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ABN Morning Remarks

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SUSAN FREITZ
ALAN MOELLER
DAN DUNCAN

ABN Morning Remarks
Cornhusker Hotel
Morning Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

Folks, molecular-life-sciences are critical to the future of agriculture. Not just important – critical. It also is critical that IANR is well-positioned to incorporate the latest science and technology through its programs, faculty, and staff to create needed knowledge, TO prepare today's and tomorrow's professionals, and TO extend the knowledge necessary to keep Nebraska's agriculture and associated activities competitive. Not everyone agrees on, or in some cases understands, the best way to accomplish this, including the importance of maintaining the appropriate balance of faculty expertise necessary to address, in an integrated fashion, creation of new knowledge to meet tomorrow's problems while simultaneously solving the problems of today.

For years we've heard the debates over the value of basic, or fundamental science, versus applied science. One camp holds basic science is more important, while the other is just as vocal that applied science matters most. Let me share my thought right now – the argument is baseless. There cannot be an either/or, as in basic *or* applied science. There must be basic ***and*** applied science. Basic science builds the knowledge base needed by applied science to provide solutions and applications for today and tomorrow. Together, basic and applied science-based knowledge created and communicated through the tripart functions of teaching, research, and extension education keeps land-grant universities relevant. This is the most assured way your land-grant university can continue to be relevant and successful in our rapidly-changing world.

To make science really useful in the land-grant university model, which is how we approach it in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, this must be done as part of a seamless continuum that reaches from the most fundamental discoveries through applications. The discovery to application continuum

must be supported at all levels of biological complexity from cells to ecosystems, and extended through classroom-teaching and extension-education if it is to be complete.

Part of the continuum occurs in our classrooms, where we prepare students to earn a living and to lead a life as engaged-citizens, whether they earn a baccalaureate degree or a Ph.D. The curriculum must be adaptable to address all student objectives, in order to serve Nebraska's expanding and changing workforce. Certainly, because careers change, some of the most important things we teach – and *practice* – at the University today are adaptability, flexibility, relevance, and sustainability. Dean Waller will talk about the curriculum.

Part of the continuum occurs throughout our state through extension education, as Nebraskans gain the knowledge "necessary" to stay up-to-date and be positioned to make the best decisions in their lives, businesses, and families. Dean Dickey will discuss that further.

At UNL the creative synergy resulting from collaborations among scientists with expertise and interests along the continuum from basic to applied research is greater than it ever could be if the parts of the continuum were "segregated" in historic "academic silos." Segregation results in lost opportunities. It is important to keep all the parts together, just as it is important that IANR faculty continue to further relationships with others at UNL and within the university system and beyond who play a role in the life sciences.

Our continuum of science, which Dean Cunningham and Dean Kostelnik will talk about in a few minutes, is a best-practices-approach that addresses today as well as the future. Those universities that survive and thrive in the years to come will be those that recognize the importance of all parts of the continuum working seamlessly "together." It will be those universities that are relevant, adaptive, and responsive to constituents' needs, while also anticipating future needs through a seamless, integrated approach to knowledge and delivery in an environment of ever-growing complexity and change.

THE REPORT

We are talking about life sciences today, and you have in your hands the life sciences report recently prepared by Institute administrators in response to a request by Chancellor Perlman. Chancellor Perlman is bringing in a review team in concert with internal groups of faculty, and stakeholders, as consultants to conduct a focused review of life sciences curriculum and research in IANR. No other parts of IANR's total program, which of course includes more than the life sciences, will be addressed directly, nor will IANR's highly-valued statewide extension program be a focus of the review.

Certainly we in IANR are not the only ones who think it is important to keep the various "facets" of life sciences research and curriculum integrated and connected within discipline-based departments, rather than separating it into entities representing "the extremes" of basic versus applied activities. And, while most scientific agricultural programs at the other land-grant universities around the Nation have organized into discipline-based departments much like ours at UNL, we know ours is not the view held by all faculty and administrators at UNL.

More and more grantors, particularly USDA's competitive grants programs, are looking for projects appropriately integrated from basic-discovery to useful-application. These grant-funding opportunities call for research and teaching or research and extension-education combinations. That's the way the Federal money is flowing. That's what the world demands. The Institute has been and continues to be superbly situated to gain such funding for programs of value to Nebraska.

When land-grant universities were founded, they were founded to be relevant to the educational, then the research, then the extension-needs of their times. That has not changed. Land-grant universities have evolved since 1862 to remain relevant as society's needs change. Relevant and responsive is what we do.

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources came into being in the early 1970s because a coalition of activists insisted on it, concerned agriculture was not receiving enough attention from the university. The land-grant university model and philosophy portrayed by the structure and operation of your

Institute remains as applicable today as it was in the early 1970s. We certainly "thank" the early leaders of ABN, and Ag 40, for their "foresight" in the Institute's formation. We also "thank" today's current members for your continued support of the work of IANR, and your continual strong representation for Nebraska agriculture. It is important that you know your voices on behalf of agriculture and the Institute remain as vital today as they were 36 years ago. Thank you.

And now, Dean GARY Cunningham. WHO WILL BE FOLLOWED BY DEAN MARJORIE KOSTELNIK.

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DEAN STEVE WALLER — THE CURRICULUM

DEAN ELBERT DICKEY — EXTENSION EDUCATION