

# American-foreign student pairings furnish understanding, friendships

By Randy Donner  
Staff Reporter

Appreciation of a foreign culture is a major benefit of a program offered through the International Education Services at UNL, according to Rod Merta, program coordinator for IES.

Merta said the English Conversation Program, which pairs an American student with a foreign student studying at UNL, encourages the pair to meet on a regular basis and hold informal conversations.

Merta said ECP is not a tutoring program, but that the aim is to better the foreign student's understanding of

American culture. He said that foreign students in America, like American students abroad, often find themselves spending much of their time with other students from their homeland.

Merta said it's not bigotry that keeps the two groups apart, but rather just an uneasiness with something that is new and different.

"It's a challenge to get American students attracted to these kinds of programs," Merta said.

Merta said he matched 80 students last fall. He called that a "pretty good number," considering that there are 1,100 foreign students enrolled at UNL.

Teresa Peterson, a graduate student

at UNL, is one of the people Merta placed last fall. Peterson said her partner, Suoh-Kiun Jih, a graduate student from Taiwan, taught her to see Taiwan through different eyes.

Both Jih and Peterson said that while learning each other's culture, they've also formed a close friendship with someone they otherwise never would have met.

Merta said ECP began four years ago and shows growth each year, but the program is always in need of American students. Anyone interested in becoming a conversation partner should contact Merta at the IES office, Nebraska Union 345.

# NU President Roskens elected to council's board of directors

Ronald Roskens, NU president, has been elected to the board of directors of the council for Financial Aid to Education Inc.

The 29-member board is composed of leaders of major American corporations and universities. Its current chairman is James L. Ferguson, chairman of General Foods Corporation.

The goal of CFAE is to expand corporate contributions to institutions of higher education. CFAE reports that, in 1983, corporate contributions to education reached the \$1.29 billion mark, a rise of \$40 million from 1982.

## New program aids businesses with new ideas

A new program designed to help Nebraska businesses and industries initiated by the state Department of Economic Development and UNL began Friday.

The Nebraska Technical Assistance Center, in Nebraska Hall, will provide technical business and engineering assistance to new and existing local companies.

This help can come from the university, state agencies or the private sector. The center then will be able to help businesses and inventors develop and market new ideas.

Gov. Bob Kerrey, UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale, Robert Valentine, director of DED's Development Division and Stan Liberty, dean of the college of Engineering and Technology, spoke at the opening ceremony and were the official ribbon-cutters.

Massengale said the center is an important "front door" that could provide businesses with contacts that previously would have been unavailable to them. Businesses had shown interest in the program even before it opened, he said.

Kerrey said he feared that some people would think the state was turning the university into an "economic development machine." He said the state, the university and those using the program could all benefit from it.

"Outstanding as that commitment was," Roskens said, "It was the smallest increase since 1975."

This is the second business-higher education organization that Roskens serves. Since 1979, he has been a member of the American Council on Education's Business-Higher Education

Forum. The forum's membership is restricted to 25 chief executives of corporations and 25 educators.

Roskens, who is chairman of the board of the American Council on Education, is the first Nebraska educator to chair that organization and its 1,600 member colleges and universities.

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