



**University of Nebraska Board of Regents Original Candidate Q&A  
From Candidates Bob Whitehouse, Larry Bradley and Ann Ferlic Ashford**

*(Hal Daub did not submit a response to our request)*

**District 4: Bob Whitehouse (R)**

**Rising tuition is a major concern for students preparing to attend Nebraska institutes of higher education. How do you propose to keep tuition rates low while at the same time offering top quality education in the state?**

While serving on the Board of Regents my greatest concern has been keeping tuition affordable for the students from my district and the students of Nebraska. At the University of Nebraska, we have kept increases in tuition predictable, while making recruiting top-tier faculty for our academic programs. During my time on the Board of Regents, we have combated increased costs by launching new programs for students needing financial aid. Programs like Collegebound Nebraska offer families the opportunity to receive their undergraduate degrees tuition free. It is important to note when tuition rates increase, our commitments to need-based financial aid increase by, at minimum, an equal percentage. A comprehensive approach must be taken to control costs, reduce the burden on our students, and continue providing the best possible education for our students.

**Recently, the University of Nebraska joined its fellow Big Ten institutions in offering Employee+1 benefits in order to remain a competitive employer. Do you agree with this change to Nebraska's benefits program? If not, would you attempt to repeal it if elected?**

I voted in support of the employee plus one benefits addition to our employee benefits package. After many meetings with the President of the University, our campus Chancellors, and other administrative staff, it became clear to me the University of Nebraska would continue to be uncompetitive if we did not adopt the plus one benefits package. In my opinion, adopting the benefits for our faculty was the right thing to do and was a big step forward for our University system.

**Passed in 2006, the Dream Act allows undocumented students living in Nebraska to receive in-state tuition at public colleges and university in Nebraska if they meet certain requirements. Are you supportive of the Dream Act? Please explain your answer.**

I support the Dream Act as the Nebraska legislature has passed it. It has always been my belief we should make education as accessible as possible for Nebraska students. More often than not, the students impacted by the Dream Act did not have a say in the decisions their parents made to come to our country, and they should not be penalized for decisions they were not able to make

themselves. Furthermore, these students can make a great impact on our state and our economy in the future if we allow them the opportunity to receive a quality education at an affordable level.

**What is your stance on bringing the stem cell policy for vote? If the Board of Regents does revisit the issue, where do you stand?**

If members of the Board of Regents feel strongly enough to revisit the stem cell issue in the next term, I believe it is their right to do so. However, I have remained steadfast in my support of stem cell research on our campuses. I do not believe the Board of Regents should impose special sanctions on the research performed on our campuses, especially when the sanctions would put the University of Nebraska at a competitive disadvantage compared to other institutions.

**What do you feel is the most pressing issue facing the Board of Regents?**

It is difficult to pinpoint one issue that is most important, but if I had to choose one, it would be this: the University of Nebraska must continue being an economic engine for our state. The University of Nebraska should be focused on educating students from Nebraska and around the nation, retaining them in Nebraska, and providing them the resources and knowledge to drive job creation. The research at our University should focus on areas that will directly impact the economy of Nebraska: fuel, food, and water. The research should be disseminated to Nebraska citizens so they can utilize the findings to create new jobs. If the University of Nebraska is performing in this manner, every Nebraska resident will be impacted by University. I ask for your support so we can achieve this goal.

## **District 4: Larry Bradley (D)**

**Rising tuition is a major concern for students preparing to attend Nebraska institutes of higher education. How do you propose to keep tuition rates low while at the same time offering top quality education in the state?**

In my view, a big reason why college tuition is on the rise in Nebraska, is that the current Regents have neglected to be vocal to the Governor and demand more tax dollars be allocated towards UNL, UNO, UNK, and UNMC. The Governor and the State Legislature needs to be held accountable for deflecting tax increases to the University system, so it in turn has to raise tuition. One way to keep offering top quality education is to work with the State Legislature and create laws that make it easier for other campuses, besides UNO, to unionize their respective faculty. Also, for UNO, we need to quit relying on an immense amount of part-time faculty and make sure that particular campus is treated fairly with funding and fill departmental faculty lines with quality professors.

**Recently, the University of Nebraska joined its fellow Big Ten institutions in offering Employee+1 benefits in order to remain a competitive employer. Do you agree with this change to Nebraska's benefits program? If not, would you attempt to repeal it if elected?**

When UNL joined the Big Ten, I predicted this move would be the biggest thing to happen to Nebraska Democrats in a long time. We will see a "bluing" of the state over time. Because I hold a Ph.D. in Geography from UNL, my thinking is thus. Before, UNL had a North/South axis of conservative ideals of higher learning in academia with the Big 6, Big 8, and Big 12. Now, that axis has shifted to an East/West direction of a more liberal line of critical thinking. Not one Regent proposed Employee+1, the President of the University had too, because every other Big Ten school was doing it. Furthermore, UNL now has to report numbers on rape victims on and off campus so as the public gets a more true form of data. Yes. I agree with Employee+1.

