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2008

## The Leading Object: August 2008

John C. Owens

*NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR*

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## Perspectives

In a way, those of us who work in academic settings experience two new years each year.

The first is the chronological new year the world celebrates in January. The second is the beginning of a new school year, which we celebrate this month as our sophomores, juniors, seniors, and returning graduate students come back from summer jobs, trips, and experiences, and as new students step onto our campus for their own new beginnings.

We don't have to teach in a classroom to sense the excitement pervading the campus as our students return each fall. There's a sense of new adventures, growth, and learning.

It's exciting. It's invigorating. It's fun.

We can be proud of our students, both for all they've already accomplished in their lives, and for the great promise that lies ahead in all they yet will do. Each time I have the opportunity to speak to a student group, I come away impressed. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and it's wonderful to catch it.

We can be proud, also, of the tremendous education they receive studying with us. I feel the same way about students arriving on the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture campus at Curtis this fall. Preparing Nebraska's future work force and leaders is one very important way we're at work for Nebraska.

I'm proud, too, of everyone who helps provide the truly excellent education our students receive. And of the many people statewide who make the benefits of that education known to prospective students, so that they wish to come study with us.

Everyone's part is important. Everyone's part matters.

Yet while fall semester seems a new beginning on campus, we know IANR work is strong and ongoing year-round as

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

# The Leading Object

*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.*



August 2008

## IANR partners with Chinese university to expand extension, research

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources will offer its assistance to a prominent Chinese university that wants to expand its own agricultural research and extension programs.

IANR has partnered with Zhejiang University (ZJU) in Hangzhou, China, to develop a China-United States joint extension and research center for advanced agricultural and natural resources technology, said John Owens, NU vice president and Harlan vice chancellor of IANR.

This appears to be the first partnership of its kind, Owens said.

Dan Duncan, assistant dean and director of IANR's Agricultural Research Division, and Darrell Nelson, ARD dean emeritus, spent nearly a week in China in July to help develop the partnership. The partnership comes on the heels of a visit to ZJU in May by several IANR representatives to form a partnership to help bring Chinese students to UNL.

Owens, who led the May delegation, said he was approached at the time by ZJU officials who sought IANR's partnership in developing the joint China-USA extension and research station.

Two ZJU representatives had visited the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in April and were highly impressed with the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead.



**Dan Duncan, front right, and Darrell Nelson, third from left back, joined representatives of Zhejiang University to develop an extension and research center at the Chinese university.**

"They got real excited and wanted to duplicate what they saw at the ARDC," Duncan said.

One particular area of interest to ZJU is irrigation technology, Duncan said. ZJU wants to develop center pivot, linear, and drip irrigation systems with advanced technology at the new joint center.

ZJU already has designated land about 45 minutes north of the main campus for the station. The goal for the station is to conduct research, demonstrate advanced technology to farmers, and teach people how to operate and maintain irrigation systems, Duncan said.

The Chinese have the capacity to teach large numbers but until recently had lacked the land resources necessary to

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research, teaching, and extension education, the three legs of the land-grant university stool, each carries out its part of the IANR mission.

Each day everyone involved in extension education is at work for Nebraska, carrying the resources of this great land-grant university throughout our state, providing "know how" Nebraskans can put to immediate use in their lives.

Through the summer months and now into September we see a time of culmination for 4-H'ers and our dedicated extension people who work with them as final 4-H projects — concrete examples of what participants learned throughout the year — appear at county fairs, the State Fair, and Ak-Sar-Ben.

Each day our researchers also are at work for Nebraska, seeking new knowl-

edge to contribute to Nebraskans' bottom lines and quality of life. In our indoor and outdoor laboratories, our researchers seek — and find — solutions to Nebraskans' current and future concerns.

It takes all three legs of the land-grant university stool, working together, supporting, respecting, applauding, perhaps at times challenging each other, to strengthen, sustain, and truly carry out the land-grant university mission entrusted to us.

I note every chance I get that teaching, research, and extension education are closely entwined in the Institute. I am proud to say that because it is what's needed to carry out the land-grant university mission.

What raises one boat raises all here. What lowers one boat, lowers all. That means not only is it good for us to be glad

for every bit of good news and reward that comes to each of our three legs of the land-grant university stool — it's enlightened self-interest.

"One of the sanest, surest, and most generous joys of life comes from being happy over the good fortune of others," the great outdoors writer Archibald Rutledge once wrote.

As we start this new school year, here's to the good fortune of all members of our IANR community as we continue our journey, at work for Nebraska.



## 'Significant deficit' results in closure of Keim Hall's Soil Plant Analytical Laboratory

The Soil Plant Analytical Laboratory located in the Keim Hall basement has closed, due to the Keim Hall renovation and the fact the lab had been running a "significant deficit," said Mark Lagrimini, head of the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture.

