

# Professor discusses academic department studies

By Mary Louise Knapp

Research literature on higher education is not sophisticated enough to meet the needs of colleges and universities, a University of Kentucky professor said Thursday.

John Smart, the director of research and programming in higher education at the University of Kentucky, discussed the problems and assets of current studies on academic departments.

"The research literature we have is basically an accumulation of descriptive studies and value statements, leaving us with only weak and shallow knowledge," he said.

Smart said although fully-developed, coherent research has been done on all areas of the lives of college students, little has been learned in the past two or three decades about faculty members and academic departments.

Smart referred to a report by higher

Smart explained that "hard" academic departments include the natural and physical sciences, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, and agricultural economics. "Soft" departments include social and political sciences, anthropology, English, philosophy, history, and communications.

Smart said he was not sure why Biglan chose those terms to describe academic departments, and said that some people in "soft" departments might be offended by that term.

education researcher Anthony Biglan titled "Relationships Between Subject Matter Characteristics and the Structure and Output of University Departments" as one of the most reliable studies in that area. The report was published in the Journal of Applied Psychology in 1973.

The study divides academic departments into three categories: "hard" or "soft," "life systems" or "non-life systems," and "pure" or "applied."

"Soft" doesn't mean "bad," he said.

Life systems, Smart said, are those departments dealing with life in general, such as the natural and social sciences, whereas "non-life" systems include other sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

"Pure" departments refer to the general study of a subject, such as English. "Applied" departments apply the knowledge in a practical way.

Smart, who has researched faculty members in universities across the country, said he has noticed certain characteristics of faculty in each category.

### Inclined to write

For example, teachers in the "soft" departments are more inclined to write books and spend the greater part of their time teaching, he said, while those in "hard" departments tended to write articles for journals and spend most of their time doing research.

Smart said faculty in "hard" "applied" and "life" departments are more inclined to socialize with each other than are those in "soft" "pure", and "non-life" departments.

Smart said his research has proved the Biglan study to be valid, but there are ways in which it could be improved.

More disciplines and subdisciplines could be added, he said, as well as studies on personality differences between faculty in different departments, studies on job satisfaction and studies on the attitudes of students and faculty toward each other.

"We should study students more, also," he said. Studies on students' personality traits and their degree of satisfaction with their studies are important, he said.

Smart said administrators would benefit from reading such studies.

"They should understand the differences that exist between faculty and not try to impose standards of uniformity on them," he said.

# Bicycle Committee investigates Lincoln projects

By Maureen Costello

The Mayor's Bicycle Committee is looking for feedback on 12 bicycle projects planned for Lincoln to improve bicycling, said Richard Haden, committee member and traffic engineer.

The projects range from purchasing 180 bike route signs for \$200 to be located along the 15 miles of bike routes, to building a bikeway along Holdrege Street from 37th to 48th streets and on 48th Street from Holdrege to Leighton streets for \$14,400, Haden said.

Three of the 12 projects have undetermined prices. They are an overpass at West O and Harris streets; a bikeway connection between 56th Street and Pioneer Boulevard, to the Billy Wolfe-Antelope Bikeway; and a provision for bicycle traffic from North 1st Street to Sunvalley Boulevard along Charleston Street.

The other nine projects

would cost approximately \$389,460, he said.

Along with trying to determine the priorities of these projects, the committee is trying to raise money to finance them, Haden said.

The committee has come up with a number of ideas for funds, but has no idea whether or not any of them are feasible. One suggestion was putting the 1/2 percent city sales tax from

the sale of bicycles into a bicycle trust fund.

An ordinance would have to be written and passed by the Nebraska Legislature. A \$5 yearly license fee also could be used to build up a trust fund. A city ordinance also would have to be passed to allow the bicycle trust fund to receive money from the sales of unclaimed bicycles by the police each year, worth about \$6,000.

An observer at the committee Tuesday night meeting commented that instead of adding more costs to the bicyclist like the \$5 license fee, taxes should be added to energy consumers. He thought that a tax on gas could be used for bicycle routes, since bicyclists conserve energy.

According to Capt. John Hewitt, there are 25,000 licensed bikes in Lincoln. If

there was a \$5 license fee, \$125,000 could be put into the trust fund.

A problem arises as to which bicycles should be required to be licensed. Suggestions were to license bikes on the streets, those owned by persons over 13, or those over 22 inches.

George Selvia, from the city transportation department, said that the problem with raising money to start independent projects is the

risk of losing improvements in bike paths in incidental projects.

Incidental projects include widening streets on the outside lanes when they are repaved for bicycle use, Haden said.

Another citizen suggestion was that a 15 mph speed limit be put on assigned bike routes to discourage motor vehicle traffic. Posts or speed bumps could also be installed.

## Correction

The Daily Nebraskan incorrectly reported Thursday that State Sen. Steve Fowler has spent \$71,892 in his race against Jerry Sellentin. The reporter also incorrectly reported that Sellentin has spent \$88,124. The figures should have read that together both candidates have raised \$88,124 and together they have spent \$72,892.

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