

Professor chosen to head development projects

By Michael Hooper
Staff Reporter

Beginning Aug. 15 Dr. Louis Picard, a UNL political science professor, will be director of the U.S. AID Technical Cooperation Project with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).

While on a two-year leave of absence from UNL, Picard will direct about 12 projects focused on human resource development, education and training in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Picard, 42, will be headquartered in Washington D.C., but 25 percent of his job will involve travel to Third World countries and throughout the U.S.

Picard's upcoming post had been vacant for six months, but a new technical cooperation agreement was signed in March between AID and NASPAA, which reopened his position. AID funds NASPAA while NASPAA currently administers applied research in the areas of development management in the Third World nations.

Picard was "asked to apply" for the job because of his extensive experience for the past 20 years in development administration. In 1979 Picard joined the UNL faculty with government and teaching experience in Third World

countries. He has taught at universities in Africa, including Uganda, Zambia, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

For underdeveloped countries, like Ethiopia, Picard said their main needs are basic education and training in technical skills to "increase productivity in agriculture and rural industrialization."

Some successful countries NASPAA/AID has helped are South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and India, Picard said. He said the countries are doing "very well in agriculture and industrialization," patterning themselves after the Japanese.

Although, he said, South Africa will not be one of the countries his upcoming job will deal with, because of its present apartheid government. Picard's research — bureaucracy as a controlling mechanism in South Africa — will continue on a limited basis. He is currently writing a book on South Africa, said it will be some time before it's finished because of his new job responsibilities.

Picard said he is looking forward to his new job over-seeing aid to Third World Nations. His wife, Lene Gaemelke, will be with him in Washington D.C. in January, he said. Mrs. Picard is working at UNL on her Masters Degree in early childhood development, he said, and she should finish in December.



Andrea Hoy/The Nebraskan

Dr. R. H. Hanson, UNL professor of agricultural economics speaks to about 175 Nebraska high school youths at the 1985 Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute Thursday. Hanson spoke on "Keeping on friendly terms while farming with family members." The five-day institute concludes today.

\$400,000 in bonds approved

Banner board policy amended

By Kip Fry
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska Union Board approved the purchase of two new spaces for banner boards Wednesday. The board also approved a new banner board policy for city and east campuses.

One banner board will be located in the main lounge near the big screen television and the other on the south wall of the Union Square. The extra banner boards were approved because of the high demand for the existing ones.

Under the new policy, organizations will be able to reserve a board only twice a semester. They also will not be able to give it to another organization, after first reserving it for themselves. A reservation for the banner board will be forfeited if the banner has not been posted by Tuesday at 3 p.m. of that week, and banners should be approximately the size of the marquee. During ASUN elections: a political party will be able to reserve a board only once

prior to the election, the president of a party is the only one who can reserve a board, and he or she must secure a slip from the ASUN office stating that the party is registered.

The new policy should help to alleviate several problems that have plagued them in the past. Union boards officials said some organizations have reserved spaces and then don't use them. Some reserve it for the entire semester and others give it to another organization. Another problem is that of the 270 recognized student organizations, only a few consistently use them.

"The lounge ought to be a living room in the students' university home," said board member Robert Stowers, an associate professor of architecture. "Signs and posters — I wouldn't put that stuff up in my living room."

However, member Robert Brandt rebutted this by saying that the lounge is a communications center.

"There is a vibrancy to know what is going on," he said.

In other business, the board un-

animously approved \$400,000 for bonds including \$100,000 for Phase II of the Union Bookstore project, which will fund the expansion on the Union's west side.

"This is the largest sum of money ever allocated," said Union director Daryl Swanson.

The Board also decided to close City Union Room 334 for studying so it can be used exclusively in the future for meeting rooms.

"There will be considerable interest in this from the people who use the room for studying," Swanson said, "but the opening of the Crib may change this."

Union officials may also add more tables to the lounge area to take care of the decreased union studying areas until the renovations on the west side of the building are completed in the spring of 1987, Swanson said. Studying in The Crib, though, may be hurt by the mid-day programs offered during the school year, he said.

Ag land values take a dive

A dramatic 28 percent drop in Nebraska agricultural land values over the past 12 months is the largest annual decrease in the state's history, even surpassing Depression Era losses.

A report released this week by two University of Nebraska-Lincoln professors shows land values, which started to decrease in early 1981, plummeted in 1984 and early 1985, dropping an average of 28 percent from April 1, 1984 to April 1, 1985.

In the last four years, agricultural land values have dropped a total of 40 percent to 50 percent statewide.

"The speed of decline in the last 12 to 18 months has never been witnessed before in Nebraska," said Bruce Johnson who prepared the report with Ronald Hanson. Both are UNL associate professors of agriculture economics.

"The reality is that the wealth of the farm owner is continuing to erode his

net worth — reducing capital for farm operations, collateral for credit and savings for future use. The implications for the individual farmer as well as the state are critical and unfortunately there are no strong signs that values will soon rebound," Johnson said.

Previously the largest annual decrease was in 1932 when land prices dropped 22 percent.

The average annual decrease in land value for types of land were: irrigated land, -28 percent; dry cropland, -26 percent; and grazing land, -36 percent.

"An excessive supply of land being placed on the market by owners in financial trouble, coupled with a continued extremely weak demand by potential buyers, has driven land values sharply down," he said.

"The market is very perilous and hard to predict right now because of the number of other factors influencing price," Johnson said. Those factors include inflation, real interest rates, farm income and the export market.

In nominal terms, current land values are comparable to values reported in the 1970s prior to the boom period, but in real terms adjusted for inflation, current land prices are equal to those of the mid 1960s.

"The impact of the current financial crisis across Nebraska cannot be overestimated," Johnson said. Just three years ago only 14 percent of all survey responses mentioned financial stress as a reason for selling farmland. This year 60 percent of the respondents cited it.

Results also showed that farm expansion was still the primary factor for buying land, but for the first time in the survey's eight-year history, lower land prices also were a primary motive.

Over the last four years ending April 1, 1985, the net worth of Nebraska's

farming sector has fallen by more than \$15 billion, mostly because of the drop in land values. In short, this represents half the wealth this sector had in 1980, Johnson said.

The UNL report is based on two sets of statistics, one prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture for the period from April 1, 1984 to April 1, 1985, and the other prepared by Johnson and Hanson for the period from Feb. 1, 1984 to Feb. 1, 1985. Johnson and Hanson surveyed 200 persons in the agricultural land market. Although independently prepared, both reports arrived at similar figures. In the study ending Feb. 1, Johnson and Hanson found a 23.5 percent overall annual decrease in land values for all types of land across the state.

Nationally, USDA statistics indicate that states showing the largest decreases ag land values are in the Great Plains and North Central Region — states which depend on exporting their farm products. These are the areas most affected by the current drop in the overseas export market.

Nationally, the decrease in Nebraska is second only to that in Iowa. According to the USDA, states with the highest annual and four-year percentage decreases in land values were: Iowa, -29, -49; Nebraska, -28, -46; and Illinois, -27, -42. Decreases in other Midwest states include Missouri, -23, -38; South Dakota, -26, -33; Colorado, -10, -9; and Kansas, -20, -29.

Cash rental rates for farmland also are decreasing, although at a rate considerably less than the decrease of land values. From 1984 to 1985, rent rates decreased 10 to 15 percent, Johnson said, pointing out that annual cash rents as a percentage of the market value for land have been increasing.

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