

2007

New Faculty Orientation Welcome

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New Faculty Orientation Welcome
8 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2007
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice
Chancellor, IANR
(With Chancellor Harvey Perlman and Sr. Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs Barbara Couture)

It is a true pleasure to join Chancellor Perlman and Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Couture in welcoming you to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

We're glad you're here, and I join my colleagues in wishing you much success and fulfillment in your work. Here at Nebraska you're part of a vibrant university with a tremendous heritage. Established as this state's land-grant university in 1869, and a member of the Association of American Universities since 1909, this university is vital to Nebraska. We're an economic engine for the state, we help educate Nebraska's future leaders, and we are committed to our land-grant mission to take the resources of Nebraska's university to our state's residents.

Being Nebraska's land-grant university is both an honor and a responsibility. You don't have to be around me long

before you know I am an enthusiastic supporter of the land-grant system. I'm also a great admirer of Senator Justin Smith Morrill, whose Morrill Act established land-grants, and of President Abraham Lincoln, who signed the act into law, bringing land-grant universities into being.

I often think how easy it would have been for these men, in the midst of the Civil War, to focus only on the events around them. How easy it would have been for them to be so mired in their bloody here-and-now that they could not see beyond the tremendous struggle to save the union.

Yet they were men of purpose. They had vision. They looked far beyond the battlefields of their day to consider what the country would need after the war was fought and won. What it would need to heal, to grow, to prosper. What it would need to outfit people with the tools to grow their lives and this country.

Before the Morrill Act, higher education was largely the privilege of the wealthy. Land-grant universities made

higher education available to those of much more modest means, beginning an educational revolution.

I said before that land-grant universities take the resources of the university to our state. We teach, we do research vital to the well-being of Nebraska and Nebraskans, and we extend the university's knowledge throughout Nebraska. One of the ways we do that in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is through extension, which I consider the best out-of-classroom teaching experience ever yet devised for delivering education to people in other than our traditional classroom settings.

While headquarters for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are on UNL's east campus, we work throughout the state. We have research and extension centers in Norfolk, Scottsbluff, North Platte and Lincoln, plus our Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead, and other research facilities throughout Nebraska. Our 83 extension offices serve all 93 Nebraska counties. The people who work in each of these settings also are your

colleagues, taking the resources of the university to Nebraskans, working with residents to meet Nebraskans' concerns through research and teaching, both on and off-campus. Nebraskans expect that of their land-grant university. They have every right to do so.

Collaboration between scientists is important on our campus – interdisciplinary work is vital to best meet the needs of our state. I'm pleased to tell you that when you work with scientists in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, you are working with some of the most-cited agricultural researchers in the world.

The ISI Essential Science Indicators Report for the 10-year period 1994-2004 indexed nearly 9,000 journals, tracking how often articles are cited by other authors. The report reviewed agricultural sciences articles published by 298 institutions worldwide – both government agencies and large universities – and found our scientists ranked 16th *in the world*. Incidentally, USDA tops the list, so you understand the competition.

Our agricultural researchers rank *eighth* among American universities. The top American university cited is the University of California-Davis. We're standing in good company here.

I think it important to note virtually all the highest U.S.-rated universities in that report are located in states with huge populations, compared to Nebraska's 1.7 million citizens. Our faculty make especially good use of the dollars Nebraska taxpayers invest in the Institute.

In fact, an independent study released this year found the Institute provides a conservative 15-to-1 return on all tax dollars Nebraskans invest with us. Fifteen to one. Conservatively. We are at work for Nebraska, in both an economic engine and a social responsibility role.

Whether or not your office is on East Campus, I hope you'll come visit us often. Our Maxwell Arboretum is a great place to relax, or think, or think and relax. The lilacs south of C.Y. Thompson Library are spectacular in the spring, and

the Jeanne Vierk Yeutter Garden is a colorful stroll from spring into fall.

We're the home of the Dairy Store, known for its ice cream, cheese and other food products – so well known, in fact, that we often give directions from there. You'll hear members of the IANR community say, "Do you know where the Dairy Store is? Great – you need to go east – or west, or north – from the Dairy Store..." to get someone to where they need to be. Incidentally, it's the Dairy Store's 90th anniversary this year.

Again, welcome to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This is a great place to grow. I know that to be true – after all, we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources know a great deal about growing!

Thank you for your attention this morning. Have a great day, and a great year. Thank you.

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