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Great Plains center receives grant

A three-to-one matching grant to raise \$500,000 in endowment money for the Center for Great Plains Studies at UNL has been awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

NEH will give \$125,000 to the center in sums ranging from \$40,000 to \$45,000 during the next three years. The center will be expected to match the award with \$375,000 from the private sector, according to Fred Luebke, director of the center and history professor at UNL.

The grant to UNL is one of 46 totaling \$14.9 million recently made by NEH to institutions throughout the United States. When matched by grants from the private sector on a three-to-one basis, the grants will stimulate an additional \$44.7 in new institutional support, according to NEH.

The NEH grants are provided as contributions "to both the financial health and quality humanities programs" of each of the institutions receiving the awards.

This endowment marks the second time NEH has awarded a challenge grant to the center.

The first grant, in 1977, made it possible for the center to begin programs and activities that have continued to now, Luebke said.

Luebke called the latest NEH award "an endorsement of what we are doing." He said it demonstrates that NEH thinks the center is worthy of continuing

support.

The challenge grant, with its matching funds from private sources, will enable the center to substantially increase its endowment, needed to continue programs and activities, Luebke said. In recent years, inflation and other factors have caused acute financial problems for the center. And, he said, "with each succeeding year of inflation the center can accomplish correspondingly less" with its endowment income.

"The endowment of the center must be enlarged substantially if it is to retain its vitality and sustain what we believe is its outstanding record of achievement," Luebke said.

Among programs the center will be able to restore are its now suspended programs of junior fellowships for students, faculty-grants-in-aid, other forms of research initiation and curriculum development.

The center also will be able to develop new programs in Great Plains studies, such as a series of forums in Nebraska communities exploring the influence of technological change on such communities, expansion of public lecture programs and organization of various workshops and other activities of interest to various groups throughout the state. Further development of curricular offerings also will be possible, Luebke said, including the possibility of adding a master's degree

in Great Plains Studies to the center's programs.

The Center for Great Plains Studies was created in 1976 as an interdisciplinary unit of UNL. It performs teaching, research and service functions that "serve the central purpose of studying social and cultural developments in the sparsely populated and climatically unstable environment that is the Great Plains region."

One of the most visible of the center's programs is its series of annual symposia on topics related to the Great Plains region. The symposia have brought considerable national and international recognition to the center and its activities.

In 1980, the center acquired the Christlieb Collection of Western Art and now administers the collection, which is housed in Love Library.

A major project undertaken by the center shortly after it was created was the production of a new edition of the several journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804 to 1806. The first of a number of publications in connection with the project, an atlas of the Lewis and Clark expedition, was published a year ago.

Also, the center has initiated a major program of scholarly publications. Six books have been published by the center in cooperation with the NU Press, and the center also publishes a scholarly interdisciplinary journal, "The Great Plains Quarterly."

Chinese official to speak at graduation

Zhang Wenjin, the ambassador to the United States from the People's Republic of China, will deliver the fall 1984 UNL Commencement address.

Wenjin also will receive the honorary degree, Doctor of

Humane Letters at the exercises, scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

More than 1,000 candidates for degrees are expected to receive baccalaureate, professional or graduate degrees at the exercises.

He was vice minister of foreign affairs in the People's Republic from 1978 to 83.

Born in Beijing, China, in 1914, the ambassador graduated from Quinghua University. He served as deputy chief and chief of the Office of Foreign Affairs of Tian-

jin Municipality from 1949 to 54.

Wenjin attended the Geneva Conference in 1954, and was appointed ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the People's Republic to Pakistan in 1965. In 1969 to 70, he was a member of the Chinese delegation to the Sino-Soviet border talks.

He was director of the Department of European and American Affairs and assistant minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1971 to 1973.

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