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UNL to get \$1.4 million for spectrometric study

UNL has been selected as one of six new regional scientific instrumentation facilities by the National Science Foundation, according to Michael Gross, associate professor of chemistry.

He said the university will receive a total of \$1.4 million over four years and be established as one of the world's leading centers for mass spectrometric research, the analysis of quantities of chemical samples with sensitive equipment.

The university will get \$677,000 this year to buy a new mass spectrometer and the supporting computer equipment. The equipment will be housed in the chemistry department in Hamilton Hall and is expected to be ready within a year.

Gross said one reason UNL was chosen over 115 other applicants was because the university already has one of the finest mass spectrometers and the staff to run it.

"We told them if they fund us with another we will be at the very frontier of the field," Gross said.

He said the new spectrometer will greatly increase the facility's capability and be

used to analyze more complex chemical samples. The two-year-old spectrometer will be used for samples with fewer chemical elements.

Gross said the creation of regional instrumentation facilities represents a change in direction for the National Science Foundation, which has traditionally helped individual colleges and universities establish their own laboratories.

But a revolution in technology and escalating equipment costs have forced the NSF to turn, instead, to centrally located facilities that can be used by many scientists.

He said UNL's facility will be shared by scientists from all over the nation. NSF will provide travel expenses for scientists to come to the center to use the equipment.

Gross said mass spectrometric techniques apply to almost all scientific fields, such as agriculture, where it can be used to identify pesticide residues.

He said mass spectroscopy also is crucial in monitoring the environment for traces of chemicals such as DDT and other trace pollutants.

Survival Skills Center trains unemployed wanting to work

Many cities have agencies which train persons for employment, but Lincoln has an agency that trains persons in urban survival.

The agency is the Survival Skills Center at 12th and O streets. It serves those eligible for benefits from the Comprehensive Employment Training Agency according to Suzanne L. Merwick, SSC assistant director.

The eligibility requirements for CETA used to be that a person be unemployed for seven days, Merwick said, but, CETA now also is requiring that a person meet low-income eligibility requirements.

She said the center is designed to fill in the cracks left by other agencies.

She explained that most cities have a four to five percent unemployment rate, but Lincoln only has a 2.7 percent rate.

This means that many of the unemployed in Lincoln are persons who are chronically unemployed and do not fit into existing vocational programs because they do not have the social or coping skills to keep a job, Merwick said.

Retarded couple

An example of a client they helped was a married couple which was mentally retarded, she said.

The couple was unable to be totally

independent so an apartment had to be found with houseparents, Merwick said.

A sponsor in the community also was needed to help the couple and they both required vocational training, she said.

The center even helped the woman get a uniform for her job, Merwick said.

The center emphasizes self-sufficiency, according to Merwick.

"We refuse to make you (the client) dependent on an agency."

"Sometimes people come in her who want to be supported by an agency and don't want to work. We just tell them that we can't help them and to come back when they're ready to work."

Dr. Gary Meers, SCC director, and UNL associate professor of business education, along with other faculty members, approached CETA with the survival skills program idea, she said.

Cooperative effort

UNL administers the center, but it receives its funds from CETA and the Department of Labor and works in cooperation with the State Department of Education's Division of Vocational Education, she said.

The center opened in June of 1977. A year from now the university will withdraw from the program and probably turn it over to CETA, Merwick said.

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