

# UNL scientists say cash needed to compete

By Cindy Kimbrough  
Staff Reporter

To keep up with countries like Germany and Japan, the United States should increase its spending for research, some University of Nebraska-Lincoln scientists said.

Responding to a report released by the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Anthony Starace, chairman of UNL's Department of Physics and Astronomy, said spending for research should be increased in the near future.

"Even though you have reasonable increases of 5 to 10 percent in the overall budget," he said, "we are trying to do so much more and the number of scientists has increased as well."

The report, released by Leon Lederman, stated that the level of research funding hasn't been adequate since 1968, science's "golden year."

According to the report, funding has risen only 20 percent since that time and is no longer adequate because the cost of doing research has increased. Lederman indicated that the budget would need to be doubled, although \$10 billion would be needed to reach the goal.

Lederman suggested two remedies for researchers: to tighten their belts like everyone else or to fight for more financial support from

Congress.

Starace, who also is chairman of the American Physical Society, said Congress should be willing to give more money to research.

"Ten billion seems like a lot, but in the context of the federal budget it is not," he said. "It is something the country has to decide, whether it is a priority or not."

Starace said the amount of scientific research has increased and people are discovering things that have to be followed up but they don't have enough funds.

One example, he said, was fusion research. It is "the energy source of the future" because it is clean and the only waste from it is water, he said.

"Progress has been slow. We've worked on it for a generation," Starace said. "Progress has been made but it is expensive."

But now, he said, the annual budget for fusion research has been cut because the progress was not fast enough. Europe and Japan are going ahead full steam, he said.

"The economy has grown, but the spending on scientific research has not," he said, "and that means we are putting less of our economic output back into what would make it grow."

Starace said that if spending for scientific research does not increase, the United States could keep things the way they are and muddle

through, finance only the top priority projects or form a commission to look for private sources for support.

Samy Elias, associate dean for the Engineering Research Centers at UNL, said increasing the research budget would "definitely be the right move," because the United States is behind many Western countries in the amount of research and development that is spent on new products.

"I think research is and will continue to be the foundation of civilization and the foundation of growth," he said.

Elias said many things developed for the space program are used every day and taken for granted.

"If you look at what is happening in Japan," he said, "they have passed us many times over in the amount of funds they allocate for research and development compared to what we do in this country."

Elias said many of the advantages society has today can be traced back to invention that came as a result of research and development. The United States doesn't have the same level of research and development today, he said.

The quest to double funding is reasonable, he said, but within the federal budget constraints, it probably is not going to happen at once. He said the government should have a

short-range plan over five years to get back to a competitive level with Germany, France and Japan.

Darrell Nelson, dean and director of the Agricultural Research Division at UNL, said federal funding for agriculture has not kept up with the cost of living in the last decade and agricultural researchers currently are engaged in a major effort to increase funding.

Nelson said agricultural research nationwide must be competitive in the world economy and maintain profitability for producers to stay on top.

The 1990 farm bill, he said, placed agricultural research in its first year of a new grant program called the National Initiative for Research on Food, Agriculture and the Environment, which has increased its budget \$30 million from last year.

The grant program will add \$500 million to the research budget over the next five years, he said.

Nelson said he was confident the program will help agricultural research because now there will be more funds for schools like UNL to compete for.

He said he feels good about 1991, but efforts need to continue to get back where UNL was in buying power in 1980.

## Official wary of research limits

By Alan Phelps  
Staff Reporter

Any effort by Congress to limit research links between American universities and foreign companies would be easier said than done, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln official said.

Bill Splinter, interim vice chancellor for research at UNL, said attempts at such protectionist legislation would "get bogged down in trying to define what an American company is."

As cooperation between American universities and foreign companies becomes more common, lawmakers are becoming more concerned that pieces of state-of-the-art information gathered in part with federal grants are being given to foreign competitors at prices below true value.

Some members of Congress have expressed interest in legislation requiring universities to look for Ameri-

can clients before selling information to foreigners.

Splinter said laws to restrict such activity would be difficult to implement.

"The problem arises when these companies are either fully or partially owned in the international arena," Splinter said. "For instance, Sony has no plants here, so they're clearly Japanese. But Honda's got a big plant in Kentucky. Would you call them American or Japanese?"

Splinter said UNL currently has a patent deal with a Japanese company that bought out an American company the university previously had an agreement with.

"There's nothing you can do in that case," he said.

If legislation were to pass, Splinter said, it would have little effect on UNL.

"A very small piece of the action here is with foreign companies. We

have some modest projects, like a small one with Kawasaki," he said. "The number that would be directly international is small, very small — three or four."

Splinter said the small amount of foreign projects at UNL would make it easy for the university to comply with any regulations Congress might pass.

He said lawmakers are more concerned about research institutions like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology because of the large volume of work they do for international corporations.

However, Splinter said he doubted such legislation ever would pass.

"I'm sure Congress will find it extremely difficult to draw a line because most (of the companies in question) are big international companies," he said. "The international trade process is so transparent across borders now."

## Ruling goes beyond teaching rights

By Kathy Wiemers  
Staff Reporter

University professors have rights beyond teaching, according to a summary judgment in a U.S. District Court case involving the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a professor.

Attorney Thom Cope said it is the first time a judge has decided that professors have rights to areas of their jobs other than teaching.

Cope represents Bruce Erlich, a UNL associate professor of English and modern languages and literatures who is suing the NU Board of Regents.

David Buntain, an attorney representing the university, said he wouldn't confirm that it was the first time that such a decision has been made.

Cope said a professor's rights, such as voting or holding an office or a committee seat, cannot be taken away without prior notice, a hearing and an opportunity to respond.

UNL had taken away Erlich's rights to vote within the department and his committee seat, according to Cope. Erlich lost his rights when the modern languages and literatures department voted to require a professor to have a half-time appointment to vote and be on committees within the department, Cope said.

Erlich's teaching commitment was divided, with a one-third time appointment in the modern languages department and a two-thirds time appointment in the English department.

Since the complaint was filed,

Helmut F. Pfanner, former chairman of the modern languages department, has left UNL and has been given immunity from the lawsuit, Cope said. Pfanner is now at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

The final trial in the lawsuit is expected to be in May, Cope said, on the issue of whether Erlich got a proper notice, a hearing and an opportunity to respond before his rights allegedly were taken away.

Cope said the trial is significant because the outcome will affect all tenured professors.

Buntain disagreed with Cope's assessment.

"For one thing, it's a preliminary decision. Until the case is finally decided, I don't think we can assess it (the the summary judgment) that way."

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