"I had been seriously thinking of closing the lab for several years," said Lagrimini, who recommended to IANR administration that the lab close July 18. He said efforts had been futile to find a cost-effective, temporary location for the laboratory before the two-year renovation began Aug. 14. In addition, he said he had tried for the last five years to find ways to make the lab profitable, including through staff reductions and soliciting more samples.

The vast number of people today have their plant and soil samples analyzed through the private sector, Lagrimini said.

"Nebraska has quite a few good laboratories that have the ability to handle samples at a lower cost," he said.

However, he said agronomy and horticulture faculty and staff still will provide research-based and unbiased recommendations to people who have their plants and soils tested elsewhere.

"If an individual wants to send us private lab results, we will provide a recommendation," he said, adding details on that process are yet to be worked out.

Gary Cunningham, Agricultural Research Division dean, said, "I strongly support Dr. Lagrimini's difficult but necessary decision to close the Soil Plant Analytical Laboratory. Dr. Lagrimini's decision will allow more effective investments of the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture resources."

## IANR partners with Chinese university to expand extension, research

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conduct applied research and extension education, Owens said.

ZJU is seeking IANR's technical assistance to develop an overall plan for the experiment station. Duncan plans to assist by sending ZJU a variety of technical information and advice.

Duncan also may return to China to offer ZJU further assistance. ZJU personnel are considering another visit to UNL this fall to possibly visit research and extension centers, Duncan said.

UNL will return the hospitality it was shown in China, he said.

ZJU officials were "tremendous hosts," Duncan said. "They made us feel welcome and wanted."

— Lori McGinnis

### 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.

Editorial - Cheryl Alberts and Lori McGinnis • Layout - Anne Moore

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103 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (lmcginnis2@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).

## Keim follows father's footsteps at University of Nebraska

**W**ayne Keim followed in some pretty big footsteps when he decided to study agronomy at the University of Nebraska.

His decision was partially based on the encouragement of his late father, Frank Keim, for whom Keim Hall is named.

"He had considerable influence on me, although I didn't realize it at the time," he said.

Frank Keim, chairman of the Department of Agronomy from 1932 to 1952 and a faculty member from 1916, was credited for building one of the outstanding agronomy departments in the world. According to the book "College of Agriculture of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln," Frank Keim excelled in attracting and supporting students in the field of agronomy.

Growing up in Lincoln, Wayne Keim had limited exposure to agronomy until his father bought a farm near Waverly, after which he spent a lot of time there. The fact that the family lived a block from the agriculture campus, now East Campus, also exposed him to many ag activities.

When it was time to enter college, Keim said his father encouraged him to enroll in the Ag College as a good place to get a general education as a starter. In the fall of 1941 he took his father's advice.

Wayne entered the university just two

months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which led to tremendous upheaval on all college campuses.

"Declaration of war came next. Suddenly we were at war. Some of us joined the Army Enlisted Reserve Corps, which was designed to allow the student to graduate from college and then serve his military obligation. It didn't work that way."

After three semesters, the AERC was disbanded and members were all called to active duty. Keim served in several ways — basic training in the Field Artillery in California, in the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Texas, in the Army Specialized Training Program to study engineering at Oklahoma A&M College and Rutgers University, and Signal Corps Officer Candidate School in New Jersey.

In 1946, Keim returned to the University of Nebraska to complete his bachelor of science degree. He enrolled in an introductory genetics course taught by his father. This was a fateful action, Keim said, because he was immediately attracted to the subject.

In 1947 he graduated with a degree in technical agriculture with honors, with majors in agronomy and mathematics. A few weeks later Keim married Joyce Neumann and they moved to Ithaca, N.Y. —

his city of birth — where he pursued master's and doctorate degrees in plant genetics and breeding.

Again Keim followed his dad's footsteps by enrolling in the same department at Cornell as his father did some 25 years earlier.

Keim emphasized undergraduate teaching as a career, with four years at Iowa State University in Ames and 20 years at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. At Purdue, Keim taught genetics to 7,000 students. In 1975 he joined the agronomy faculty at Colorado State University in Fort Collins as department head.

He retired in 1992, and now at age 85 he serves as professor emeritus. He continues to serve on departmental committees and recently completed with colleagues a history of the department at CSU.

Keim credits his time at NU for strongly influencing his career.

"I received an excellent education and I am proud to be a Nebraska alumnus."

— Lori McGinnis



Wayne Keim

## Fine arts college promotes IANR partnership in Italy

**T**he relationship between IANR and the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts has gone global.

College Dean Jack Oliva made a presentation about the relationship at the World Conference of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) in Bologna, Italy in July.

The presentation stemmed from the college's partnership with the Institute. Students from the college have led educational programs at 4-H camps, and last year IANR and UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman sponsored a tour of the college's Chiara string quartet to lesser-populated areas of Nebraska.

