

Student teachers get aerospace instruction

A special program for students in the Teacher's College is making earthbound teachers airborne, according to Frank Sorenson, Link Foundation coordinator at UNL.

To expose teachers at all levels to what is happening in the air, in space and in the oceans, Sorenson said UNL has a program to train teachers in aerospace studies, so they in turn can teach their students.

Teacher's College has had such a program since 1940, he said.

This week, Ralph Flexman, director of the University of Illinois Institute of Aviation, and Omer Benn, chief of pilot training at the University of Illinois, were in Lincoln to speak with faculty members, staff members and students interested in flying and aerospace technology.

Illinois research

Flexman reported on research being done at the Illinois Institute.

The major area of study has been on the human factors of flying and how a machine's design can affect the pilot's flying, Flexman said.

The altimeter, an instrument which measures altitude, is commonly misread by pilots, he said. After research, the Illinois Institute found that altimeters with digital readout rather than dials are less likely to cause pilot error, according to Flexman.

Benn said that during the 30 years the University of Illinois has offered a flight training program, they have had 10,000-11,000 persons complete the program. All those students have received private pilot's licenses, and 50 per cent have gone on to receive commercial licenses, he said.

45-plane fleet

The University of Illinois owns its own airport and has a fleet of 45 airplanes, Benn said.

UNL does not have its own airport or planes for instruction, but Sorenson said there is an active interest in aviation on campus. He estimated that 50 faculty members fly regularly and several own their own planes.

Seventeen Air Force ROTC students at UNL are now taking flight training, he said. In addition, faculty members and students have organized the UNL Flying Club.

The aeronautics program at UNL has had impact on a lot of people, Sorenson said.

At the University of Illinois, the aeronautics thrust has been towards research, he said. However, at UNL, the thrust has been towards an expanded education for teachers, according to Sorenson.

Summer scholarships

During the summer, the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics has offered scholarships for several Teacher's College students to receive flight training.

After receiving instruction in aeronautics, Sorenson said the teacher can then relay the knowledge to his students.

A program of teaching aeronautics to elementary students has begun at McFey School in Lincoln, he said.

The funds for the UNL program come from the Link Foundation, Sorenson said. The Link Foundation was founded by Edwin A. Link, who developed the "Link Trainer" in the early 1940's for use in pre-flight training.

The Link Foundation, a private foundation which supports aerospace-related projects, has given grants to more than 103 universities since its formation.



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