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Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Retreat Luncheon

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Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Retreat Luncheon
Thursday, August 16, 2007
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

Thank you for inviting me to be here with you today – it is a real treat. I am a big supporter of the Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management program and have great expectations for it. In fact, I expect this program will grow and grow and grow, because I know from past experience what a program like this can do.

In my former life at New Mexico State University, I started what has now become their dynamic School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management. I'm told that there now are over 400 majors in this New Mexico program.

Our five-year goal for the UNL program, counting from 2006 when the Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management degree began here, is 250 students by fall of 2010. I understand that today, we are about at our projected enrollment of 50

students majoring in Hospitality, Restaurant, and Tourism Management at UNL.

I'm sure you all know our program here in Nebraska was strongly supported by industry leaders here in Nebraska who recognized the need for highly qualified employees in Nebraska's tourism and hospitality industries. We responded as Nebraska's land-grant university at work, helping our state meet its needs. That's always gratifying to see.

Also gratifying to me is that the Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management jointly offered by the College of Education and Human Sciences and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Such collaboration is especially important in a time of scarce resources and high expectations by stakeholders.

With eight options, six offered through the College of Education and Human Sciences, and two through the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, our students have a rich buffet of experiences and study areas to choose from to

strengthen their education and to prepare them for bright futures.

I'm very pleased today to have the opportunity to welcome two new faculty to the program, who will help us roll out new classes. It's also my pleasure to say just a bit about each.

First, Dr. Robin ^{DiPietro} DiPietro joins the Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management program as an Assistant Professor of lodging management. She comes to us from the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida, where she was serving as an Assistant Professor. I understand ^{DiPietro} Dr. DiPietro spent the spring semester 2006 as a Visiting Professor at the University of Aruba, teaching in the Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies. She is an alumna of the University of Nebraska with her B.S., M.B.A., and Ph.D. degrees earned on the Lincoln campus.

Lisa Pennisi is joining the Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management program as an Instructor in tourism marketing. She received a bachelor's degree in psychology from

the University of Central Florida, and a master's in environmental science from Miami University in Ohio. She is completing her doctorate at the University of Florida in tourism and natural resource recreation, and has 12 years experience in ecotourism/recreation and the natural resources education resource industry, including starting and managing a county nature center.

And, for some interesting similarities between these two new faculty, both grew up in Chicago, both are coming to us from the State of Florida, and both worked for Burger King. Does it get any better than that?

We welcome you both and are glad you're here with us as we grow our exciting program in Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management.

Thank you.