



The Chancellor's Report

A report to special friends and supporters of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

April 2006

Partnership focuses on new energy sources

The Nebraska Public Power District this month announced it will provide \$5 million in funding over the next five years to the new Center for Energy Sciences Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Chancellor Harvey Perlman

The center will focus on the development of new sources of domestic energy, leading to less dependence on foreign oil and greater economic opportunities for our state. We anticipate the Regents approving this center at an upcoming meeting.

We have a number of faculty already looking at biofuels, hydrogen technology, wind energy and other options that could reduce our need for fossil fuels, and this new center acknowledges the huge potential of some of this existing research. The funding from NPPD positions the university well to participate in the national initiatives recently announced by President Bush.

This is a very significant development and I greatly appreciate the leadership of the NPPD board and CEO Ron Asche as they, once again, demonstrate good stewardship of finite resources and pave the way to provide Nebraska with a strategic advantage in our world economy. Nebraska is the only state in the nation with all public power, and joining the resources of

NPPD and UNL to take on a leading role in producing energy for generations to come makes sense for Nebraska.

I am optimistic that other entities in the state will take note of this development and add to the support of this enterprise.

As we continue to develop strategic partnerships, we must continue to focus on our research infrastructure. LB605, a bill passed by the Legislature and awaiting the Governor's signature (at this writing), provides funding for capital needs at the university and state colleges. The bill authorizes the issuance of revenue bonds to be repaid by annual contributions from the State matched by contributions from the University. This issue is important to Nebraska from an economic development viewpoint. While the Antelope Valley Project will open up land for building more research, current facilities that house world-class research in atomic physics, nanotechnology, and agriculture are also in need of renovation to ensure that we have buildings that are not only safe, but are capable of supporting 21st century research. A strategic investment in competitive facilities, such as the funding LB605 will provide, will keep Nebraska competitive. I am pleased that the Legislature has decided to provide this important support.

Our partnerships in research and investments in our infrastructure — visible demonstrations of support for research leading to economic benefits — will continue to attract top researchers in many fields. The new Center for Energy Sciences Research will attract top



researchers from across the nation, as well as students who want to become involved in the development of new energy sources. The fact that undergraduate students can and do have opportunities to conduct research with top faculty mentors is a point in our favor when it comes to recruiting students.

Speaking of recruitment of students — all indications tell us we can expect significantly more new incoming students next fall. This is good news and we are now working to ensure that we have enough space in the core courses taken by first-year students. These include English, history, communication studies and chemistry. To make certain we have enough space in the fall for our new students, we are providing an incentive for sophomores, juniors and seniors to take such courses in the summer sessions, rather than waiting until fall semester. This is the first time we have ever offered a discount on tuition, and it may or may not be the last time. But this summer, students can save \$30 per credit hour, or \$90 per class, by signing up for specified summer session courses, which are posted on our web site at www.unl.edu/summer.

This is just one of many measures we are putting in place to prepare to make all new students feel welcome as they start their college career.

Retention of students continues to be a key focus

We are also boosting enrollment by working to keep students in school through graduation. We are having success; since 2000, our retention rate has grown 1 percent each year. That amounts to approximately 36 students per year, or a total of about 180 since 2000.

Under the leadership of our Office of Undergraduate Studies, we have focused on developing strategies to keep students in school, recognizing that even a little extra support can go a long way in helping students realize their individual potential.

You will be seeing and hearing more about this in the coming year.

15 new programs gear up to support student advising

As you may recall from my previous letters, UNL remains a model in the nation for innovative undergraduate education programs. We take that honor seriously enough to keep investing in new programs to improve outcomes for our students.

Our Academic Affairs office last month awarded 15 new internal grants, totaling \$285,000, to UNL faculty and staff to develop innovative ways to improve advising and other learning-focused projects. I thank the University of Nebraska Foundation Grants Committee for again supporting this project through a grant fund designated to sustain and improve undergraduate education.



