

Journalism seeks to maintain quality

By Theresa Forsman

The excellence program has allowed UNL's School of Journalism to start a small, high quality graduate program and to maintain and improve the present quality of its nationally-recognized undergraduate program in the face of large enrollment increases, according to R. Neale Copple, director of the journalism school.

"We have been slow about going into graduate work," Copple said, "because we have been afraid that such a step would bleed funds from the undergraduate program and hurt its quality."

"The excellence designation made it possible for us to take the step and to continue to improve our present offerings," Copple said.

Wilma B. Crumley, vice director of the School of Journalism, is in charge of organizing the graduate program. The school accepted its first graduate students this year.

The Legislature appropriated \$75,000 last year for the graduate program and \$25,000 in excellence money this year for the undergraduate program.

Instruction increased

The money was used to increase instruction at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and to obtain support staff for both programs, Copple said.

Copple emphasized that the school is not necessarily hiring instructors only for the graduate program.

"Our philosophy is," he said, "that in all likelihood no professor will devote full time to teaching graduate courses. We think both the teaching and the students are better served by people who are contributing to the undergraduate program as well."

Copple said the school has one of the best journalism teaching staffs in the country. Their talents need to be used where the state will gain the most benefit.

Excellence money also was used to increase the "impossible operating budgets" of the school's newspaper and radio station, Copple said.

The Nebraska Reporter is a laboratory newspaper pub-



Neal Copple, Director of the School of Journalism

Photo by Kevin Higley

lished twice weekly by the journalism school and includes work done by students in reporting, editing and photography classes.

KRNU is the UNL's radio station which provides laboratory experience for broadcasting students.

Copple said he has not totally committed all the excellence funds on a permanent basis in order to reduce the consequences of an unforeseen budget cut.

The new graduate program was originally planned to accept 12 full-time students and 12 part-time students. Because of the high quality of students applying for the program, Copple said, the school accepted 13 full-time and 23 part-time students into its first-year graduate program.

Expansion to be discussed

Copple said he will discuss expansion of the graduate program with the visiting evaluation team this year.

Students are admitted into the graduate program on the basis of samples of their work, their transcript, and their reasons for wanting to enter UNL's journalism graduate program. Applicants are not required to take the Graduate Record Exam, Copple said, because studies have shown the test is not a reliable indication of how well a student will succeed in graduate school.

There are approximately 850 journalism majors at UNL. This represents an eight per cent increase over last year's enrollment.

In 1972, the total number of undergraduate journalism majors jumped 54 per cent over the previous years.

Journalism students have the option to major in the news-editorial broadcast or advertising sequences. Also, students in teachers, agriculture or home economics colleges may cross-enroll in the School of Journalism.

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