

Sociology department reduces research funds

By Ann Lowe

Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

There's no such thing as a free plane ticket for UNL social science graduate students who want to attend national conferences this year.

Several graduate students Wednesday found memos in their mailboxes Wednesday telling them travel allowances would no longer be available from the Happold Student-Oriented Studies in Social Sciences Program, a financial support program for student research in social sciences.

"Everybody said, 'You're kid-

ding! Oh No!" Michael Hill, a sociology graduate student, said.

Hill, 39, has been asked to present a paper this fall at a sociology conference in Maryland. He said the cheapest air fare he could find was \$350, and he had planned to apply for a Happold grant.

"Now it's going to be real tricky getting the money," Hill said. He said he probably will ask for help from the sociology department and the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Happold student research program was set up in the mid-1970s to offer financial aid to students working on honor

papers and other research projects. Although it originally was designed for undergraduates, up to 75 percent of the grant requests have come from graduate students, said Robert Miewald, professor of political science and chairman of the Student Research Program.

Students get up to \$300 a year from the Happold fund, Miewald said. Graduates have not been allowed to use the money for thesis research, but they could use Happold grants to pay for travel expenses, he said. Last year, about 30 students applied for travel funds, and all requests were granted, Miewald

said. This year, however, Miewald already has had to turn down graduates' requests. Funding to the Student-Oriented Studies Program has dropped to less than one-fourth of what it was last year, he said.

The program is funded through a larger university endowment, which draws on royalties from oil wells in Oklahoma, G.G. Meisels, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences said. Though he said he couldn't give exact figures, Meisels said the wells are producing less, and "the disposable income over the last three years has declined

substantially.

Student-Oriented Studies was one of those programs. Between 1981 and 1983, the program got \$24,000 from the Happold fund. In 1984, the program's allowance \$1,500.

Miewald said his decision to cut off graduate travel funds was "not an attempt to discriminate against graduate students." Travel grants usually are not offered to graduate students and have been "something of a luxury" at UNL, he said.

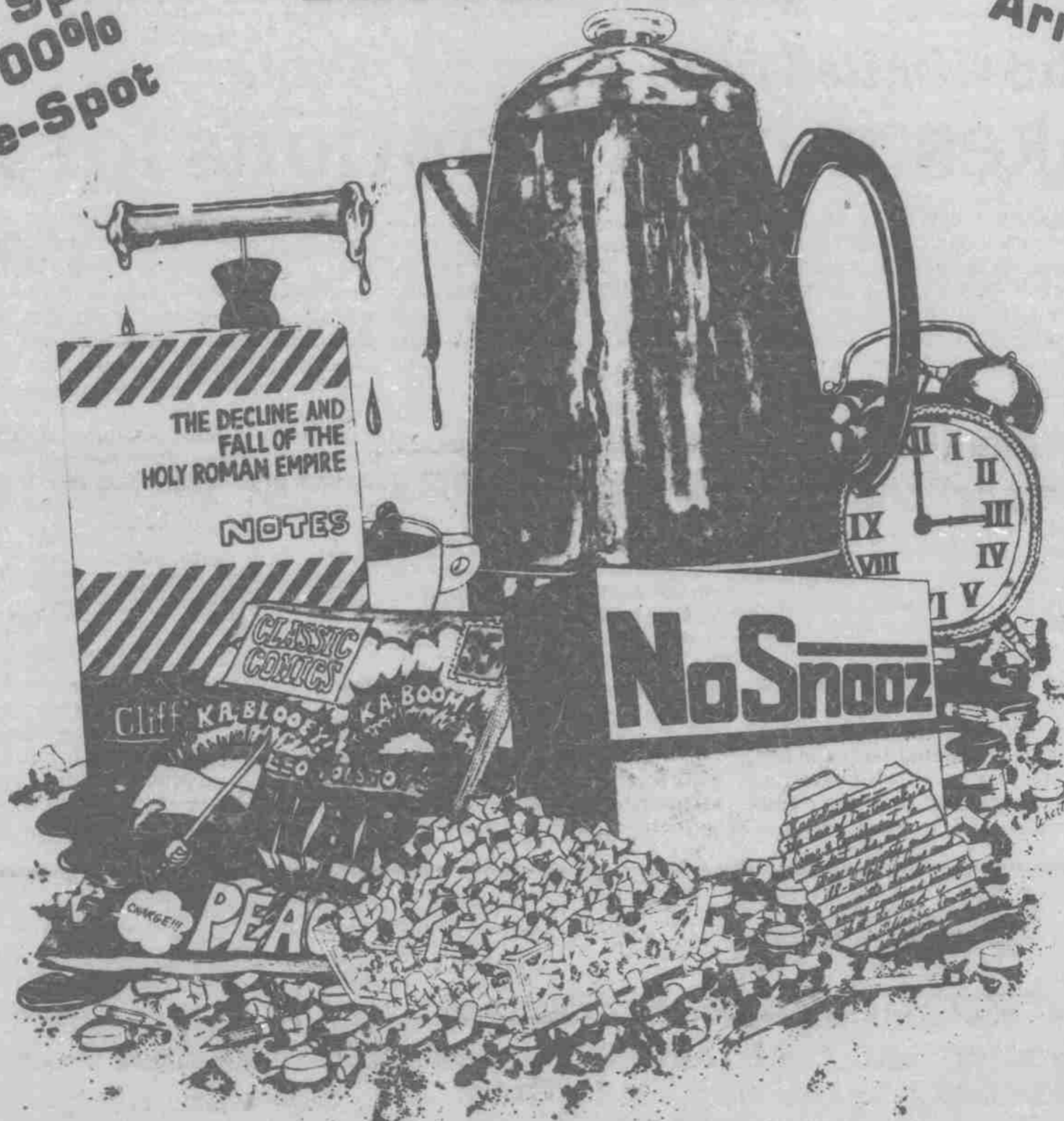
"It was fun while it lasted," Miewald said. "It's regrettable that we can't afford it anymore."

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