

Academic program

## Evaluation under way

How do you define excellence in an academic program?

That question will face faculty and staff as the Academic Program Evaluation begins on the UNL campus, according to UNL Chancellor James Zumberge.

The program, now under way, is to increase the public accountability of the university. Zumberge said, "As a result of inflation and other factors, we face tough fiscal problems and must develop a strategy to help us solve these problems while meeting our responsibilities to society."

He added, "Public accountability requires that we show benefits from our expenditures and that we meet the ever changing needs of our students and the community which supports us."

### Program impetus

Providing impetus for program evaluation were the Faculty Senate and the Legislature. Zumberge said, "From the Faculty Senate came a resolution for a screening and evaluation process sufficient to serve the future of a University faced with declining enrollment, rising costs and in need of quality improvement."

Zumberge added that the Legislature called for improved quality also, but asked, "How do you define quality?"

The process of evaluation, according to Zumberge, will consist of a brief initial evaluation of each program by those involved in it. The evaluation will determine goals, establish what the program is presently doing, and how well it is doing it, and what ways the program could improve.

Included in the evaluation will be information about a program's potential for extending educational opportunities beyond the campus, improving research, enhancing service to the state and consideration of the needs of the state's citizens not now being met.

Academic Program Evaluation will encompass the University's Areas of Excellence program, Zumberge said.

"They will be more deeply involved in the evaluation process during the 1974-75 academic year."

Areas of Excellence involves the appropriation of more than \$440,000 to six different UNL programs to develop their potential.

### Others not excluded

NU President D. B. Varner said the designation of the six programs does not exclude others from consideration for funds and for future reference as an area of excellence. Zumberge said, "There will be other areas of excellence proposed in the future, and they will be proposed as a result of the initial screening system."

The program evaluation will include a look at the justification of existing programs as well as how they can be improved.

"It is no longer an adequate response that we continue an academic program because we have always had it," Zumberge said.

Zumberge has concluded that the flexibility of emphasizing promising programs, de-emphasizing or eliminating programs that have outlived their usefulness and recognizing the need for new programs "may be retained only through extensive evaluation of the programs, new and existing."

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