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Perspectives

In August I had the opportunity to participate in the 50th anniversary celebration of our Haskell Agricultural Laboratory near Concord and the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory open house near Whitman.



John C. Owens
NU Vice President and
Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

What great experiences!

There were approximately 500 people on hand to celebrate the Haskell Agricultural Laboratory's anniversary. It was a wonderful day, and a great way to celebrate 50 years of work in northeast Nebraska. NU President J.B. Milliken and Speaker of the Nebraska Legislature Mike Flood made excellent presentations during the luncheon program.

Over 300 people attended the Gudmundsen open house, where last year we celebrated 25 years of Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory work for Nebraska.

Also a great day.

The new Wagonhammer Education Center and Ray Bohy Conference Room at Gudmundsen, completed in 2005 through a generous gift by the Wolf family and the Bohy estate, provide such terrific educational space. I think they must be the most impressive found on any research and demonstration ranch away from the main campus of any university in the country.

When I spoke at Gudmundsen, I talked about the "why" of our research and extension sites throughout the state, which include (but are not limited to!) the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead and Research and Extension Centers in North Platte, Scottsbluff, Lincoln, and northeast Nebraska, with offices in Norfolk, and research and extension work also at Haskell.

Are you aware the West Central Research and Extension Center at North Platte, the oldest of our regional research and extension centers, has been at work for Nebraska for over 100 years? It was

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*The Morrill Act of 1862
established a Land Grant University
in each state where
The Leading Object
would be instruction
in agriculture and related fields.*



September/October 2007

CASNR Experiences Double Digit Enrollment Increase For Fall 2007

The 2007 fall semester brought good news for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. CASNR had its largest enrollment increase in the last three decades, said Dean Steve Waller.

Enrollment for the fall semester was 1,455, about 11.7 percent over the 1,303 students from a year ago, Waller said.

"It is amazing," Waller said.

Waller and Laura Frey, College Relations Director, attribute much of the increase to the work of Nebraskans for Nebraska, an organization developed about a year ago and coordinated by Frey. Nebraskans for Nebraska is a consortium of CASNR stakeholder groups that promote the college in their areas, Frey said.

"Nebraskans for Nebraska has been very helpful in recruiting students to our college," Frey said.

The group has about 100 members, including University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension personnel, and members of Ag Builders of Nebraska, Nebraska Cattlemen, and the CASNR Alumni Association. Members provide names of potential CASNR students to Frey, who then contacts them.

"They provide a statewide message about the opportunities in the college," Waller said of the Nebraskans for Nebraska members. "They are our ambassadors."

New degree programs and options also are attracting interest, Waller said. Forensic Science has about 20 students, and Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management, a joint degree program with the College of Education and Human Sciences, has about 52 students



Brett Hampton

The number of students attending the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources increased by 11.7 percent in fall 2007.

between the two colleges.

The Department of Animal Science also has shown an increase in students. Waller said that can be attributed at least in part to new offerings that appeal to students.

One is the new food technology for companion animals program, a joint degree program with the Department of Food Science and Technology. It is thought to be the only one of its kind in the region, Waller said. Animal Science also has two new program options, companion animals and equine science.

CASNR increased its presence at the Nebraska State Fair this year with displays in four areas.

—Lori McGinnis

established back in 1903.

In two years we'll mark the 100th anniversary of the Panhandle Research and Extension Center, established in 1909. We celebrated 35 years of work for Nebraska at the High Plains Ag Lab near Sidney, which is part of the Panhandle Center, in 2005.

Such sites, and the 83 county extension offices serving all 93 Nebraska counties, allow us to put university resources as close to Nebraskans as possible.

This is a deliberate choice.

Our sites and centers are throughout Nebraska so we can best meet research and extension education needs of diverse parts of our state, within the limits of the resources available to us.

There is no question resources affect what we do; the round after round of budget cuts endured during Nebraska's last budget crises remain sharp in our minds. We know, to our sorrow, what our state

lost in those cuts.

