



Chancellor M.A. Massengale and Dean of Graduate College Henry Holtzlaw speak at graduation ceremony.

Photo by A.J. Kunce

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UN-L sees conflict of interest in waste ruling

BY JOANN MORRISON

University of Nebraska-Lincoln officials this week challenged the good intentions of the State Health Department's removal of the university's broad-scope license to handle radioactive materials.

Spokesmen at the University say that conflict of interest and the possibility of a personal vendetta by a previous UN-L employee might be clouding the licensing issue.

Dr. Henry Smith, state health department director, said the department is justified in its actions and that no conflict exists.

In a letter sent to the University on June 22 by Smith, the university was told that its broad-scope license to use radioactive materials would be terminated on Oct. 31 because of the university's continued non-compliance with state guidelines in handling the materials. According to the letter, 10 of the 17 non-compliance items found in 1981 were still deficient in 1983.

Jack Goebel, vice chancellor of business and finance at UN-L, and coordinator for the environmental safety program on campus, said he was surprised to receive the letter.

Goebel said he was aware that the state still had complaints regarding university non-compliance.

"But we felt that we were on our way to very adequately taking care of the problem," he said, "until we got a letter saying (the Health department) was terminating our broad-use license. Up to that point, we had no notion that the situation warranted extreme action."

The university and the health department agree that there is no immediate threat to the health of university personnel and students working with the low-level isotopes used in research.

Richard Gardecki, radiation safety officer (RSO) at UN-L, said, "The risk from using these low-energy radio-nucleides is less than the risk of smoking one cigarette."

The health department director said that radioactive materials have the potential for

causing accidents. He said the university had not been documenting the use and disposal of these radioactive materials properly.

As a result of the broad-scope ban, individual users at UN-L will be required to file for separate licenses, Smith said. "We're starting from square one," he said.

Smith said that a broad-scope license would be re-issued to the university when it could show full compliance to health department standards.

Vice Chancellor Goebel said the issue was complicated by the fact that the previous radiation safety officer at the University, Julius Haes, appeared to be involved in the issue.

Haes is now working for the division of radiological health at the State Health Department, he said.

"We are accused (by the department of health) of poor documentation, improper meetings and equipment lack," Goebel said. "Two of those are the result of action on the part of the previous RSO (Julius Haes), he said.

"Haes was an employee at UN-L and now finds himself in a position of examining the work of the people who were formerly his colleagues," Goebel said he questioned whether Haes should be involved with the re-licensing of the university.

Smith said he sees no conflict of interest in Haes' position.

"He is not serving as RSO at the present time," Smith said. "He is our authority on (radiation) health."

"Haes did not participate in the survey of his own work," Smith said. "Haes had nothing to do with the decision to write the letter. The decision was my responsibility."

Haes will not be dealing directly with the licensing of the university, Smith said.

The health department director said there was no connection between the timing of the letter to the university and the fact that Haes was elevated to overseer of the radiological health division two days after the letter was sent.

Richard Gardecki, radiation safety officer at UN-L since March of this year, said that 19 out of the 22 non-compliances in the 1983 survey report could be directly attributed to Julius Haes when he was RSO.

Gardecki said that it was the responsibility of the RSO to make sure all radioactive materials were used properly and that lab facilities were adequately equipped.

One of the complaints in the survey, Gardecki said, was that there weren't enough radioactive survey monitors in the labs, he said.

"This is not a responsibility of the administration," he said, "It is the RSO's. If you're doing your job properly, you check to make sure the lab has proper facilities. If they don't have a meter, you don't let them use the materials."

Gardecki said that Haes had been permitting such non-allowed use.

Haes denied that any of the non-compliance items are his fault.

"The problems are the responsibility of the whole university," Haes said. "I tried to do my job, but my recommendations were not necessarily followed by the administrators."

Haes said he didn't think there was a conflict of interest in the case. Actual licensing will be handled by someone else, he said.

"The (health) department recognizes

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UN-L faculty pay raises for 1984-85 not guaranteed by Regents' decision

BY LARRY SPARKS

A recent decision to base faculty salaries at the three University of Nebraska campuses by reference to peer institutions does not mean University of Nebraska-Lincoln professors should expect dramatic salary increases for fiscal year 1984-85, according to administration and faculty representatives.

UN-L faculty members already have been told they will not receive raises for fiscal 1983-84, but the July 5 decision by the Board of Regents led to some speculation that large increases may be in store for next year.

NU Director of Public Affairs Jim Raglin said a recent study by the Faculty Salary Study Committee shows UN-L salaries for 1983-84 are about 16 percent below the median wage at similar land-grant institutions. The university has some catching up to do in salaries, he said, but the increases probably will come gradually.

"We are behind other universities," Raglin said, "nobody would argue that. But this state isn't exactly looking around for ways to spend its extra tax money."

"We're not talking about marching in giant steps," he said. "We have to take a realistic approach to this."

Linda Pratt, president-elect of the American Association of University Professors at UN-L, doubts the regents' statement will result in any major pay scale changes.

"Why should I think something is going to change?" she asked. "The regents told us this year that pay raises were their top priority and we ended up with nothing."

Harry Allen, director of research and planning at UN-L, confirmed that the administration already uses data from peer institutions to lobby the Legislature for pay raises. The 10 land-grant institutions used in the faculty study are those used by the administration, he said.

The 10 schools cited in the study are Illinois, Iowa State, Michigan State, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio State, Purdue, Wisconsin, Penn State and Maryland—College Park.

Regent Edward Schwartzkopf acknowledged that the board's decision is not a guarantee UN-L salaries will be brought up to the level of its peer group. The board, however, is committed to making an effort in that direction, he said.

Schwartzkopf blamed the Legislature for the lack of pay raises this year and said the regents will not be able to provide significant raises without increased funding.

"If the money isn't there," he said, "we simply cannot provide raises."

Ms. Pratt, however, said the regents should not blame the Legislature for the lack of pay increases. NU was given a lump-sum appropriation this year, she said, and could have budgeted for raises.

Granting pay increases this year would See PAY RAISE, Page 2

Thursday is deadline for degree application

Thursday, July 14, is the last day for degree candidates at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to apply for degrees to be awarded at the end of the second summer session. Applicants must apply at Room 208 in the Administration Building.