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JANUARY 27, 1977
CENTENNIAL ROOM
NEBRASKA UNION

4:00 - 5:30 & 7:30 - 9:00

Medical center graduate program to return to former four-year plan

The University of Nebraska Medical Center has reversed a 1970 decision which shortened its program to three years and will return to the four-year graduate program, according to a center official.

Dr. Perry Rigby, medical center dean, said the program originally was shortened to three years so more students could be admitted and be graduated quickly. He said there now are fewer residencies available for graduate students, so the four-year program will return.

Rigby said the number of residency positions is expected to decrease nationally from about 25,000 in the 1970s to 17,000 by 1980, while the number of students graduating has increased from about 9,000 to 16,000.

Dr. Hobart Wiltse, assistant dean and chairman of the curriculum committee, said the majority of students at the medical center are studying for family practices. Residency positions for this field are expected to be full nationwide by 1980, he said.

"We're looking ahead at a crunch," Rigby said. "The four-year program seems to be the best way possible to prepare the students for the competition."

The four-year program will be an "enrichment period" for the student, he said. There will be more time for elective courses, research and vacations for the students.

Under the three-year program, students were forced to decide after 13 months which medical field they

wanted to enter. For some students, this meant choosing a field before they even completed basic science courses, Rigby and Wiltse said.

"Students need to make a career choice," Rigby said, "and they need to have quality education to be able to make their choice. The four-year program will give them more time to choose the career that is right for them."

The four-year program will go into effect with the class entering in 1978, but will not affect present medical center students, Rigby and Wiltse said.

The three-year option still will be available for students who qualify scholastically and have shown they are able to handle the stress of a three-year program, according to Rigby. Most of these students will be persons with advanced degrees, he added.

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