This is what a 1% increase in student retention looks like.

For each of the past five years, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has done 1% better in student retention than the year before. That means 36 more students this year 'hung in there' to move toward graduation...180 more since 2000.

Even though we can be proud of our 84% student retention rate, we know we can do even better. The support of our Alumni Association is important in making this effort even more successful. If you know a current UNL student, encourage them to stay in school through graduation — because that 1% isn't about numbers, it's about individual students, their potential and their future... and ours.

For a list of things faculty and staff are doing to help students stay in school, go to <http://www.unl.edu/retain>.



Our students tell us they need someone at UNL to take a personal interest in them, and help them convert vague aspirations into clear but flexible goals. To that end, we have several new initiatives, including one to promote every student's transition to college life, another that addresses advising for success in mathematics, and yet another designed to support advising through alumni and employers.

Community service remains a major part of UNL's culture

I continue to be proud of the great work being done by our students and faculty in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Wayne Drummond, dean of the College of Architecture, just returned from New Orleans where he and students from two senior design studios are working on redevelopment projects in the devastated and abandoned inner-city area of Jubilee City.

Another 93 UNL students, staff and faculty spent part of their winter break on a service-learning hurricane relief trip to Waveland, Miss. to help with clean-up operation. A similar group spent its spring break in Kiln, Miss. We are also building these service-learning experiences into our curriculum.

PROJECTS FUNDED — A special section in the *Scarlet*, the newspaper for UNL faculty and staff, heralded the 15 grants awarded to proposals aimed at supporting student advising. Learn more online at www.unl.edu/svcaa/itle.



SERVICE LEARNING — UNL students Jinohn Temple and Leah Daharsh pick up debris caused by Hurricane Katrina during the winter-break service learning project in Waveland, Miss.

New majors are pulling in more students

We are very excited about the new Landscape Architecture program which will be offered in partnership with Agronomy and Horticulture. The focus of this professional program is the conservation, stewardship and appropriate utilization of the natural resources of our state through design for the benefit of all citizens and communities of Nebraska.

Students enrolled in another relatively new major, Professional Golf Management, have shown success. This program, which started in 2004, raised some eyebrows when we first announced it. Here is one indicator of how things are going: Nineteen of our students reached the point at which they were required to undergo rigorous testing by the Professional Golf Association. The PGA warned us that new programs should expect a 50 percent failure rate. All 19 of the UNL students passed all eight of the tests—the first time that has ever been accomplished by any university PGM program or at the PGA testing center in Florida.

These students are learning about all aspects of the business of golf, including horticulture and agronomy, business practices and about the game of golf.

UNL's PGM program is attracting students from all over the nation.



LINING UP — Professional golf management major Todd Schaferman, a junior from Hooper, Neb., lines up a putt.

Giving back

UNL students, faculty and staff have helped in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in a number of ways, including clean-up trips to Waveland and Kiln, Miss.



There is no place like the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Learning • Excellence • Achievement • Diversity • Engagement • Research • Stewardship

I continue to be amazed at the wide range of areas and initiatives in which your university is involved, and I often wonder if focusing an organization this diverse is even possible. I do know that the common thread in all of this can be summed up in our core values:

Core Values

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln values:

- Learning that prepares students for life-time success and leadership;
- Excellence pursued without compromise;
- Achievement supported by a climate that celebrates each person's success;
- Diversity of ideas and people;

• Engagement with academic, business, and civic communities throughout Nebraska and the world;

• Research and creative activity that informs teaching, fosters discovery, and contributes to economic prosperity and our quality of life;

• Stewardship of the human, financial, and physical resources committed to our care.

The best way to remember this list is that the first letter of each value, put together, spells the word, "Leaders," which is really what we are all about. Thank you for your leadership in supporting the University.

Presorted
First Class Mail
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit 46
Lincoln NE

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

201 Canfield Administration Building
Lincoln, NE 68588-0419

