

Program to solve computer illiteracy

In the first year of a unique program at NU, faculty members will develop their ideas on how to acquaint members with computer use, said Don Costello, director of Academic Computing Services.

Costello said about 20 faculty members will be chosen as Computer Network Associates. He said the network is looking for teachers who are innovative, who have the backing of their deans and department chairmen, and who are willing to work toward the goal of "computer literacy."

The program was started when a recent study showed that less than 15 percent of NU graduates have had exposure to computers in their studies.

Costello said people chosen for the program will receive some release time from their teaching duties during the six to 18 months of the program.

"Those chosen for this program generally will be more sophisticated computer users who will be trained to author programs," Costello said.

"Some associates will need very little assistance, while others will need to learn the languages and techniques used to develop computer-assisted instructional materials."

The Computer Network will provide machine time, staff and materials to the associates. The network does the data processing involved in registration, the payroll and grade reports.

"Computers will play a larger and larger role in the functioning of society," Costello said. "People in a larger number of fields will have to come to grips with the role of computers in their discipline."

He said their chances of success will depend more and more on their computer knowledge.

He said, for example, that medical students can simulate a patient's case with computers and test the effectiveness of different treatments in simulation before making a diagnosis.

Costello said the program has the approval of university-wide academic affairs and UNL Chancellor Roy Young's Deans Council. He said he hopes all colleges within NU will take part. The computer instruction materials that are developed may be sold to other universities, he said.

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