

Increased pay, involvement goals of new Faculty Senate president

By Marc Simon

Improving faculty salaries and getting more faculty involvement in university issues are major goals of Norman Thorson, professor of law and newly-elected president of the Faculty Senate.

"The highest priority of the faculty is to improve faculty salaries," he said, saying that this was necessary to keep qualified faculty at UNL. While it is generally true that persons in the "academic market" are paid less than those in the nonacademic sector, UNL has failed to keep up with salary levels at many other academic institutions, Thorson said.

Part of this needed improvement, Thorson said, could come in the form of an improved benefits package for faculty. He added that there are a few areas, which need further looking into, which may provide a few benefits at no additional cost to the university.

Increased faculty involvement in important university issues is another goal of Thorson. He said he would "make sure that the faculty is involved in an important decision making," which would be aided by striving for "good cooperation with administration" among faculty members.

Thorson said he sees a continuing need to improve relations with decision makers in Nebraska who have input into the university's operation. To help do this, he said he is trying to measure people's attitudes and perceptions concerning the university through various means.

Part of these perceptions, Thorson thinks, are heavily related to what people hear concerning faculty accomplishments. UNL has many outstanding faculty members, Thorson said, several of whom have been honored for their teaching and research

activities.

Thorson said he wants UNL to attract first-rate faculty members so "the university achieves a greater level of excellence."

"This is where you want to attract world-class scholars and world-class research," he said.

Thorson said he does not have a long-range agenda for the Faculty Senate. Referring to problems and issues the organization will be faced with, he said, "you have to be ready to react, but you can't be asked what to react to."

In addition to his senate endeavors, he currently is working on two projects. One is a book on Nebraska water laws to be done in conjunction with Richard Harnsburger, a professor of law at UNL. The other is a collaborative effort on a book relating to cases in agricultural law.

Thorson has earned four degrees at UNL, including his law degree in 1977 and doctorate in 1979. He was a Faculty Senate member for four years, and served on various committees including the executive, employee benefits, contracts and athletic ticket policy committees. He was elected to his current position as president during a May 8 Faculty Senate meeting, and will serve for one year.

Other officers elected to the Faculty Senate are: Agnes Adams (assistant professor of libraries), secretary; elected to Executive Council were Stan Vasa (education professor), Yen-Ching Pao (engineering professor), Nancy Betts (home economics professor), R. McLaran Sawyer (education professor), John Sholz (chemistry professor), George Tuck (journalism professor), Bill Caree (Douglas County extension agent), Allen Blazek (agricultural education professor) and Desmond Wheeler (chemistry professor).

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section changes for the first five-week session.

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