

Official: 'Lifetime students' increasing

By Eric Snyder
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is no exception to the national trend of rising interest in continuing studies programs, an official said, due to the increasing need for "lifetime" students.

Robert Simerly, dean of the Division of Continuing Studies, said he is optimistic about the long-term success of UNL's program because he thinks advances in knowledge and technology will translate into business for the division.

"The half-life of knowledge is now five years," he said. And to remain successful, "people need to start to think of themselves as lifetime students."

At universities nationwide, interest in continuing studies is heightening, causing some concern that the programs are being used to make money for strapped institutions, according to an article in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Although continuing studies programming at UNL hasn't proved to be as profitable as on other campuses,

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Simerly,
Continuing Studies dean

the division has managed to become largely self-supporting, Simerly said.

He described enrollment as "steady," with the division serving roughly 75,000 people annually. UNL's Division of Continuing Studies serves people in all 93 counties of Nebraska, all 50 states and more than 125 countries.

Simerly said the Division of Continuing Studies helps businesses within the state. UNL's ability to develop professionals through workshops and courses has made the Division of Continuing Studies "a very important part of the economic development of the state," he said.

Corporations in the United States spend roughly \$60 billion on the training and development of their employees, Simerly said. Knowledge and technology are changing so rapidly in the business world, he said, that

employees need "constant updating."

The Division of Continuing Studies operates employee training programs to update businesspeople within the state. These courses are largely non-credit workshops that teach managerial skills. Many of the offerings are transmitted via satellite to the work sites so employees do not have to leave their place of work to take part.

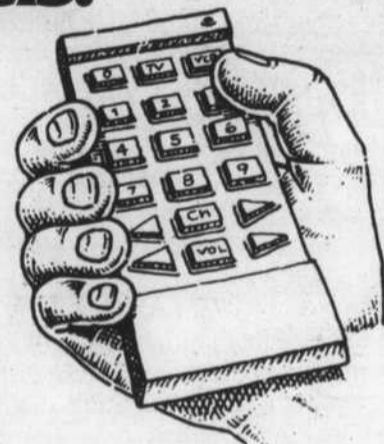
Examples of corporations that utilize UNL's offerings are the Omaha Public Power District, American Telephone and Telegraph in Omaha, and 3M in Valley, Neb.

Marvin Van Kekerix, director of academic telecommunications and professional development for the division, said courses offered via satellite currently are only available within the state of Nebraska. Out-of-state satellite transmission may be a possibility in the future, he said.

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