

Regents approve property acquisition

By Adeana Leftin and Wendy Navratil
Senior Reporters

The NU Board of Regents on Friday approved UNL's purchase of the Union Insurance Company property at 14th and Q streets.

At the regents' monthly meeting, Jack Goebel, vice chancellor of business and finance, said the property is essential to the space needs of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The building will be bought for \$1.45 million by University of Nebraska Foundation. UNL will enter into a five-year contract with the foundation to make annual payments on the building.



Richard Wood, NU general counsel, said that at the end of the five-year contract, UNL will renegotiate with the foundation to extend the payment period. When the building has been paid off, the title will pass to the university.

Goebel said the building will be occupied by University Press, which is now located in Nebraska Hall. The space vacated by University Press will be used to alleviate crowding in the engineering college, he said.

The regents also approved the replacement of a mainframe computer for the University of Nebraska Computing Services Network.

Wilfred Schutz, assistant vice president and director of universitywide computing, projected that use of the computer would last two years and might be stretched to three. At that time, he said, because of new technology, it can be

upgraded and the capacity doubled.

The computer handles the university's administrative system, human resource system, financial system and student information system.

The purchase price is a slightly more than \$2.5 million.

Following up on discussions of minority issues at the regents' October meeting, Regents Chairman Don Blank announced the formation of the Regents Committee on Minority Affairs. The committee, headed by Blank and Gene Crump, former Nebraska deputy attorney general, will establish goals and strategies for improving the climate for minorities at NU's campuses.

A discussion on academic excellence and

instruction at each of the NU campuses raised the issue of whether a core of general education curriculum should be established at all campuses.

Regent Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo said that across the university, some agreement over general education curriculum should be reached. Some NU image problems may be caused by a lack of a system-wide general education groundwork, she said.

UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier said that while UNL and the other NU campuses need to improve in the area of education, regents should not mandate uniformity in general education course requirements for all the campuses.

Discussion was stopped short to attend to other matters, but Blank said regents would address instructional and general education issues again at their January meeting.

Computer

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personnel; and the UNL and University of Nebraska at Omaha student information systems.

"We really had to have a new mainframe to satisfy what we're now running on it," Van Horn said.

The replacement of the NU mainframe should be followed by the replacement of the UNL student information system, Van Horn said.

"As a separate issue from the mainframe system, Lincoln really needs very badly a new student information system," Van Horn said.

The student information system holds records of every student from the time he or she enrolls at the university until graduation, including his or her account, transcript and financial aid information, Van Horn said.

Unlike the other NU campuses' software, the UNL student information software has been "home-grown" over the past 15 years or more, Van Horn said. The other NU campuses' student information software was purchased from external vendors.

"UNL's is a cumbersome collection of 400 or 500 separate modules or programs — it's really not integrated together," Van Horn said. "So if you change your address, we may have to change it in four or five places."

The initial cost of new software would range from \$800,000 to \$1

million, he said, and maintenance costs would range from \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year after that.

UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier said he would push for the new system despite the expense.

"We don't have the money," Spanier said, "but we'll have to find it. It's something we have to do one way or another."

Van Horn added that the university would save some money by using more automation, reducing some cumbersome clerical functions and eliminating some of the complexities in operation.

The current arrangement of student information systems across the university inhibits the flow of information, Van Horn said, because the campuses use different systems.

The nursing program at UNK is administered by the University of Nebraska Medical Center, but because their student information systems aren't integrated, UNMC officials have difficulty getting access to UNK students' information.

"Faculty may have to understand two different systems, know different commands," Van Horn said. "It's kind of a pain, kind of inefficient. So what we need is some integration, too, between the campuses."

Because the new UNL student information system would be more similar to those of the other cam-

pus, it may make more integration possible, Van Horn said.

"We're going to look at what kind of software UNL needs," Van Horn said, "keeping in mind the systems of the other campuses."

But even if the software was purchased today, Van Horn said it would be take at least two years to migrate or convert students' records onto the new system. Students' records would continue to be stored on the mainframe during that time.

Van Horn said that after that period, the student information system might be transferred to distributed processing, which means that the system would be run separately from the NU mainframe. Instead, mini-computers would house the system.

When the student information system was fully instituted, standing in line for registration would be replaced by making a phone call. Walking to the administration building to check on financial aid would be replaced by typing in a security code to access account information. And dogeared student files and transcripts would be replaced by computer files that advisers could access in a moment, improving the quality of advising.

"The new system would be responsive to students' needs," Van Horn said. "That's our No. 1 goal."

"We're just catching up with the rest of society," Spanier added. "Most other institutions are ahead of us."

Hooks

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their observations of white people and whiteness in informal studies and conversations throughout history.

The black view of whiteness, hooks said, is one of a power that can hurt and destroy black culture. The observations made about whiteness by black people are a sort of coping mechanism, she said.

"The purpose (of the observations) is to help black folks cope and survive in a white supremacist society," she said.

Drawing from her experiences in the classroom, hooks said that her white students, even those who claim there is no such thing as "whiteness" or "white culture," are shocked to learn that blacks critically examine white people. "This in itself is an expression of racism," she said, adding that whites "safely imagine themselves invisible to blacks."

Many white people are living in denial of both whiteness and the belief in white supremacy, she said. This idea of invisibility leads to the myth portraying whiteness as "benign, innocent and non-threatening," she said.

Whites are socialized to believe that white means goodness, hooks said. Written history erases and denies racism to make racial unity and pluralism seem more plausible, she said.

"Black folks see (whiteness) as a power that wounds, kills and tortures," hooks said.

The representation of whiteness and its association with innocence is tied to terror in black society, she said.

Whites who have "shifted their location," meaning they've assumed the position of a black person or

have been exposed to racism, have a better understanding of why whiteness can be terrorizing, hooks said. This allows them to recognize that even progressive, anti-racist whites can promote the idea of white supremacy by denying that a supremacist society exists, she said.

This shift in location, hooks said, or the decentralization of white people, is a good way to get around the "race doesn't matter" theory by showing examples that racism does exist. These examples force white people who embrace the idea that "people are people" and who believe racism does not exist to see the power of whiteness in a supremacist society, she said.

“Black folks see (whiteness) as a power that wounds, kills and tortures.”

hooks
Oberlin College professor

Examples are easy to spot, she said, through observations at banks and stores where blacks are overlooked and whites are given preferential treatment.

Hooks said white people must be willing to fully examine their true stance on racism and the presence of the belief in white supremacy, and admit that they resent and deny the idea of whiteness.

She said white people must talk about these issues among themselves and admit that they are afraid of what would happen if whiteness were not a central power.

Unless there is a space for people who want to change but are afraid, there will only be rejection of change, hooks said.

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