

# Future to change definition of traditional student

College students fresh out of high school may be a dying breed.

The latest studies destroy the myth of the 18-year-old freshman. Projections by the National Center for Educational Statistics predict that 50 percent of all college students will be older than 25 by 1993.

"The majority of students (in the future) will be near 30, part-time," said Bob Atwell, president of the American Council on Education in Washington. "That trend will accentuate."

However, the non-traditional student probably will not be in the majority at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the next century, despite the nationwide trend.

"I think it (higher enrollment of non-traditional students) will happen some, but not to the extent it will nationally," said James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs.

Although UNL has seen an increase in the enrollment of non-traditional students over the past two decades, Griesen said, that rise has not been comparable to other universities.

He attributed that to the way non-traditional students look at UNL.

"We're viewed primarily as a full-time institution," he said. "Certain institutions just play that role in a state."

However, the UNL student of the future will change in terms of ethnicity. Currently, Griesen said, African Americans, American Indians and Hispanics are underrepresented, but he added that minority enrollment should change by the year 2000.

"Look at the K-12 (kindergarten through twelfth grade) enrollment in those three categories," he said. "It's triple, quadruple, five times the percentage of enrollment we have here."

Based on those numbers and on the development of support programs targeting students as early as the junior-high level, Griesen said, minority enrollment should at least double by the year 2000.

The goal of achieving greater diversity in the next century is not limited to the student level, Atwell said. "We're going to have to achieve greater diversity at all levels — students, faculty, administration" if colleges want to see higher enrollment levels, he said.

BY DIANE BRAYTON  
SENIOR EDITOR

*I can't imagine  
that the normal  
university of the  
future will be  
electronic.*

—Marian Gade,  
research associate

Marian Gade, research associate for the center for studies of higher education at the University of California-Berkeley, agreed, saying minorities would constitute a larger part of the population.

"The big change (in higher education), of course, is going to be the number of minority students who haven't been served," she said. "We're still not in the position to serve some of those students."

Just as student demographics are expected to be more diverse, student curriculum will be more varied.

Integration studies will be the catch phrase in the next century, education leaders agreed. The student of the future will not be limited to one area of study; rather, students will combine majors to make themselves more marketable.

"We definitely see trends toward double majors, like agribusiness — agriculture and business — or psych law," Griesen said. "People are positioning themselves to be competitive."

In addition, more emphasis will be placed on internationalization.

The Persian Gulf war has shown people the importance of a more global attitude, Atwell said.

"Ninety-nine percent of the 500,000 (soldiers) we sent over to the gulf wouldn't have been able to tell you where Kuwait was on the map," he said. "I think that's changing; it has to change, it will change."

A more global economy in the next century also will encourage international thinking of universi

"In the 21st century," Griesen said, "internationalization will impact every aspect of a student's life. It's important that we become cognizant that we live in a global economy."

What students will learn may change quickly, but changes in the ways they learn are predicted to follow more slowly.

Griesen said the current educational system has been slow to adapt to improving technology, and he reluctantly predicted that future classes could follow the same path.

## Libraries to survive age of technology

BY DIANE BRAYTON  
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As education enters an age of widespread computer use, it is easy to dismiss books as a thing of the past, and the library that houses them as merely a museum of the obsolete.

Not so, library officials say. The traditional library, with row upon row of books, will not disappear, they say. Rather, print will be complemented by the incorporation of technology.

And, according to Kent Hendrickson, dean of university libraries, that partnership will be evident in the 21st century at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"We see ourselves being a sort of a gateway to all kinds of information on and off campus," he said. "In the future, we will also provide access to other electronic databases around the campus, around the country, around the world."

"We've made the first step in that direction by implementing IRIS," the computerized card catalog system, Hendrickson said.

Students and faculty members can access the Innovative Research Information System from their offices or residence hall rooms by plugging their personal computers into UNL's intercampus communication network.

In the future, they may even be able to access the text of the material they need.

However, copyright laws that protect some library materials hamper that scenario, said Mary Ellen Davis, director of communication for the Association of College and Research Libraries.

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