Winter 2002

Nebraska Blueprint – Winter 2002

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It’s a Small World
International exchange programs broaden students’ perspectives

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Meet the staff of the Blueprint Weekly and Nebraska Blueprint
The two student-run publications in the College of Engineering and Technology, the Nebraska Blueprint and the Blueprint Weekly, focus on news about students and the college.

The Blueprint Weekly, the newsletter, focuses on college events and career opportunities, while the Nebraska Blueprint highlights students and their research.
From the Editor

Here it is, another edition of the Nebraska Blueprint. Everyone on staff insists each semester is busier than the last. We all had our work cut out for us last semester, but somehow we pulled it together. This issue was scheduled to come out in the fall, but budget constraints forced us to delay its release. I would like to thank the college’s administration for helping us resolve that. Thanks also go to our staff for working so hard, even as we were being buried by coursework and final exams.

As you may know, the Nebraska Blueprint has been attached to the back of Contacts magazine for the past several years. We have decided to break away from this in the hope of developing a stronger magazine for students in the College of Engineering and Technology. We also hope to increase the scope of our coverage within the college. A new plan has been implemented to include advertising or to have a sponsor of each edition to help cover the costs of production and printing. We also are selling subscriptions to alumni and friends of the College.

This issue has been underwritten by the College Relations Office and focuses on student programs and groups. In the pages that follow, you will find a showcase of some things in which the student members of various groups and programs are participating. Also featured is a compilation of two stories that ran in the Blueprint Weekly concerning the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The tragedy deeply affected many of our students and they spoke freely in the articles. May God bless our country and comfort the hearts of those affected by this atrocity.

On a lighter note, the Nebraska Blueprint is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. In our Fall issue you can look forward to historical excerpts from past issues of Nebraska Blueprint as well as a look at the next 100 years. In this endeavor, we hope to collaborate with past editors and staff members for a first-hand look at the history of the magazine and its evolution.

And feel free to send your comments and suggestions to the address provided on Page two of this issue. Or call us. We’d love to hear from you.

Admus Thilmann
Greetings to All!

The energy of the students, faculty and staff in this College is truly amazing. It is wonderful to be in an environment where, on a daily basis, one can find creative new ideas, positive synergism and intellectual challenge. It is with sincere hope that the College Relations Office can facilitate, encourage and support the activities of the college.

What is the College Relations Office? We recently have had a transition in the Office of Student Programs and moved from being primarily a career, student recruitment-focused office to an integrated student/alumni/corporate relations model. Our mission is to serve the various entities of the college in recruitment, retention, placement and alumni/corporate relations. Here are a few things in which we are involved:

New student recruitment: It is our goal to recruit all students interested in studying Engineering at the University of Nebraska. Through the excellent work of our Ambassadors, Diplomats and Delegates, we host recruitment events, meet individually with students and families, send personal notes or e-mails and call prospective students. We also do presentations in high school math and science classes.

Career involvement: Lark Bear, our Career Specialist, is available every day to assist students with resumes, subscribing to Husker Hire Link (free to UNL students) and job preparation. With NU’s Career Services Office, Lark plans our two annual Career Fairs – one each in the fall and spring. The career fairs are essential in bringing opportunities to students and allowing industry representatives to see the high caliber of students who graduate from our programs. We want to thank all the students who take time to volunteer to help at the fairs, and give a special pat on the back to SWE (Society of Women Engineers) and CETSA (College of Engineering & Technology Student Advisory Board) for their assistance in staffing the events. Students on our Omaha campus also can utilize the excellent resources of the PKI Career Resources Center. Through a wonderful collaborative effort with the Career Services Office we offer top-notch service to Engineering, Technology and Construction Management students as they pursue internships, co-ops and postgraduate employment.

Alumni involvement: We collaborate on such events as the Alumni Tailgate, Senior Recognition Reception, Awards Banquet and various student recruitment events. Without our wonderful alumni we could not accomplish as much as we do. Alumni come back for career fairs, speak in the sophomore seminar classes and provide great insight to our recruitment, retention and placement efforts.

Corporate Relations: We try to be the resource office for industry folks wanting to recruit our students, meet with faculty or learn about our programs. Through career events, such as the Downtown Technology Fair, E-week and Learning Community events and sophomore seminars we make a positive impression on companies interested in NU Engineering. Many companies have provided terrific support during E-week, Discover Engineering and Women Interested in Engineering. This interaction promotes positive relationships leading to excellent recruitment for the college as well as the companies involved.

