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LEAD Presentation

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LEAD Presentation
November 4, 2005
East Campus Union
John C. Owens

NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

"Thank you" for inviting us to share with you some information about the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and what we are doing for Nebraska. As a stakeholder in Nebraska's land-grant university, you and every other Nebraskan have every right at any time to ask us what we've done for you and your neighbors lately. We welcome the question. There is so much excellent work being accomplished on this campus and throughout Nebraska that I am delighted each-time I have the opportunity to talk about it. The biggest problem I find is stopping - there's always so much more to say than there is time to say it in!

Several of my colleagues from the Institute are here to visit with you, too, today, after my formal presentation. We'll all be happy to answer any questions you might have and to listen to

your ideas and suggestions. But first we'd like to start with a video focusing on ways the Institute contributes to Nebraska's economy and quality of life through programs that meet needs identified by Nebraskans.

In 2003, IANR began a continuous process to update our strategic plan through the leadership of then-Associate Vice Chancellor Alan Baquet. Alan now is our agricultural economics Department Head, and Susan Fritz ~~is serving as the~~ ^{THE ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR} ~~is leading the~~ ^{IS LEADING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE ENTIRE INSTITUTE.} Dr. Fritz also serves as Associate Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; she is one very busy woman.

In more than 30 listening sessions ~~held~~ throughout Nebraska in 2003, we heard two consistent concerns. The first is economic development and community vitality. The second is water, both quantity and quality. Those two themes were echoed in December 2004 in four listening sessions held in various parts of Nebraska. Both are special focus areas in the Institute. As we research and educate in both areas, we build on

a body of knowledge Institute faculty have developed through the years. Our video presentation today highlights these two focus areas.

Certainly one of the ways we contribute to the economy of rural areas and of all of Nebraska is through work that adds value to Nebraska products. Internationally-recognized Institute work in beef muscle profiling is one example of tremendously good work adding value to Nebraska beef. We'll hear a little bit about that from Animal Scientist Chris Calkins and Sallie Atkins of the Nebraska Beef Council.

Video of Chris Calkins and Sallie Atkins

As I noted earlier, IANR researchers, teachers, and extension-educators have worked in rural economic development and community-vitality areas for years. Our research-based education is vital to Nebraskans.

Under former President Dennis Smith, the university system

“launched” the Rural Initiative several years ago to help meet the needs of rural areas. The Rural Initiative is “administered” through the Institute. It “works” across all four campuses to provide Nebraska needed expertise. It also works “closely” with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension. The Rural Initiative and Extension “worked collaboratively” on a project called Communities of the Future. Seven extension educators and a community development specialist worked full-time, “statewide”, as a team, to assist communities and regions in “building” capacity. They’ve documented “lessons learned” to inform future work by the university and its partners.

Here’s a bit about the Rural Initiative’s and Extension’s “ongoing” contributions to Nebraska:

*video combination from RI piece done for Regents,
Connie Francis talking about EDGE and young physical
therapy entrepreneur from North Platte*

Nancy Miller, an Associate Professor in Textiles, Clothing and Design, whose area of specialization is the business of merchandising, at the end of September reached the end of a three-year grant from the USDA Fund for Rural America. She worked collaboratively with Iowa State, the University of Minnesota, and Ohio State University on the project.

In the first phase of their research, scientists looked at small businesses in small communities to see how they network and collaborate to have more power in the marketplace. They studied 29 existing networks across the four states. They looked at how the networks started, what ties bind them together, what resources they share, and what enables them to trust each other to go forward in developing a formal organization.

Using information gained from studying existing networks, Professor Miller and an extension educator started a new network among independent apparel store owners in small Nebraska communities. Growing out of this work are projects that provide experience for textiles, clothing and design students. Students

work with the store owners to offer ideas on more effectively displaying merchandise for customers. They address case studies based on real challenges faced by small business owners.

Dr. Miller hopes to see future grants fund study on how small businesses develop network relationships that strengthen their market position and create competitive advantages. She says there is a lot of theory but not a lot of study on business networking, and we'd like to rectify that. The University of Nebraska and Iowa State University researchers will continue to lend support to the apparel store network, as well as three other new-networks created: an entrepreneurship club, a Hispanic business owners' network, and a "grow your own market farm network." Dr. Miller has received a National Science Foundation grant from the Innovations and Organizational Change Program to continue the work on starting new networks. The work, in connection with Iowa State University, started in October and will extend the research to 2008.