We also know how hard we worked to retain all we could to continue to help grow Nebraska's future, which we do, every single day.

Here in the Institute, we have a long and proud legacy of being at work for Nebraska. We intend to go right on lengthening that legacy and keeping it strong.

It's what land-grant universities do — research, teaching, and extension education for the citizens of the state. The research being done at the University adds value to Nebraska's commodities, develops new products, grows emerging markets, finds best management practices, sustains and protects the environment, and strengthens Nebraska's families, youth, and communities. This research provides new knowledge for our state and world.

Extension education carries this new knowledge across Nebraska, so Nebraskans

can put it to immediate use in their lives.

This new knowledge also is taught in our classrooms and laboratories, helping build the well-prepared workforce needed for the 21st century, with leadership skills so essential to helping Nebraska communities strive and thrive.

We're Nebraska's primary provider of agricultural and natural resources programs, providing excellent research and education for both, and for families, youth and communities. We're a major economic engine for Nebraska's present and future, and a strong contributor to the state's good life.

We truly are at work for Nebraska. Thank you, each of you, for your contribution to this work every day.



NCTA Increases Enrollment

Enrollment at the College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis is up 20 percent from last year, Dean Weldon Sleight said.

Enrollment figures released in September show 327 students enrolled for the fall semester, up from last year's enrollment of 272. A number of factors have contributed to the increase, Sleight said.

One of the primary reasons is directly related to the delivery of courses to students not attending the NCTA campus, he said. NCTA launched its concurrent enrollment program this fall for high school students.

The program allows high school students to take courses through NCTA and receive both high school and college credit. NCTA currently has 23 students participating, Sleight said.

This was the fourth consecutive fall where enrollment increased, and Sleight expects more increases for the future.

"I have no doubt that numbers will continue to increase at NCTA since the institution is now moving programs throughout the state in keeping with its statewide mission," Sleight said.

Fritz Named Associate IANR Vice Chancellor

Susan Fritz has been permanently named Associate Vice Chancellor of IANR.

Since 2005 Fritz has been serving a two-year term as Associate Vice Chancellor for Planning and Academic Development.



Susan Fritz

John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR, said Fritz has excelled in planning and academic development activities as well as other assignments.

"Dr. Fritz has incorporated new and innovative ideas into the IANR strategic planning process, taking us through an update of the previous plan," Owens said.

Owens said Fritz played a major role in the successful 10-year UNL North Central Association reaccreditation process and was one of the writers of the self-study document. The process allowed Fritz to forge new relationships across UNL and strengthen her existing connections within IANR, Owens said.

"I greatly value her strong work ethic, her ability to successfully complete projects, and her dedication to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, its faculty, staff, students, and clientele," Owens said.

Correction:

Duane Acker, the first Vice Chancellor for our Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, also is President Emeritus of Kansas State University. Unfortunately, the latter was not stated correctly in the August *Leading Object*. Again, our thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Acker for their visit to our campus in June, and let me once more recommend Dr. Acker's book, *Can State Universities Be Managed?*, to all interested in management in higher education.

Need to meet with the

Vice President/Vice Chancellor?

Drop-ins each Friday from 3-5 p.m.*

John C. Owens

NU Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR

202 Ag Hall • (402) 472-2871

*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be called away on University business.

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Drive through Nebraska as a Teen led Burnell to UNL

A motel worker described as “the nicest person I ever saw in my life” can be credited with getting Tom Burnell to attend the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

That worker at a Ben Franklin Motel outside Omaha helped the then 16-year-old Californian to see that Nebraskans “are truly wonderful people” and that he wanted to be one of them, he said.

Burnell, chief executive officer at the Nebraska Heart Hospital and Nebraska Heart Institute in Lincoln, even goes so far to say that UNL and his days as a College of Agriculture student saved his life.