Other things in which we are involved are New Student Enrollment, Learning Community, Mentor Breakfasts and day-to-day interaction with students as they try to make connections within the college. Our goal is to provide a positive environment where students can get involved in their college community. It is through strong support from the Dean’s Office that we are able to provide these types of resources to our students, faculty, staff, alumni and corporate friends. A special thank you to Interim Dean Bill Splinter, Associate Dean John Ballard and Associate Dean Suzanne Rohde for their support of our efforts.

If you would like the opportunity to get involved with our office, contact Ann Koopmann in W181 Nebraska Hall, or Alma Ramirez-Rodgers in 105E PKI. We look forward to working with you!
College sees many exciting changes

A letter from Dr. John Ballard,
Associate Dean

As we begin our second semester, I can say we’ve had some real successes so far in the College of Engineering and Technology. Many of our students returned this semester after positive experiences in engineering co-ops or summer internships, making them stronger candidates when it is time to seek employment, and a group of freshman have found strong support — and a lot of fun — through their involvement in the Learning Community.

There are a lot of changes taking place on the campus, too. One of the most prominent is that Student Programs is now the College Relations Office and will offer more services to students. Other changes you’ll see:

• The construction of Othmer Hall at 17th and Vine streets is ahead of schedule. It should be ready for occupancy during the summer of 2002.
• Room W183 Nebraska Hall has been remodeled. It is now a much more “student- and instructor-friendly” room.
• The Kauffman Center is fully operational and is housing JD Othmer Hall, at 17th and Vine streets, will house the Department of Chemical Engineering and the Dean’s office suite. Photo by Jeff Wilson.

Edwards Honors students.

• An old friend is missing from the College and University: Bancroft Hall (see back cover). The Department of Engineering Mechanics purchased Bancroft Hall, a Lincoln public school, in the 1940s and remained there until 1996, when it moved to Nebraska Hall. Bancroft Hall served as home to several units in the College of Engineering & Technology.

One thing that hasn’t changed is our commitment to you, our students. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to see your academic advisor, visit my office in W181 Nebraska Hall, or stop by to see Ann Koopmann in the College Relations Office. Or you can stop by the dean’s office in Omaha, PKI 107A, or contact Alma Ramirez Rodgers. Our office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
Growing up in the small French town of Issodun, Karine Hubert’s knowledge of America was restricted to books, movies and television. So, when the opportunity to visit the United States came about, she wasted no time in making the best of it. At the time she was pursuing an integrated bachelor’s and master’s degree in food science and engineering at the Ensbana University in Dijon.

Hubert randomly chose UNL from a list of several schools. The Department of Biological Systems Engineering offered her a four-month research assistantship under Dr. Curtis Weller.

“I enjoyed working on the project that Dr. Weller assigned to me,” she said. The project involved replacing carnauba wax with sorghum wax for coating on hard candies.

“Carnauba wax offers a coating for hard candies that prevents melting and breaking, but it is very expensive,” she said.

Aside from her research, Hubert set out to improve her knowledge of the English language. That was probably the biggest achievement of her stay, she said.

“I would hear some new words and phrases every day that I would later look up in a dictionary.” She was pleasantly surprised at the patience and understanding people showed in lieu of her limited knowledge.

One of Hubert’s favorite experiences at UNL was dorm life. Living in Selleck Quadrangle, she was exposed not only to Americans, but to students from more than a dozen countries.

“Through my interactions with other international students, I learned so much about countries like Japan and India. I have made friendships here I will cherish for a long time.”

She also has matured a lot during her stay. “I enjoyed living independently, so far away from home.” And although she said she was very apprehensive at first, she felt she adjusted very well, which surprised her.

Hubert especially enjoyed university life, which she said was “stress-free” compared with university life in France.

“I also experienced Husker school spirit during game days, which is something I will never forget,” she said. She also developed relationships with faculty members, which was something new to her.

“Everyone likes to have fun and make jokes, keeping a relaxed environment,” she said. “Back in France, things are a lot more stiff and formal.”

Hubert took every opportunity to travel to other cities – including Chicago, Kansas City and Omaha.

“I visited these cities with new friends I made here and it was a blast.”

When asked about her most memorable experience during her stay, she said without hesitation that it was making new friends from different countries and hanging out with them in bars and dance clubs.

“I am not really into the whole drinking scene, but I wanted to experience even the night life of Lincoln.”

The only difficulty Hubert had was adjusting to American food.

“But I eventually got used to that too,” she said.

Hubert was not the only student from France. Over the summer a dozen French students did research or took classes at UNL and all lived in Selleck Quadrangle.
Two students, Mark Dietz and John Prauner, from the University of Nebraska College of Engineering and Technology, participated in a study abroad program in Germany last summer. The J.D. Edwards Honors Program provided tuition and loaned the students laptop computers while studying. The program also arranged living accommodations and helped with admission requirements. The students paid for plane tickets, room and board, and other expenses.

