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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 10, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: L. WILLIAM SEIDMAN *lws*  
SUBJECT: Letter from Woody Varner

A letter to you from Woody Varner, President of the University of Nebraska, is attached.

You should be aware that while I have discussed with Woody the concept of a Gerald R. Ford Center for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Nebraska, I have as yet made no personal commitment to be involved.

Attachment



Dr. Varner is in town today.



Central Administration  
Office of the  
President

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.

3835 Holdrege  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68583  
(402) 472-2111

December 29, 1976

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

Bill Seidman and I have been in conversation during the past few weeks about an idea which I think has a great deal of merit, and I hope very much we can persuade you of its merit. The plan is one which would permit you to establish a clear and positive identification with a major public university in an area where you have a natural affiliation, and to do so in the State of your birth. I am confident we can work out the arrangements so that this does not become an excessive burden on your time and, at the same time, would make a major contribution both to the University of Nebraska and to the larger world of public policy.

Here is my plan spelled out in a conceptual way. I am proposing that we establish at the University of Nebraska a Gerald R. Ford Center for the Study of Public Policy. This would be a program geared to post-baccalaureate study dealing with the many areas of public policy at the national level. I am proposing that you serve as titular head of this organization as long as you are physically able, with an appropriate stipend being provided and with the expectation that you would spend two or three days a month on site - more of course if your schedule would permit. I am further proposing that Bill Seidman be designated as the operating head of this Center, with perhaps three additional full-time positions created for major public figures to be identified with the operation.

This small central staff could be augmented by members of the faculty of the University - members drawn from the several disciplines which would have a contribution to make. Those easily emerging are faculty members from the departments of political science, agricultural economics, economics, business and public policy, and of course there would be others who would be very much interested in being identified with such a program.

I could see us bringing on to campus for one-year appointments people like Elliot Richardson, William Simon, Henry Kissinger, and others

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of this caliber - including, of course, members of the Democratic party so that this could have a bipartisan flavor. These people could come for short stays or for a full year stay - and some of course might want to make this a permanent place of residence.

We envision this program drawing about 20 highly selected graduate students from across the country to study at this Center for a year, with the degrees being earned in political science, economics, agricultural policy, or some other area of academic interest.

Again, it seems to me that this plan has a great deal of merit and some real possibilities. If this has any interest at all for you, I will be more than pleased to come to Washington to visit with you and Bill on a leisurely basis about the organization and implementation of this plan. It's a project which I would personally be pleased to include as a high priority undertaking for our major fund-raising efforts which I will lead during the next three or four years. I can see this getting started during the next few months and coming into full bloom within the 12 months ahead.

Again, I hope very much you will think positively about this possibility. We would be honored and pleased to have you here, and I am persuaded that you could make an extraordinarily strong contribution to public policy matters in this nation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,



D. B. Varner  
President

cc: Mr. L. William Seidman