

## Research role

Apparently, there's a lot more to education than teaching. Take, for instance, the many and varied types of research now in progress at UNL. Research may not have much to do with the direct teaching process, but it has a lot to do with quality of education.

In an interview Wednesday, Research Administrator Francis Schmehl said that this year over \$17 million will be spent on research in the NU system, most of which is paid for by grants from the federal government. And that's a lot of research.

But what exactly is this research? And what does it entail? Webster defines research as "systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, undertaken to establish facts or principles." The definition certainly applies here. On the UNL campus, nearly every department has members researching some educational concern of the University system.

According to Schmehl, the University allows all faculty members to allot 10 to 15 per cent of their time to research. In addition, the University has a number of faculty members who do not teach at all, but provide the manpower for research projects paid for by federal grants. This usually is handled either through leaves of absence or summer work. Those who do not take the leaves of absence do research in spare time, often as an overload on top of coursework.

The areas in which research is conducted are as varied as the researchers. While more research is conducted in the physical science departments, work is underway in virtually every area imaginable, including the humanities. About half the research conducted at NU is basic, having to do with theoretical, general concerns rather than specific interests. This wide base speaks well

for the NU program, for in a University with the scope of Nebraska, it would be disastrous to dwell on one area of research.

In some specific cases, research undertaken by the University has directly benefited students in a classroom situation. One example of this is found in the chemistry department, where, after completing a research stint, Dr. Charles Wilkins helped introduce the use of computers to improve the graduate and undergraduate chemistry programs.

Most often, however, the benefits to students are less tangible. While not always visible, it is fairly certain that research aids teachers in keeping up with advances in their field. This automatically makes them more able to effectively communicate new developments in their fields. If this research were to be discontinued, many members of the faculty would find it difficult indeed to absorb the quantity of new information which accumulates weekly in any specific field.

Currently, NU is at neither a high nor a low spot in its total amount of grants awarded. The University's \$17 million figure is astonishingly low compared to Massachusetts Institute of Technology's \$99 million, top figure in the United States. On the other hand, it ranks in the middle of the Big Eight in total receipts. Compared with other area schools of comparable size, the University stacks up like this:

University	Total grants in \$millions	Rank in U.S. colleges
Colorado	\$32 million	21st
Missouri	22	39
Kansas	17	54
Nebraska	16	62
Colorado St.	15	64
Kansas St.	10	96

Of this grant money, only 58.3 per cent goes to salaries, however. Over 31.1 per cent must go to operating expenses, (including animals, food chemicals, glassware and so forth) while another 2.8 per cent goes to travel and 7.8 per cent to equipment each year. As such, the research program has strict limits.

As worthwhile as research is, it would be extremely difficult to expand the programs. Since most of the financing for research comes from federal coffers and nearly all the rest is made up by private foundations, to increase programs an institution would have to receive an increase in federal or private funding. Since most grants are received because of requests from the faculty, to expand the program would require increased faculty requests. And this is unlikely. Due to the present understaffed, overworked state of the UNL faculty, it is doubtful that research will expand extensively in the next few years.

It appears NU may stay at the medium level in research a while longer.

Jim Gray



## Christmas comes but once a day in 1984

America's chronic economic ills were solved at last with the election in 1984 of President Jeremiah Jingles. Jingles ran on the Merry Christmas Ticket.

His platform consisted of but a single pledge: "If I am elected, we will celebrate Christmas every day!"

This platform was not only politically appealing (for most voters liked Christmas, all in all), but it was economically astute.

As Jingles noted in his campaign speeches, for generations Christmas spending had stimulated increased employment, soaring retail sales and the use of vacant lots for peddling Christmas trees.

"But as it is now," he would say frowning, "Santa Claus doesn't descend from his helicopter until the week before Halloween. Why should we reap the

afternoon? "Ho, ho, ho! May I wish you a Merry Christmas today," he said, "and tomorrow and Wednesday and Thursday and..."

What happy days those were! Strangers smiled warmly at each other on the streets and exchanged the universal greeting: "Merry Christmas!"

The economy boomed. New stores blossomed everywhere. Factories hummed around the clock. Hallmark stock hit 873 7/8 on the Big Board. The production of tea cozies, black negligees and stuffed pandas quadrupled.

By March, full employment was not only a reality, but there was a labor shortage.

True, there were minor problems. In April Congress was forced to pass a law banning the sale of anything but plastic Christmas trees as the demand for gift wrappings was denuding the forests. And during a June heat wave there were numerous brown-outs caused by the strain imposed by both air conditioners and Christmas lights.

But the first real crack in the cherry facade didn't occur until the Fourth of July. That was when a husband in Scranton hung himself with one of his 432 neckties. The note he left behind said simply: "There wasn't one I liked."

The following week, a housewife in Elmira ran amuck and killed two neighbors with a cleaver, shouting she had mistakenly sent them two Christmas cards that day only to discover they hadn't sent her one for a week. (She was later proved mistaken.)

By last November, the nation was nervous and jittery. Riots broke out in department stores whenever Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" was played. And all a warm greeting of "Merry Christmas" was likely to get you was a punch in the nose.

So it was that Congress met on Dec. 25, a day like any other, and amid cries of "Bah, humbug!" voted to impeach President Jingles.

At the same time, they passed a law decreeing that any person caught wearing a red suit and white beard in public on or before Dec. 15 would be shot on sight.

And America has lived sanely, if not happily, ever after.

arthur  
hoppe  
**innocent  
bystander**

benefits of Christmas solely during the last fiscal quarter? Let's spread yuletide joy throughout the year."

Idealists flocked to his banner. "What a wonderful world this will be," said one, "if the spirit of peace and good will prevails year 'round." And clerics joined his cause in droves.

"I can think of nothing more Christian, sir," a deacon in Schenectady told him, "than to celebrate daily the birth of Our Blessed Savior."

"Who?" said Jingles. "Oh, yes Him, too."

So Jingles was elected in a landslide. Who will ever forget his inaugural address that snowy January

