

STATE AND LOCAL

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Have you ever thought of giving up snuff?"

Tuition

Lamar University President calls for substantial increase

AUSTIN — State university students should pay "more realistic and substantially higher tuition" and fees, the chairman of the Council of University Presidents told House budget writers Tuesday.

C. Robert Kemble, who also is chancellor of Lamar University, was the opening witness as the House Appropriations Committee began looking at higher education — a prime target of the state's austerity program.

Kemble said college presidents are "painfully cognizant" of the money problems. But he asked committee members to look at higher education as "not a drain, but an economic asset."

Kemble offered no specifics on tuition hikes beyond his call for "more realistic and substantially higher tuition."

Texas state college tuition is among the lowest in the nation at \$4 per hour, and Kemble said fees paid

by students should be increased "50 percent or so."

The 26 percent cut proposed by the Legislative Budget Board comes while other states, escaping several years of recession, are increasing college funds an average of 16 percent, he said.

"Higher education is being asked to bear a disproportionate share of the burden," Kemble said of the Legislature's effort to close a \$1 billion spending gap.

Speaker Gib Lewis said Tuesday he hopes the colleges end 'up with no more than a 10 percent cut.

He said tuition hikes would be the best way to find money for the universities, but he added, "That's going to be a little bit of money, not a great deal."

Amid talk of combining or closing some campuses, the university presidents also called on lawmakers to avoid consolidation of state colleges.

"That is exactly the wrong way to go," said Kemble.

Hearing announced on nuke waste dump

WASHINGTON — The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will hold a hearing Feb. 11 in Hereford on potential location of a nuclear waste dump in Deaf Smith County, U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen said Tuesday.

The site is one of three the Department of Energy is considering for the nation's first permanent nuclear waste dump. A final decision is not expected for five years.

DOE officials plan to hold hearings for public comment on Feb. 26

in Tulia and March 1 in Austin.

Bentsen, the ranking minority member on the Environment and Public Works Committee, said he opposes locating the dump in Texas and asked the committee to hold the field hearing, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Hereford High School Auditorium.

Bentsen said anyone wanting to submit written testimony or appear at the Feb. 11 hearing should write to Lee Fuller, Committee on Environment and Public Works, SD-410, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510.

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