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## New Faculty Orientation

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**NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2003**  
**JOHN C. OWENS**  
**NU VICE PRESIDENT AND IANR HARLAN VICE CHANCELLOR**

Good morning! What a pleasure it is for me to have this opportunity to welcome-you to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as we look forward to the new academic year. I promise to keep my remarks short! After a morning of hearing others speak, I know you are looking forward to the opportunity to visit with each other. The opportunity to get to know your new colleagues is a key component of the New Faculty Orientation. And I hope you will get to know those people here today and take advantage of all opportunities you will find to explore common interests together as you build your professional relationships on this campus.

Today I'm going to focus on the good news of UNL, and there is a great deal of good news – much more than anyone could even begin to cover within only a few minutes. While Nebraska, like virtually every other state in the nation, has suffered budget-difficulties in the past two years, and those cuts made to our university budget have been extremely painful, the faculty, the staff, and the students of this great public university have continued to excel.

For instance:

We received a \$10 million award from the National Institutes of Health to establish the Nebraska Center for Redox Biology, a collaborative research enterprise of UNL and our Medical Center's Eppley Cancer Center. Ruma Banerjee, Willa Cather professor of biochemistry, directs the center, and she was awarded the grant through a national, peer-reviewed competition to establish Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence.

Ken Price, Hillegass chair in 19<sup>th</sup>-century American literature, received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the continuing development of an electronic archive of Walt Whitman's poetical writings and other reference materials. Our Department of Mathematics is one of eight math departments from 20 leading research universities selected to participate in the five-year Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, a research and action project aimed at improving doctoral education at U.S. universities.

James Van Etten, William Allington distinguished professor of plant pathology, was just elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest honors accorded a U.S. scientist.

Carole Levin, Willa Cather professor of history, and David Wishart, professor of geography, won National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships.

Our Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery reopened in February after a year of important renovations. We dedicated the new UNL Van Brunt Visitors Center in April. We held the first Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference on this campus this summer, with well-known writers in attendance. The International Quilt Study Center received a donation of the Jonathan Holstein Quilt Collection and the Holstein Collection of Archival Materials, valued at more than \$2.2 million.

Our students gave us much to celebrate, both here on campus and nationally. Chris Gustafson, an agribusiness, economics and public policy graduate who minored in international agriculture, natural resources, and Italian, earned a Fulbright Scholarship and is off to Italy for a year's study.

At holiday-time during last year's semester break, students from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications traveled to Cuba for an intensive, fact-finding mission as part of the college's depth-reporting class.

The list of UNL successes is way too long to totally cover today. And to that very long list I now add each of you. You have come here to add your talents, your expertise, and your enthusiasm to the faculty of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I count that as a great success for us all. Each and everyone of you now will be influencing individuals, communities, our state, and, indeed, the nation and beyond. And each of you will strengthen the University's position-of-excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I look forward to working with you and applauding your individual and  
collective successes in the years ahead. Welcome to the University.