

# Neb. state colleges caught in money crunch

By Mark Hoffman

The telephone rings and Max Lundstrom excuses himself from the interview to answer it.

Today he is his own secretary. Strange? Maybe not, except Lundstrom is the Wayne State College (WSC) vice president for administration, and two days a week, Monday and Friday, he is without a secretary.

That, he said, is one of the ways WSC is trying to make ends meet with a \$3.4 million budget for the 1973-74 academic year.

WSC, like many small colleges across the nation, is feeling the impact of smaller enrollment, less financial support and the need to reduce programs and cut instructors.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, a national collegiate publication, the four Nebraska state colleges—Chadron State, Peru State, Wayne State and Kearney State—might have to dismiss 50 faculty members after this academic year because of declining enrollment.

Chadron State College (CSC) has announced that it will drop its foreign languages program. Don Deselms, CSC vice president for academic affairs, cited lack of student interest as the main reason for dropping the program.

But "if we had all the money in the world, we wouldn't worry about dropping programs," he said.

Although WSC enrollment has dropped from a peak of 3,068 in the autumn of 1968 to 1,802 this semester, WSC has not had to cut programs, but program sizes have been reduced and teachers have been cut, Lundstrom said.

In the autumn of 1971, WSC had the equivalent of 110.9 full time teachers for 2,668 students. Now there are only 81.39 full time teachers, Lundstrom said.

How is this teacher reduction felt in the classroom? Russell Rasmussen, chairman of the WSC Physical Sciences Dept., said that his department has the equivalent of 11 instructors.

The department includes 13 programs including preveterinary medicine, prepharmacy, pre-engineering, premedicine and preoceanography.

The Chemistry Dept. has two and one half instructors because Rasmussen, as departmental chairman, is supposed to be teaching only half time, "but I always teach full time," he said.

Instructors not only teach class, he said, but help in the laboratories, are responsible for checking inventories on chemical stocks and service equipment because the school cannot afford to take out maintenance contracts on equipment.

A maintenance contract allows equipment buyers

to take out a contract similar to insurance. If the equipment breaks down, the company pays for repairs.

Rasmussen said, "our manpower is 11 people, but with these other jobs, we have about eight doing the work for about 14 people."

He, like many WSC instructors, could be found working at their offices on Saturday.

Not just instructors, but the materials to work with have been in short supply.

Last year, the WSC Chemistry Dept. received \$1,000 to buy chemicals for about 400 to 450 chemistry students, he said.

The Chemistry Dept. received \$3,000 this year for chemicals and equipment repair.

"This year we feel our budget is half (of what it should be), but we feel we are at the helm of a gray ship," he said.

The budget for UNL undergraduate chemistry instruction for 1973-74 was \$46,614. About 2,500 students are involved in the program, said George Sturgeon, UNL associate professor of chemistry and chemistry laboratory director. Included in this budget, he said, are expenditures for chemicals, minor laboratory equipment and maintenance.

Niel Edmunds, WSC dean of Applied and Professional Studies, said that inadequate finances to meet inflation has resulted in fewer instructors and heavier workloads in such areas as industrial education.

"We have lost buying power for material and equipment, and have had to rob the instructional budget for maintenance," he said.

A new industrial arts building is under construction at WSC, but "if we don't have the finances for the equipment, we are cheating the student," Edmunds said.

Irvin Brandt, WSC dean of Arts and Sciences, said WSC's financial situation has resulted in a reevaluation of current programs and classes.

As a result of that reevaluation, some classes are offered once very two years, to economize with larger enrollment in each class, he said.

Even with declining enrollment and financial difficulties, Lundstrom remained optimistic about the future of WSC. WSC is necessary "to meet the needs of this area," he said.

For example, Wayne Public High School started a program for training mentally disabled children that has won it national recognition, Lundstrom said.

Other area high schools are developing similar programs and "eventually we will be moving into an area where we will have to provide teachers (for these programs)," he said.

WSC also hosts weekend workshops for area high schools teachers. The subject of the workshops might range from courses on career education to becoming acquainted with the metric system.

In view of declining enrollment, Val Peterson, WSC distinguished professor of political science, said, "sheer size is not what counts."

Peterson, who has been U.S. ambassador to Denmark and Finland, Nebraska governor and University of Nebraska regent, received his first college degree at WSC.

He said the quality of college education is "not a mass production thing. You can't measure it like you do in selling seats to a football game."



Max Lundstrom

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## Historical visit

There is a chance that in April a UNL residence hall will have a resident who is more than 70 years old and who is able to pass any American history test without studying.

The man is Henry Steele Commager, professor of American history at Amherst College in Amherst, Mass., a private liberal arts college for men.

Commager's visit is being sponsored by the State University of Nebraska (SUN) program and the UNL History Dept. He will be on the UNL campus April 8 through 26.

Edward Homze, acting chairman of the History Dept., called Commager "probably the most distinguished American historian living today."

Homze said the often outspoken Commager will give 15 lectures on the American Revolution. Students may receive one hour of credit for attending the lectures. Nonstudents also may sit in, he said.

"He (Commager) insists upon living on campus while he is here," Homze said. "He believes this will give him a better chance to communicate with the students."

He said Commager might be able to stay in the Neihardt Residential Center.

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