The presentation focused on the importance of the performing arts college within a land-grant university and its relationship with UNL Extension and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

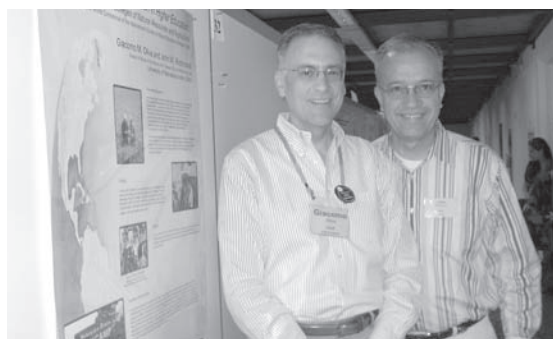
"Performing arts fits squarely into the

land-grant school and there is a natural synergy between the outreach engagement of the arts and outreach and engagement in agriculture and extension," Oliva said.

Oliva made the presentation with John Richmond, director of the School of Music.

"The presentation was very successful and generated quite a bit of conversation about things we are doing at UNL to promote arts outreach and engagement," Oliva said. "Having the presentation in this international setting afforded wonderful visibility for the College of Fine and Performing Arts, CASNR, the extension division, and UNL as a whole."

UNL Extension Dean Elbert Dickey said helping send the quartet to Nebraskans who lack access to such music is an example of how extension reaches across the state.



Jack Oliva, left, dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, and John Richmond, director of the School of Music, gave a presentation in Italy about the relationship between the college and IANR.

"The statewide performances of the Chiara quartet exemplify how the partnership between IANR and the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts helps to fulfill the mission of the land-grant university," Dickey said.



## Boeckner new director at Panhandle center

Linda Boeckner, professor of Nutrition and Health Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, is the new director of the Panhandle Research and Extension Center and the Panhandle Extension District.

Boeckner, who has served as interim director since the departure of Charles Hibberd to Purdue University as associate dean and director last November, has been an extension nutrition specialist at the center since 1987. Her appointment became effective Aug. 1.

“She will bring some special and highly-valued qualities and perspectives to the district,” said John Owens, NU vice president and Harlan vice chancellor of IANR.

Boeckner’s specialist and program coordinator responsibilities

have included co-leadership of statewide action teams focusing on nutrition, health, and wellness. She has been involved with development and implementation of the ABCs for Good Health curriculum and working with a statewide aging team since 2001.

Boeckner said the Panhandle center is an important part of the university’s research and extension program.

“We are dedicated to serving the clientele of the area in excellent fashion, and will be continuing those strong efforts into the future,” she said. “The fact that we have excellent faculty and staff to help meet those needs is one of the perks of the job.”



Linda Boeckner

## Former UNL agronomy professor James Drew dies

Former University of Nebraska–Lincoln agronomy professor James Drew has died at his home in Alaska.

Drew, who was 77, died on July 9 in Fairbanks from pancreatic cancer. He joined the UNL faculty as an assistant professor in agronomy in 1957 and eventually became a full professor. Drew later served as dean of graduate studies at UNL.

He moved to Alaska in 1976 to become director of the Agriculture Experiment Station at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

## Wheeler retires after 25 years at UNL

Dan Wheeler has retired from his position as head of the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication.

Wheeler, who spent 25 years at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, now is professor emeritus of leadership studies. During his UNL career he taught undergraduate and graduate leadership courses.

Previously, Wheeler was coordinator of the Office of Professional and Organizational Development. He is co-developer of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire, an instrument used in considerable servant leadership research.

He is past president of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, a Senior Fulbright Scholar in Higher Education, and a member of several leadership advisory boards.



Dan Wheeler

## Watts receives award from Argentina ag institute

Darrell Watts, professor emeritus in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering, has had collaborative ties with scientists and extension agents in Argentina for over 25 years.

During a study abroad tour to Argentina with College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources students earlier this year, Watts received an award from Argentina’s National Institute for Agriculture Technology for his years of service for helping Argentine researchers access irrigation, conservation tillage and site specific crop management knowledge and technologies. Adoption of these technologies has improved agricultural productivity and sustainability, and benefited farmer and national economics.

## Balschweid is AgLEC’s new department head

Mark Balschweid is the new head of the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication.

Balschweid comes to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln from Purdue University in Indiana, where he was a faculty member for 10 years in agricultural education, teaching, and advising students. He also was coordinator of Purdue’s graduate program. In addition, Balschweid coordinated a statewide advanced life science initiative creating high school courses in advanced science content utilizing agricultural education as the context. He also was coordinator of the Agricultural and Extension Education graduate



Mark Balschweid

program for the College of Agriculture at Purdue.

Originally from Oregon, Balschweid taught high school agricultural science before earning his doctorate in agricultural education from Oregon State University.

“My desire is to support faculty and staff in the AgLEC department and continue to foster the high level of teaching, extension, and research efforts that the department is known for to the citizens of Nebraska,” Balschweid said.

Balschweid and his wife Mae Anne have been married for 21 years and they have three children.

“As a family we’re excited to be in the Lincoln area and personally I feel very fortunate to transition from one great institution like Purdue University to another great institution like the University of Nebraska.”