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Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon

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Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon
East Campus Union
Noon Friday, Sept. 30, 2005
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

What a terrific day this is! First, we have the pleasure of recognizing those of you who are receiving fellowship awards, and that always is a treat. Second, we are so very pleased today to initiate the Darrell Nelson Excellence in Graduate Student Advising Award, named in honor of our recently retired Agricultural Research Division dean and director. Yes, this is a very good day!

My heartiest congratulations to each of the award recipients we recognize – and celebrate today. Your presence here is real recognition of the talent and promise we see in you. I hope you enjoy your special day.

We're so very pleased in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources to have those of you being recognized for fellowship awards learning and working with us in your academic departments. I hope you make the most of every opportunity available to you to work with our highly talented faculty while you are here studying. Over the last decade in agricultural research, IANR scientists are among some of the most-cited in the world.

Perhaps you're already aware of that, but if you are not, I want you to know the Institute for Scientific Information Essential Science Indicators Report, 1994-2004, which indexes nearly 9,000 journals and tracks how often articles are cited by other scientists, reviewed agricultural sciences articles published by 298 institutions worldwide. They found we rank 16th in the world.

Sixteenth. In the world.

The term "Sweet Sixteen" took on a whole new meaning for me the day I heard that news!

Topping the list is the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The number one university is Wageningen University in the Netherlands. We rank 10th among universities worldwide, and eighth among U.S. universities.

The top U.S. university cited is the University of California-Davis. We're moving in some tremendously good company here!

One of the things that I particularly like to note about this ranking is that not only does it reflect so well on the work of our faculty and on the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, it reflects extremely well on our entire state.

Virtually all the highest-ranked universities are located in states with populations far in excess of Nebraska's 1.7 million citizens. Yet our state has, over the years, made an especially strong commitment to public education. Our faculty, in turn, provide an excellent return on the dollars Nebraska taxpayers invest with us.

So while you are with us, I hope you take every opportunity to question, to explore, and to discuss issues from all angles. You have the opportunity to query some very fine minds on what guides the principles of science, science ethics, and why we do the work we do at this great land-grant university. We in the Institute are so pleased the awards you're recognized for today can help you further your opportunities. We're thankful to the people who made these awards available through their generous gifts to the university. They had the vision to make them possible, and we are most grateful for their belief in the value of our work in agriculture and natural resources, and their willingness to support that work down through the generations. I think when they made their gifts they did so with great optimism for what the awards might do to further your learning, and your eventual contributions to the world.

You already have accomplished much, as is demonstrated in your being recognized today. All of us in the Institute look forward with much eagerness to applauding your future successes, also, as you build your careers, contribute to the world body of knowledge, and advance your scientific fields.

You're embarked on an exciting road, and we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are delighted to be part of your journey.

Again, congratulations for being honored here today. Best wishes for all your future endeavors. Let's give all those being recognized today a hand.

(Lead applause)

Thank you.

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