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Meeting Minutes: March 16, 2006

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March 16, 2006
UNL East Campus Union

President Irv Omtvedt called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon. He asked for memory moments to recognize deceased Emeriti Henry Baumgarten and Russell Nelson.

Vice President and Program Chair Howard Ottoson introduced the featured speaker, **Prof. Peter Levitov, Association Dean of International Affairs at UNL**, to present the topic "*International Students in the U.S.A.*" (Note: the full presentation by the speaker can be found on the *Look and Listen* tab).

Prior to World War I, Levitov commented, there were an estimated fewer than 5,000 international/foreign students in the U.S., in a period of comparative isolationism. With the advent of the League of Nations and a growing awareness of the U.S., numbers grew. At the conclusion of World War II, the U.S. was acknowledged as a world leader, with interaction with other nations fostered by the Marshall Plan.

Students from foreign countries, primarily at the graduate level in the immediate post World War II era, gravitated primarily to prestigious eastern universities, i.e., Harvard, Columbia and University of Pennsylvania. The Fulbright Act encouraged foreign students and professors to come to the U.S., with the reverse also evident.

In the late 1960's, The Great Society, with non-military U.S. aid to the rest of the world, caused a flush of foreign students. Foreign exchanges relating to agriculture also contributed to growth in numbers of visiting students, including at UNL. In the 1970's, students from OPEC countries (major petroleum producers/exporters) came in droves to the U.S. Of note in the present context of foreign relations: many Muslim students from Iran entered U.S. university campuses, as well as students from Venezuela and Nigeria. In the 1980's, the largest contingent of foreign scholars were Malaysian. More recently, the largest bloc of foreign students in U.S. colleges and universities are from China, followed in order, India, Japan, Korea and Malaysia.

Of about 1,300 foreign students from 106 countries at UNL, 70 percent come from eastern and southern Asia. A similar percentage are enrolled in Big 12 universities, because of climate differences, more foreign students are enrolled in Big 12 schools in the South.

After 9/11, foreign student enrollment on U.S. campuses fell because of the difficulty in obtaining visas, especially for state (other country) sponsored visas. "It was a real mess," Levitov said, and led to a diplomatic backlash to the U.S. Today, foreign students account for 2 percent of all visas issued in the U.S. Approximately 600,000 international students

are studying on U.S. campuses. Many students are non-immigrants—they go back home, he said. Graduate students and their dependents make a significant contribution to Nebraska's economy, Levitov emphasized.

Many foreign students face a difficult adjustment to the different culture of the U.S. Students encounter culture shock when they land in this country. Later they feel good, he said, then it (difficulty in adjusting to U.S. culture) hits them again. Levitov compared foreign students' acculturation to transplanting a flowering plant: "it wilts before blooming."

Family relationships are different in many foreign countries than in the U.S. Use of time can be much different relating to practice of religion and use of leisure time. As foreign students strive to adjust to their environment in the U.S., every day interpersonal communication—slang, regional accents and gestures—differ by geographical region in the U.S.

Levitov had three suggestions for Emeriti:

1. Look into a host family program through the Lincoln Friends of Foreign Students.
2. Through the English Conversation Partners Program, look into matching with a foreign student for one hour a week to engage in casual conversation.
3. UNL has received a large monetary gift enhancing an exchange program with Germany. Foundation support is needed for both directions of the exchange.

In general, he urged spending a few hours looking into history and foreign language of a particular country represented by foreign students in the U.S. and at UNL.

In answer to questions:

The number of African students is down. Of those in the U.S., 2/3 are graduate students and half of that group have research support from their home country. UNL is not as well known as other universities by potential African students. And the climate of the Cornhusker State is not conducive to students from countries in a warmer climate

Levitov distributed a leaflet explaining the Conversation Partners Program for Spring 2006, including an application form, and International Student & Scholar Statistical Data at UNL for spring 2006. Largest fields of study, by category are Arts & Sciences, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Education and Human Sciences.

President Omtvedt called the business session to order at 1 p.m. He noted changes in chairpersons of two committees: Jim McShane will head up the Wisherd Fund Committee; Robert Fuller will chair the Member Relations Committee.

Jim Kendrick called attention to the new feature on the website wherein Emeriti can listen and watch the presentation by the speaker or presenter at monthly membership meetings.

Fuller reported that a memo dated March 9 had been sent to both UNL Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Barbara Couture and Vice Chancellor for IANR John Owens urging that the level of recognition given to faculty who become Emeriti be raised to the campus level, beyond the current recognition by their academic unit. It is proposed that a campus-wide recognition luncheon be sponsored jointly by Dr. Couture's office and the office of Vice Chancellor John Owens, along with the UNL Emeriti Assn. With the present policy of the announcement of those faculty retirees granted Emeriti status occurring once a year—in June—a recognition luncheon could be held in July or August.

The need to recruit members of the Emeriti Assn. was emphasized. Steps to increase this effort would include a revised mission statement and revision of a brochure developed in 1999.

The treasurer's report (now posted on the website), was presented by Walter Mientka, and approved.

Approval was given to transfer \$5,000 from the Wisherd Fund account in the NU Foundation to the Emeriti Association checking account, to be used for any appropriate purpose.

Omtvedt summarized the development of a new logo to be used on envelopes and stationery to be used to mail information to various sub-lists of the Emeriti Assn. master roster. A listing of postal mailings associated with the Emeriti Assn. was distributed to the administrative group, i.e., officers, directors, committee chairs and committee members. Specific and assigned mailings would be done by the president, secretary, treasurer, the Member Relations Committee and chairs of the Membership and Wisherd Committees. Meeting announcements to Association members residing in Lancaster County would continue to be developed by the secretary, printed and mailed by UNL copying and mailing center.

Delivee Wright, in charge of courtesy within the Member Relations Committee, again reminded members of the need to notify her of Emeriti who have returned home after hospitalization and of Emeriti with birthdays in upper age brackets (example: 70, 75, and beyond) so that a basket may be delivered to appropriate recipients. If an Emeritus is well acquainted with a bona fide recipient, it would be fine for he or she to deliver the basket.

A question was raised as to whether a policy should be adopted to send a sympathy card to surviving family members following the death of an Emeritus. Informal consensus seemed to favor adoption of this policy. A decision was left to the courtesy subcommittee of the Member Relations Committee.

Jim McShane agreed to send a personal note to the Baumgarten family and Don Edwards agreed to send a personal note to the Nelson family on behalf of the Emeriti Association

A question was asked as to whether Helen Kreymbourg had achieved Emeritus status. No immediate answer was available.

The next membership meeting will be held April 20 beginning at 12 noon (correction) at the East Campus Union. The program presenter will be Max Clegg, on how to ride across Nebraska on a bicycle (BRAN). Clegg has the experience...he has ridden across Nebraska on a bike nine times...a total of 4,500 miles.

There being no further old, new or unfinished business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan B. Lutz, secretary