While in Bruchsal, Germany, Dietz took classes in software engineering, human resource management, and cryptography. Prauner chose courses in information systems, electronic money, corporate finance, and human resource management. Both students took classes in cognitive sciences that might transfer as requirements at UNL.

The students noted that German culture was different from their own, with faster driving, and different social customs. They also commented on the importance of lunch in Germany and the earlier closing times of stores.

John Prauner and Mark Dietz meet friends at an ice cream parlor.
Ambassadors, Diplomats take on leadership roles

by Rebecca Oltman and Tonia Kinish

In addition to learning about engineering, ambassadors, diplomats and delegates on the Lincoln and Omaha campuses are learning about leadership.

Ambassadors and delegates on the Lincoln Campus work with the College Relations Office to help in recruitment efforts, alumni and corporate relations and outreach, giving them a real insight into the workings of the college.

“It has allowed me to see how the college actually operates as a whole,” said Bill Boldt, a delegate since Spring 2001. Boldt, a senior in electrical engineering, said the program has helped him develop leadership skills and relationships within the College.

This year, ambassadors and delegates have newly defined roles. For example, Randi Coakley, a senior in Industrial Engineering, is the on-campus special events coordinator. She plans such events as Red Letter Days and high school visits.

Other ambassador roles include: ambassador/delegate coordinator, tours/follow up coordinator, off-campus special events coordinator and public relations/alumni activities coordinator.

Because they are given a scholarship, ambassadors must put in five to 10 hours of work each week. As volunteers, delegates perform many of the same functions as ambassadors, but put in fewer hours.

Diplomats and delegates on the Omaha campus help the College and The Peter Kiewit Institute generate awareness about careers in engineering, host distinguished visitors and serve on committees. They also help recruit students through campus and outreach activities, give tours, participate in group activities and talk about their educational experiences.

They foster communication among students, faculty and administration while increasing the visibility of the College in area high schools.

One diplomat is named student coordinator and assists in developing and organizing special projects and meetings. That student also serves as liaison between the advisor from each college and the diplomats and delegates.

Diplomats must put in a minimum of 50 hours each semester, while delegates must put in 25 hours. They receive a scholarship, business cards, logo wear and recommendations upon completion of their term.
Diversity Scholar

**Name:**
Jairus James Cameros Gonzales

**Major:**
Architectural Engineering

**Standing:**
Junior

Being a Diversity Scholar is the most fruitful experiences in which I have ever been involved. I came to know this program while working as a diplomat for the college of Engineering and Technology. I was a freshman in architectural engineering and was approached by Alma Ramirez Rodgers, coordinator of recruitment, about applying for this scholarship that targets economically disadvantaged students.

The scholarship includes full tuition for up to four years, a mentorship program, a room at Scott Residence Hall and a full-time paid summer internship! What more could a student ask for? At the time my parents were paying for my education and I thought this would be a great opportunity to give them a break from that – and also for me to move out of the house and spread my wings.

Almost two and a half years have passed since then and I couldn’t be more pleased with the program. There are five students receiving diversity scholarships and there is an effort underway to create more.

I cannot express enough thanks to my sponsor, HDR, The Peter Kiewit Institute, the College of Engineering and Technology and, especially, Ms. Rodgers for all work they have done to keep me and others on the track to success.

To get into this program one must come from an economically disadvantaged background and be an incoming freshman or student in the College of Engineering and Technology, with the minimal requirements for entrance into the College of Engineering and Technology.

For more information, e-mail Alma Ramirez-Rodgers at aramirez@mail.unomaha.edu or call (402) 554-3618.

Learning Community

by Melissa Andersen

For most students, the first semester away at college can be a true test in study and social skills. The Freshman Residential Engineering Learning Community helps to alleviate some of that stress. According to College of Engineering and Technology Associate Dean John Ballard, the Learning Community combines residential experiences with academic experiences to help freshmen develop a network of peer support.

Students in the Learning Community share the sixth and seventh floors of Abel Hall. Two peer mentors and a resident assistant live on the floor. The mentors help to facilitate a support system for the students. The floor coordinates special activities to give students a chance to learn about their majors as well as to socialize with peers.

The Learning Community also takes field trips throughout the year. Past trips have included day excursions to construction sites, including the First National Tower in Omaha; a visit to Black & Veatch, an engineering and consulting firm in Kansas City; a behind-the-scenes tour of Disney World; and, most recently, a trip to three Colorado companies: Coors, Celestica and Kodak. Private donors help defray the costs.