Burnell’s story starts with an unhappy home life. He was born in Rockville Centre, New York, right outside of Long Island but grew up in Los Angeles after his parents divorced.

He left home at age 16 after he graduated from high school early. He was driving across the country alone to see his father in New York. On the way he stopped at the Ben Franklin Motel, where he met that “nicest person.”

He had been thinking at the time about going to college, and while driving through Nebraska he saw a University of Nebraska sign. He later flew to Lincoln, toured the campus and enrolled.

Burnell entered the Department of Animal Science because he wanted to be a veterinarian. Retired faculty member Ernie Peo became his adviser.

“He took a real keen interest in me and guided me in a direction that frankly I didn’t know I was going.”

Instead of becoming a vet, Burnell got into teaching and research. He earned his bachelor’s degree in 1984 and his master’s in animal nutrition in 1985, both from UNL, and his doctoral degree in nutrition and biochemistry at the University of Kentucky.

He taught animal nutrition at Kentucky and Auburn University before deciding that he no longer wanted to be on the tenure track. He took a position at Continental Grain Co. in Lincoln as a field technical services representative. He spent 11 years with the company, moving around the country and eventually working his way to company president. The company sold in 2000 and he decided to take six months to a year off.

However, four months later he took a position to run a start-up biotechnology company in Austin, Texas. Later he started his own consulting business in which he served as interim CEO of struggling companies, mostly in the biotechnology areas.

One of those companies, Eurofins Scientific, asked him to stay permanently and he did for four years. The excessive traveling prompted him to quit and move back to Lincoln, where he obtained his current position nearly a year ago.

Throughout his diversified career, Burnell stayed devoted to UNL.

“The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is the reason I’m alive today,” he said. “I left home on my 16th birthday and came to a place as a stranger. People opened their arms to me as a native son. I truly owe my life to UNL.”



Tom Burnell

Blezek Receives Omtvedt Award

Allen Blezek has received the 2007 Omtvedt Innovation Award.

Blezek, director of the Nebraska LEAD Program for nearly 25 years, received the award in August from John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR.

Owens cited Blezek as a widely recognized educator, innovator and leader in Nebraska as well as nationally and internationally. For more than 40 years his career has focused on agricultural leadership development for youth and adults, Owens said.

Under Blezek’s leadership, more than 750 of Nebraska’s most promising men and women have enhanced their leadership abilities, Owens said. Blezek has led numerous delegations and conducted or participated in international programs in 100 countries around the world.

LEAD — Leadership Education/Action Development — is Nebraska’s only comprehensive statewide agricultural leadership development program. Blezek retired effective September 1.

The Omtvedt Innovation Awards recognize areas of strength and innovative research and programming within IANR. The award is made possible by a donation of Leona and the late Neal Harlan, who honored Irv Omtvedt on his retirement as Vice Chancellor of the Institute.



Allen Blezek

Hejny New Director of Nebraska LEAD

Terry Hejny has been appointed Director of the Nebraska LEAD Program.

Hejny has been with University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension since 1998, serving in Fillmore and Cass counties. He previously was an agricultural educator instructor in the Geneva Public Schools.

Hejny succeeds Allen Blezek.

“We believe Terry has just the right set of skills, attributes, and knowledge to take the Nebraska LEAD Program into the 21st century,” said John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor.

Hejny’s appointment was effective September 10.

“I am honored to become the next Director of the Nebraska LEAD Program and look forward to the challenges that come with maintaining the quality of the finest adult agricultural leadership development in this country, if not the world,” Hejny said.



Terry Hejny

Daughter's Graduation Prompts Thoughts on Education

By Charles P. Schroeder

As the somber strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" began precisely, as always, at the crack of Roger Mandigo's whip, we commenced the celebratory finale of a family adventure. Our daughter, Lindsay Hastings, was at the Devaney Center to collect her master's degree in Leadership Education, and we were there with her husband, Matt, to cheer her success.

