioning that his contact with Lieuallen has come only during six years of budget problems.

Most of the criticisms of Lieuallen's lobbying style are just "personal judgments," Lemman says. "We need to tell our story better and more often. But if you can buy a vote with dinner, we're in deep trouble as a society."

Lieuallen says he'd rather not talk about his lobbying style. "I really don't want to comment on that. I don't perceive it that way, but some others do. It's an area that, at this juncture, wouldn't do me or them any good for me to debate it."

Olum praises Lieuallen for keeping institutions strong within the system. Unlike chancellors in other state systems, "He hasn't tried to run us," Olum says.

"I don't believe the chancellor should be a

dominant figure," Lieuallen says, adding that a chancellor is primarily an administrator and politician. "I don't think a chancellor succeeds or fails by telling the institution presidents what they ought to do in their academic programs. I'm not saying it wouldn't be appropriate for a chancellor to provide input, but the most important scholarly leadership will come from within the institutions. It has to.

"When the chancellor begins to compete with the presidents for that leadership, you begin to build internal dissensions that are destructive. We pay

'The chancellor is a symbol as much as a person'

presidents a reasonably good salary, and we expect that kind of leadership from them. It's simply a practical consideration. Presidents are closer to the action."

Lemman agrees. "There's a difference between anarchy and a confederation of institutions which are pushed, monitored and cajoled instead of being told what to do. Ultimately the control is there and exercised, but the technique is to keep a loose, rather than tight, reign on people. Our strength lies in the system concept."

Lieuallen says one of his strengths has been his knack for getting people to work together. "Having good ideas isn't really a great virtue unless you can implement them."

Lieuallen has been able to get people to work together because "he works hard at it," Lemman says. "He consults widely and often, listens well and attempts to reach a consensus. He is a person who

takes issues very seriously, but not himself.

"Lew delegates authority very well, and expects people to take risks. He's tolerant of mistakes and people's shortcomings; he realizes that no one can do it alone."

Both Lemman and Olum describe Lieuallen with similar words: warm, friendly, has a sense of humor, cares deeply about higher education.

"He really does want what is best for the system," Olum says, adding that Lieuallen always has been candid with him, even when they've disagreed.

Having a thick skin is part of the job description, Lieuallen says.

"I've told myself that the chancellor is a symbol as much as a person. I'm not always successful, but I try to persuade myself that a certain amount of criticism is part of the job description and is inevitable. If I don't want to be the person most closely related to the symbol then I ought to get out.

"Criticism is not fun, but I don't let it ruin my life."

Lieuallen's long stay in the job is a testament to his ability to distinguish between personal criticism and criticism that comes no matter who is chancellor, Lemman says.

But Lieuallen has gotten more than his share of criticism during these tough economic times, Lemman says. "Had he left five years ago or five years from now the attitude about him would have been different. It's easy for any lame duck to be a scapegoat.

"It's tragic that after what — by any objective standards — is a brilliant career in higher education that it ends on this note. He's being blamed for things that are not of his making. Some people are transferring their own shortcomings to Lew.

"I obviously have a high regard for him, both professionally and personally," Lemman pauses, his voice softens.

"I'll miss him a lot."

Stories by Sally Hodgkinson
Photos by Bob Baker

Lieuallen rebuts higher ed critics

The state system is not overbuilt, is not overburdened with program duplication and does not have inadequate long-range program planning, Chancellor Roy Lieuallen says, in response to recent criticism from legislators.

"People argue that Oregon is overbuilt in higher ed, and I agree," he says. "But in the last two decades, it has been overbuilt in the community colleges, not in the state department of higher ed. We have the same institutions we had in 1946." Thirteen community colleges have been built within the last 20 years, he adds.

When Lieuallen is asked how much duplication exists in the State System of Higher Education, he bristles. "There is quite a bit of duplication. We have a program in physics at Oregon State, a program in physics at Portland State, a

program in physics at the University of Oregon and a program in physics at Southern Oregon State College. That's duplication. There's no way I can argue against that.

"But that's not the question. The right question is: Do you have unnecessary, expensive and undesirable duplication? I say we have very little or none at all."

In 1909 the State Board of Higher Curriculum was established to regulate and coordinate programs for the University and Oregon State University, the only two higher education institutions within the state at that time. The curriculum board was replaced in 1929 by the State Board of Higher Education, also entrusted with avoiding unnecessary and expensive program duplication, Lieuallen says.

A recent study by the state system on

program duplication shows that, when matched against comparable systems, Oregon institutions have very little duplication.

Lieuallen and the state board also have been criticized by institution presidents for making across-the-board budget cuts to schools instead of cutting low-quality programs.

"You have to judge quality on what the objectives of the institution are. You don't judge quality on whether you have seven National Academy of Science winners in one institution and none in the other. Eastern Oregon State College is not an institution designed to attract and support National Academy award winners.

"Some people say Oregon State University is a better institution than Eastern Oregon, and, since we're cut-

ting, what you ought to do is cut out Eastern Oregon State and preserve OSU. Well, that's a pretty hard decision to make in terms of the citizens who live east of the Cascades."

The board cannot close institutions because they are established by statute. "When you hear legislators say, 'Why doesn't the board close a school,' that's rhetoric. Only the Legislature can close an institution."

Lieuallen says he and the state board are trying to preserve as many programs as possible — even if quality suffers in the short run — to prepare for the population growth of the 1990s.

"No one argues whether the recession will go away. The argument is when it will start going away. We should not eliminate programs and institutions that might take decades to re-establish."