**Passed in 2006, the Dream Act allows undocumented students living in Nebraska to receive in-state tuition at public colleges and university in Nebraska if they meet certain requirements. Are you supportive of the Dream Act? Please explain your answer.**

For the past five years, I have been the Commander of the American G I Forum-Omaha Chapter. This organization has been actively advocating for the civil rights of Mexican-American and other Latino veterans for over a half century. I remember testifying on behalf of the Dream Act when it was a hot topic in the Nebraska State Legislature. I did not see any of the current Regents at those committee hearings when there was vocal opposition. Furthermore, I did not see any of the current Regents making noise when the anti-affirmative action petition circulated a few years back. Yes. I support the Dream Act.

**What is your stance on bringing the stem cell policy for vote? If the Board of Regents does revisit the issue, where do you stand?**

Since I have a B.S. in Biology, and a M.A. in Biology from UNO, and a Ph.D. in Geography in Geography from UNL, I may very well be the most qualified Regent candidate in the whole state, to critically decipher the ethical, historical, and scientific ramifications of embryonic stem cell research.

**What do you feel is the most pressing issue facing the Board of Regents?**

Ethics! If I am elected to the Board of Regents I will restore ethics. As I have been campaigning hard in the gerrymandered District 4, people from all sides of the political spectrum have said the way in which a 100 year old football program and a perennial national champion wrestling program was cut by UNO, was the most despicable act to occur in this state in a long time. That horrendous decision emitted such collateral damage. When many parents, coaches, counselors, court systems, teachers, and elected officials, do their utmost to combat the social ills of alcoholism, drug use, gangs, guns, poverty, and violence within District 4, and try their best to nurture youth and high school sports as big pieces to the puzzle to keep young people on the right path, UNO officials and the Board of Regents make a move that completely undermined what was in the best interest of the community. The manner of which that decision was made reeks with impropriety.

## **District 8: Ann Ferlic Ashford (R)**

**Rising tuition is a major concern for students preparing to attend Nebraska institutes of higher education. How do you propose to keep tuition rates low while at the same time offering top quality education in the state?**

During the last budget process, we should have put in place a one year freeze on tuition. I will advocate for that freeze the first year I am Regent. During the 2009-2010 budget cycle, though the Legislature cut \$1 billion from the State government budget, the University system was not proportionately affected. We need to require the University system to find waste, eliminate duplication and control and monitor the expenditure of our tax dollars and our student tuition. We need to ensure that our students are getting the best value for the tuition dollars they are investing. The University should not place artificial obstacles in the way of students wishing to graduate on time. This past spring, I met with a young woman who is planning to go to medical school. This has been her plan since high school and she made all her advisors aware of that plan. When it came time for her to take the MCATs (required for admission into medical school), she was unable to do so because her advisors had neglected to tell her of a required science course that must be completed prior to the MCATs. That should never happen. As a result, she is looking at a minimum of an extra semester in undergraduate studies. This is valuable time and money that will be expended. Once our students graduate on a timely basis, they must be able to find employment for which they are qualified. The University system must establish partnerships with business to determine the needs of those businesses going into the future and design the curricula and educational requirements that will meet those needs. In the over 20 years I spent as a senior executive in Human Resources, I never once had an educational institution come to me to determine what our future needs would be. That has to change and the University system needs to take the first step in that outreach.

**Recently, the University of Nebraska joined its fellow Big Ten institutions in offering Employee+1 benefits in order to remain a competitive employer. Do you agree with this change to Nebraska's benefits program? If not, would you attempt to repeal it if elected?**

I agree with the Employee+1 benefits change. Under the current benefit structure, I would not attempt to repeal this and I would vote against a repeal should an attempt be made.

**Passed in 2006, the Dream Act allows undocumented students living in Nebraska to receive in-state tuition at public colleges and university in Nebraska if they meet certain requirements. Are you supportive of the Dream Act? Please explain your answer.**

I support the Dream Act. This is not only an ethical decision but a fiscally sound one as well. After all the resources we spend on educating our students in primary and secondary schools, we want them to study in Nebraska and remain in Nebraska to become productive and tax paying individuals, adding exponentially to our State's financial well being.

**What is your stance on bringing the stem cell policy for vote? If the Board of Regents does revisit the issue, where do you stand?**

I am against bringing stem cell research back for a vote. If the Board of Regents does revisit the issue, I support both adult and embryonic stem cell research. The Legislature passed our current State law and this effort, which was led by State Senators Brad Ashford and Steve Lathrop, should stay in effect.

**What do you feel is the most pressing issue facing the Board of Regents?**

The most pressing issue facing the Board of Regents is the rising cost of education facing our students. This issue is impacted by so many factors, including brick and mortar, degrees that are no longer applicable for employment, transparency about all resources of the University including foundations, the ratio of administrative to educational staff, additional fees and room and board expenses, and the reduction in financing from the State and Federal governments. We must break out of the traditional molds of higher education and turn ourselves into flexible organizations that can address our students' needs on a global basis in a more cost effective manner.