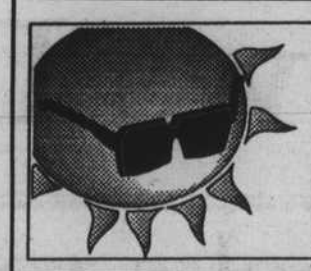


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TODAY'S WEATHER

65/43

Today, sunny and warmer, southeast winds 10 to 20 mph. Tonight, increasing clouds and not as cold. Tuesday, partly cloudy, high around 70.

Spanier's 'Lone Ranger' image prevalent



Chancellor Graham Spanier

Scott Maurer/DN

Leader reins in year's problems

By Jeremy Fitzpatrick
Senior Reporter

Chancellor Graham Spanier told the Academic Senate in January that he could not be the "Lone Ranger" of UNL's budget-reduction process, riding in to single-handedly save the day.

Spanier then took control of the process and, in one month, cut \$4 million from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's budget. In one month,

he quietly ended the six-month controversy surrounding the budget cuts that had been bogged down in committee hearings and letter-writing campaigns.

That is the role Spanier, 43, has played since he started his job Nov. 1.

Whether the issue is stricter admissions standards, the budget, race relations, administrative reorganization, restructuring UNL's Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Compliance office or parking, Spanier has been involved, and visibly so.

He will be installed officially as UNL Chancellor today.

Spanier dislikes the "Lone Ranger" description, and says he has only "a

little more influence and resources" than the average person as chancellor.

But he doesn't deny that for someone who describes himself as hands-off, he can be very hands-on.

"It's an interesting dilemma, because the truth is, I'm very hands-on," he said. "I came from a job where I was the hands-on person — that was my job to do everything."

"But my philosophy is to be hands-off."

However, when Spanier did have to be hands-on during his first few months at UNL, he said he was confident his decisions would be well-received at the university because he

had done his homework before he arrived.

Spanier said books people sent him after he was selected to be chancellor were particularly helpful in learning about UNL. He read all of the books and anything else he could get his hands on about the university.

"I tried to use my experience in higher education to diagnose the situation here," he said. "I worked very hard in the few weeks between I was appointed and the time I arrived to learn as much as I could about the campus."

Spanier said his research convinced

See SPANIER on 3

Kerrey touts technology in education

Senator expresses doubt about Perot

By Cindy Kimbrough
Senior Reporter

Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., said Friday that he did not know if he could support H. Ross Perot if the Texas billionaire entered the Democratic primaries.

"Who is the guy?" he asked during a press conference at the NETV building.

Perot said he would hold town-hall meetings to decide everything, if elected president, Kerrey said.

"I don't know if this guy is Thomas Jefferson or (Benito) Mussolini," he said.

"Perot, what are you going to do about the deficit?" Kerrey asked. "You don't need a town-hall meeting to tell me you're undecided."

Perot must tell Americans what he wants to do and where he stands, Kerrey said, instead of holding town-hall meetings.

Kerrey said he believed a lot of the support for Perot was born of an enthusiasm for change that was building in America.

People are not sure anymore if George Bush or Bill Clinton will initiate change, he said.

But Kerrey said he thought Clinton would promote change if he was elected.

In Lincoln to promote the use of technology in education, Kerrey also told reporters that he thought the future of education in the United States was in telecommunications.

Kerrey said at a forum he attended Friday that representatives of various Nebraska technology projects told him there were tremendous educational opportunities in telecommunications.

For example, MIDnet, part of a national computer network, now gives schools the capacity to do things they may otherwise not have the resources for, he said.

Computers at McMillan Junior High school in Omaha are hooked up to MIDnet, he said.

See KERREY on 3



Michelle Paulman/DN

James Van Etten, professor of plant pathology, looks over a DNA sequencing gel, a representation of a cell's genetic material, in his lab in the Plant Science Building.

Weird science

Professor's newfound virus may affect genetic therapy

By Jennifer McClure
Staff Reporter

Discovering a virus usually creates feelings of worry.

But when Jim Van Etten, a professor of plant pathology at UNL, discovered a virus, he was ecstatic.

In 1981, Van Etten and Russ Meintz, the former chairman of the biology department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, discovered a new family of viruses — one of only 72 families worldwide.

The viruses were scientifically recognized as a family a year and a half ago, Van Etten said, and its scientific name is phycodnaviridae.

Van Etten said he did not set out to discover a virus family. "This all started with drinking beer one night," he said.

Van Etten said a fellow scientist was looking at some photographs of algae, and said he thought he saw a viral particle.

The particle was on a single-celled eukaryotic alga, Van Etten said. He explained that between the two types of algae — prokaryotic and eukaryotic — nothing was known previously about

viruses on eukaryotic algae.

In addition, Van Etten said, they discovered the viral particle on eukaryotic algae in fresh water instead of salt water.

"We found them in every freshwater sample we've looked at," he said. "We've looked all over the world, including the United States, Japan and China. We haven't looked in Australia yet."

Van Etten said they did not realize the viral family was common in nature until 1986 when they tested fresh water from North Carolina.

"The concentration (of viral particles) was very high," he said. "It contained 40,000 viral particles per milliliter."

Oceanographers are starting to look for eukaryotic algae in the ocean, he said.

The virus also has some special qualities, Van Etten said.

For instance, the viruses encode for a certain group of enzymes that can splice genes, he said, and the virus-produced enzymes can be used as diagnostic tools for genetic diseases.

"Hopefully, if you can diagnose these diseases, gene therapy may be possible," he said.

Van Etten said several important differences existed between the viral family and others.

Phycodnaviridae is one of the largest viruses known, he said, and it has one of the largest known amounts of genetic

information.

The virus has about 20 times the amount of genetic information the AIDS virus has, he said.

Van Etten said the virus' DNA structure is different from most viruses.

"The DNA has cross-linked ends," he said. "Most viral families don't."

Although the virus is different from others in some ways, Van Etten said, it has no known danger.

"We do have to acknowledge, though, that it could affect another host (other than eukaryotic algae)," he said.

Van Etten said four laboratories in Australia, Germany, Russia and Japan were working on his discovery. Russ Meintz, now a professor at Oregon State University, also is looking at the viral family.

"This isn't a one-person operation," Van Etten said.

Eight to 11 people at a time are working at UNL, he said, including undergraduate and graduate students and visiting scientists.

Van Etten said he hoped the diagnostic enzymes in the virus could be developed commercially.

"When you do scientific research, you don't know where it's going to go," he said. "We didn't predict the practical value."



MONDAY

Ladies and gentleman please rise as we present graduation memories. See supplement

Quakes continue to rock California. Page 2

A small crowd witnesses Cornstock '92. Page 9

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