

Dental college drills through 52,000 appointments

By John Ortman

On-the-job training is the order of the day at the UNL College of Dentistry, where 300 students pulled 2,774 patients through 52,000 appointments last year.

College Dean Richard Bradley said sophomore, junior and senior dental students work on patients from the community in the college's East Campus clinic. The clinic can perform all kinds of dental work, he said, including oral surgery.

The clinic's services are open to anyone, and appointment can be made by phone, Bradley said. He added, however, that not every patient is accepted for treatment because students able to treat complex problems may not always be available.

The clinic is self-supporting, Bradley said, because clinic operations must be paid for by clinic income. Treatment is relatively inexpensive, he said.

The college charges considerably less (one-half to two-thirds as much) as private practices, charge, Bradley said.

Bradley said that while freshmen dental students are exposed to patients, clinical work does not begin until the sophomore year. Juniors and seniors spend most of their time in the clinic, he said.

Senior dental student Charles James explained that freshman and sophomore years are predominately academic, although students do work on tooth-equipped mannequins. The work on mannequins eases the transition to patients, he said.

"The first time a student does a procedure on a patient is not the first time he has done it," James said. "In the sophomore year we start out with an introduction to periodontic treatment, which involves the gums and soft tissues of the mouth."

James said sophomores also learn how to fill teeth with silver amalgam and how to construct gold crowns.

The senior year is reserved for refinement of techniques, James said. Seniors also are exposed to more complicated processes such as oral and restorative surgery.

"I feel qualified," he said. "Our whole time here is an internship. I feel the people in my class are competent. They know correct procedures."

James said seniors also spend seven weeks working at area hospitals and institutions with children and the handicapped. This seven weeks is valuable in learning to deal with scared patients, he said.

"By the time you get exposed to some of these stressful situations an ordinary patient seems easy to handle."

Sheri Vidlock of Lincoln is one of 40 enrolled in the college's 4-year dental hygiene program. She said the dental hygienist program also stresses the reality of



Photo by Bob Pearson

An upperclass dental student works on one of the College of Dentistry's 52,000 clinic appointments.

practice.

"We work on each other the first semester of the junior year and on patients the second," she said. "In the senior year we are assigned to three dental students and take orders from them."

Bradley said that in addition to doing research and providing continuing education to practicing dentists, the college is an innovator.

A grant two years ago from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has financed a 3-year program stressing treatment for the handicapped, Bradley said. UNL was one of 11 schools to receive the grant.

Special problems of the handicapped include medications they may be taking and the physical inability to get in and out of dentist's chairs, Bradley said. The thrust of the program is to normalize treatment for the handicapped, he said, explaining that in the past many dentists were reluctant to treat them because it was thought special techniques and equipment were needed.

Bradley said that last summer the college received a three-year, \$1.5 million grant from the National Medical Library to provide computerized instruction at the college. The new system will allow students to test themselves on different areas of knowledge, he said.

James said he would return to his hometown, Falls City, after his May graduation, ready to begin private practice.

Exon will discuss farm strike at UNL

Gov. J. James Exon will be the keynote speaker Tuesday in the East Union at a discussion of the farm strike and agricultural policy.

The discussion, sponsored by agriculture honorary, Alpha Zeta, will begin at 7 p.m. in the Great Plains Room.

Exon's 30-minute opening speech will be followed by 10-minute presentations by Stan DeBoer, American Agriculture spokesman; Ralph Knobel of the Farm Bureau and Daryl Holle of the National Farmer's Organization.

Floor discussion and questions will be moderated by Everett Peterson, a UNL agricultural economics professor.

Ag Forum is an annual discussion of agriculture issues to inform faculty members, students and the public, said Bill Connealy, Alpha Zeta president.

East Campus landscape plans near completion, name needed

A plan to landscape a barren area on East Campus may move a step closer to completion on March 10, when a design will be presented to UNL and East Campus administrators.

Horticulture Professor Richard Sutton said the presentation will be at 1 p.m. in the East Union and will include discussion of the design, funding sources and a name for the area.

"One of the problems is that the area doesn't have an identity," Sutton said. "I'm getting tired of calling it 'the open area south of the union'."

Sutton said the design grew out of projects completed last semester by his

planting design class. Four groups studied the area and produced detailed designs, including mock-ups and maps showing wind flow, traffic and plant species to be used.

The present design was developed by Sutton and the UNL grounds department, using ideas from the class project, he said.

Sutton estimates the design will cost \$45,000 and will include sidewalks, grading, a sprinkler system and plant materials.

If funding for the project is obtained, Sutton said grading and sidewalks could be finished by next fall. He estimated the entire project could be completed by June 1979.



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