Most parents and spouses on hand that Saturday morning were filled with jubilation and relief to pass this milestone, and looked forward to its sight in their rearview mirrors. But, I confess to less festive feelings.

When Lindsay decided to pursue her master's at UNL following internships with the Heartland Center for Leadership Development and the Nebraska Rural Initiative I was pleased. But, it was the "Well, that's nice for her" category of pleased, rather than the one labeled "Holy cow, this is going to be exciting for me, too!" I mean, you know, I'm a grown-up. Education is for young people, or people who don't know where they're going, or those who don't have enough to do. Right?

I should have known that vibration was a train coming down the track. When Lindsay started talking about interesting conversations she was having with Milan Wall and Sandy Scofield, then Dean Steve Waller and Lloyd Bell, then her major

professor, Leverne Barrett, and other campus figures whose views on the world I find intriguing, I was drawn to ask a question or two. Or I was hitching up my metaphoric britches and offering my own views on the subject at hand. At the very least, I was stopping for a moment to think about it.

Then she started on her rural community leadership research. My dusted-off curiosity and her enthusiasm made for arm waving phone and e-mail exchanges. Her mother's experience with master's degree processes had them on the phone mixing it up over an entirely different set of issues. And Matt's political science studies had a bearing on all this stuff, too, you know. Egad! This master's program had become a family affair!

As the fates were giggling at my feckless resistance to the siren song of learning, they also sent me hurtling with only one eye open to Palo Alto, California, for a couple of weeks at Stanford University's Center for Social Innovation. (Please don't tell my conservative friends I did this voluntarily). That set up late night e-mails to Lindsay and Matt, bubbling effusively about what thoughts had whipped my sensibilities into a froth that day, and begging for reports on what they were scrubbing at UNL.

Life has changed at the Schroeder house. Gosh, we had been so comfortable doing

the same thing today as we did yesterday. We thought we knew all we really needed to know to perform successfully in the professional sense. Perhaps, we did. But, we've been reminded how intellectually lazy we'd become, and what joy there is in throwing a little thought brew into the fan just to see what happens next.

As Chancellor Perlman drew the carefully executed graduation exercises to an end that morning, relieved that the bare-chested, corn-cob-headed screamer in the hard-to-come-by seats had been the worst of his problems for the day, I felt a sense of "Well, that's that!" drifting across the auditorium. I confess that I prayed, "God, don't let this be IT!"

Oh, I know that university campuses are regularly maligned in the business world as some sort of fantasyland. But, I also know that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has been the source for lifting me and my family to consider the "what ifs" of life, rather than being driven to accept "that's the way it is." I am thankful for our association with the thinkers residing therein and hope we never stick our thumbs in our suspenders and accept where we are as where we'll always be.

(Charles Schroeder is a 1973 UNL graduate in Animal Science and currently is executive director of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.)

Etling Selected for Fulbright Project

Arlen Etling, Professor of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has been selected for a Fulbright Senior Specialist project in Toledo, Spain.

Etling will teach and consult at the University of Castilla-La Mancha during its fall semester, according to the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign



Arlen Etling

Scholarship Board.

The Senior Specialists Program, created in 2000 to complement the traditional Fulbright Scholar Program, provides short-term academic opportunities to prominent U.S. faculty and professionals.

Etling is one of more than 400 U.S. faculty and professionals who will travel abroad this year through the program.

"I am really looking forward to this opportunity to build collaborations for UNL; and I am looking forward to helping colleagues apply for this Fulbright Senior Specialists Program when I return at the end of the semester," he said.

Etling currently is coordinator of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources' international study programs.

Gail Henderson Receives OEA

Gail Henderson, a Research Technologist and Lab Manager with Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, has received the Outstanding Employee Award for managerial/professional staff for September/October.

Nominators state that Henderson "maintains a very organized laboratory to make work safe with all research technicians and graduate students working in an efficient manner."



Gail Henderson