One thing we do know: It can be lonely being the only

person in your business in a town, and it's helpful to have someone with the same interests to talk to. These networks are set up so those participating aren't in competition with each other. They allow people to talk about business plans, merchandising strategy, and purchasing together to gain price breaks.

Response from 377 small business owners who were members of the original 29 networks studied suggested networking participants were greatly impacted by the networks and perceived several advantages. Business-wise, they gained access to technology and influenced favorable legislation. As owners, they had more self-assurance about their business capabilities, as Dr. Miller tells us.

Video of Nancy Miller, Diane Knobbe, student in merchandising study

We talk about community vitality throughout Nebraska.

Within the Institute we know the importance of community development and support, as well. We'd like to tell you a little bit today about two programs that help build community for our students on east campus and at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. These programs provide students with support and a sense of belonging, enhancing their chances of success in college.

Video of ACE and NCTA

Earlier I noted water is a focus area in our current Institute strategic plan. Water is absolutely vital to Nebraska. This state has aquifers below it that make it possible to irrigate 8.2 million acres of cropland. If poured over the surface of the state, the water in those aquifers would have a depth of 37.9 feet. Nearly 24,000 miles of rivers-and-streams add to Nebraska's bountiful natural resources. We use water for life – we cannot survive without it. We use water for business. We use water for

recreation. Nebraskans identified water as a top concern in listening sessions held in both 2003 and 2004, and we expect that concern to continue.

The Institute long has been involved in research, teaching and extension education related to water. Here are two of our current projects.

Video of Steve Melvin and Suat Imark

I said earlier that we always are exploring those factors that influence water. Certainly drought is one of them; the National Drought Mitigation Center based here looks at drought from a number of aspects, including climate and its affect on environment and agriculture. Our carbon sequestration project also looks at environmental effects of current practices, and how we might most ~~effectively~~ and ~~efficiently~~ use the resources available to us for enhancing agriculture and preserving our environment. Don Wilhite, Director of the National Drought

Mitigation Center, and agronomist Ken Cassman tell us more about that.

Video of Don Wilhite and Ken Cassman

There are, of course, many more wonderful examples of how the Institute is contributing to the success and well-being of Nebraskans. Time does not permit us to show more than a few examples – but we'd really like to do so!

Let me highlight just a few other items I think you'll find of interest.

Over the last decade, our Institute ^{faculty} ~~are~~ are some of the most-cited scientists in the world in agricultural research. The ISI Essential Sciences Indicators Report, 1994-2004, indexes nearly 9,000 journals and tracks how often articles are cited by other authors. Their report showed UNL ranks 16th in the world. *In the world.*

We rank 10th among universities worldwide, and eighth

among American universities.

ARS
The U.S. Department of Agriculture tops the list of those cited. The Number One university is Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The top American university cited is the University of California-Davis. Obviously we are in very good company here! And we are delighted. Delighted for this accolade to the quality of our scientists' work, and delighted for Nebraska. Virtually all of the highest-rated universities are located in states with huge populations, compared to Nebraska's 1.7 million people. Yet Nebraskans historically have supported their land-grant university, and our faculty, in return, have made especially good use of the dollars Nebraska taxpayers invest with us.

I'm absolutely delighted to report to you that after eight years of decline in enrollment in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, this year we saw an increase of 42 more students than last year enrolled in the college. In fact, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources led the UNL campus in increase in student numbers this year.

I'm also pleased to report that the College of Education and Human Sciences is up 25 students, and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis up 48. This is very good news for us, because we absolutely must see our student numbers rise. We offer a tremendous education that provides our graduates a wonderful springboard to rewarding careers.

(WILL INSERT ARD GRANTS AND CONTRACTS HERE IF AVAILABLE. OTHERWISE, WILL CONTINUE WITH NEXT PARAGRAPH.)

Our research and extension education [“]efforts[”] in the Institute help Nebraskans make decisions necessary to respond to a number of issues important in their lives, including Nebraska's current water situation, and knowledge gained here can help plan for the future.

The [“]new[”] College of Education and Human Sciences celebrated its second birthday this fall, and remains a one-of-a-kind college in Nebraska. No other higher education institution combines the fields contained here into a single college aimed at

improving people's lives.

I could go on and on – and some of you may feel I have! –
but I am going to stop now to ask my colleagues from the
Institute to join me here in the front of the room as we invite your
questions *and your connects.*

Thank you for your attention, for your interest in the
Institute, and for your support of our programs in the Nebraska
Legislature and the United States Congress.