But the focus of the Learning

Please see Learning Community, Page 10

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French student, from Page 6

For many students in that dorm it was a unique experience interacting with the French students. Omar Bin Azad, a resident assistant in the dorm during the time, said the French students actively participated in such recreational activities as barbecues and volleyball tournaments.

As for Hubert, she said she had a very rewarding learning experience during her stay in Lincoln. In fact, she plans to come back to the United States in the next couple of years to pursue an industrial internship in another city.

With a plethora of memories and experiences, Hubert is getting ready to go back to France. “I will miss this place and all my new friends I have made,” she said. “But as they say in France, ‘au revoir!’”

Study abroad, from Page 7

The students “learn about other cultures and how to conduct themselves in other cultures and... to gain global perspectives on their chosen field of study,” Darlington said.

And how did the students feel about the experience?

“I would definitely recommend a study abroad to other engineers,” Dietz said.

There you have it.

The students studying in Germany toured this building in downtown Heidelberg for their human resources class.

Learning Community, from Page 9

Community is on academics. In the larger courses, such as Math 106 and Chemistry 109, 111 and 113, sections are reserved for students in the Learning Community. This allows them to be grouped together in recitations and labs where they will see familiar faces in courses that might otherwise be somewhat overwhelming. Additionally, students living in the Learning Community attend a special section of the Engineering 010 Seminar. Students pay $95 to live in the Learning Community.

One of the annual activities for the Learning Community is a Steak and Egg Dinner. Students gather for a dinner where they socialize with peers. After dinner, students are divided into groups and are given a kit of materials that includes tape, string, a balloon and a plastic cup. Each group designs a contraption that can hold an egg. The trick is to create the device in such a way as to prevent the egg from breaking when dropped from the roof of Abel Hall. The group with the surviving egg is the winner.

In the Fall 2001 contest, several eggs survived the 11-story drop. The winner was decided with an egg toss: the members of each team tossed their egg back and forth – with a greater distance imposed after each toss – until only one egg was left unbroken.

The exact whereabouts of that egg are unknown.

Winners of the 2001 Egg Drop and Toss were Sam Trenchard (electrical engineering), Chard Carlson (computer engineering) and Justin Robinson (computer engineering).

Join the Blueprint Staff

Interim Dean, Dr. William Splinter, started as the editor of the Nebraska Blueprint. Sound impressive?

Perhaps it could be you! The Nebraska Blueprint is searching for a few good staff members to write and edit.

- Enhance your communication skills
- Meet great people
- Gain valuable work experience

For more information, contact Adam Holmberg at: aholmber@cse.unl.edu or Constance Walter at: cwalter3@unl.edu or 402-472-8309.
Terrorist acts stun students

Many watched in horror as the tragedy unfolded

by Deepak Keshwani, Ginger Wingate

Following the tragic events of Sept. 11, the Blueprint Weekly asked several students in the College of Engineering & Technology to give their comments and opinions. We wanted to know how they were coping and to assess the general mood of students from the United States and abroad. We ran two stories – one that focused on students in general and one that focused on our international students. Following are a few of the comments we received.

Students expressed views on different aspects of the attacks. But the overall consensus was a condemnation of those responsible and support and prayers for those affected.

"I have learned that you can't take the blessing of daily life for granted." – Hannah Schemm, Mechanical Engineering

"I saw the nation's tendency to pull together in times of crisis...I have greater respect for my country." – Matt Foral, Biological Systems Engineering

"The attacks go against the concept of a civilized society. The attacks brought back harsh memories of terror attacks in my home country... I can't even begin to imagine what friends and family of the victims must be going through. This is a sad day for the world." – Siddharth Suri, Computer Engineering

"I went to class because if the world ceases to function, we have given terrorists exactly what they want – terror on a grand scale." – Lindsey Pritchard, Biological Systems Engineering

"It came as a big shock. I could not believe what was happening." – Ibrahim Abdulmohsin, Computer Engineering

"It never hit me how many people hated the U.S." – Sarah Betzold, Chemical Engineering

"I have gained so much knowledge of the capabilities of our nation's media system. We saw terrorism live!" – Ashley Hughes, Biological Systems Engineering

"It was exactly what happened in a book I read titled 'Black Friday,' when terrorists shut down the American economy system by flattening the World Trade Center." – Katie Neddenriep, Civil Engineering

"This event is another reminder to live everyday as if it were your last." – Maria Stitzmann, Chemical Engineering

Many students spent much of Sept. 11 in front of television sets watching news coverage of the terrorist attacks on America.
Bancroft Hall, which housed several engineering programs over the years, was torn down in Fall 2001. The building, once a Lincoln public school, was purchased by the Department of Engineering Mechanics. The department moved to Nebraska Hall in 1996.