

Wearing two hats is hard, grad students say

By Juliet Yenglin
Staff Reporter

They face a combination of heavy course loads and intensive research, long hours of grading papers and meetings with confused students.

But despite the difficulty of balancing responsibility with stressful schedules, graduate teaching assistants at UNL have made room for the experience of teaching, and most said they often found it worthwhile.

Nancy Welch, who is working toward her doctorate in English composition and creative writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said she viewed her experience as a graduate teaching assistant as an opportunity to encourage growth in her students — and in herself as well.

Welch's scholarly pursuit involves writing, she said, and she was able to make a connection between her own growth as a writer and a researcher through her teaching.

"My research is largely devoted to teaching and to the teaching of writing," Welch said. "I have to work hard to show my students what kind of knowledge I have to give them."

Mike Ryan, a graduate teaching assistant for Calculus 106, said he had received a positive response to his teaching from the students in his class.

Because he is only in his first year of graduate school, Ryan said he still recalled how students related to the material.

"I'm not so far out of the class, so I am able to help them understand concepts that may be troublesome," he said.

Students often will be less apprehensive about asking a question of their teaching assistant than their professor, he said.

Mark Giesler, who is working toward a doctorate in theater, said it often was difficult to change hats from student to teacher, but that the two roles complemented each other.

"(Teaching) is a performance of sorts," Giesler said. "Our goal is to make our students aware that theater is valuable in society."

"We're introducing something fresh and new, which is a nice challenge. We're able to mold views and attitudes about the theater."

But an effective learning atmosphere can be produced only through the efforts of both the teaching assistant and the student, Giesler said.

Joe White, who is working toward his doctorate in modern European history, said the "mediocrity" of secondary education was one problem infecting college-level teaching.

The absence of both good writing and public speaking abilities, he said, leaves students without the proper skills necessary to "attack" an essay exam.

By keeping his expectations of students high, White said, he creates a "shock effect" that forces students to realize they will have to learn.



Mark Giesler, a theater graduate student, sits in the Temple Theater. He teaches beginning theater classes.

Enthusiasm often is difficult to maintain, he said, but he said a genuine interest still existed in his students.

Clif Bridges, who is working on his master's degree in military his-

tory, said that instead of viewing teaching assistants only as "graders," students should take advantage of their experience.

Bridges said teaching had given him firsthand experience with stu-

dents as well as the motivation to make sure they understood the material.

"It's a daunting task," he said, "but very rewarding when they say, 'A-ha, I understand.'"

UNL, Hungary team up on environmental study

By Jennifer McClure
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is cooperating with the University of Science in Budapest, Hungary, to study the environment, said Istvan Bogardi, a professor of civil engineering at UNL.

One of two programs began last September with a \$70,000 grant from the U.S. Information Agency and an \$18,000 matching grant from the Research Initiative Fund, Bogardi said. The program combined political science and civil engineering.

Bogardi, a native Hungarian, said he became involved in the program through the International Affairs Office. He said it notified him of the U.S. Information Agency grant, which he applied for with Ivan Volgyes, also a political science professor at UNL.

Bogardi said it was important for people in different disciplines to work together.

"The point is to integrate social science and engineering for good solutions," he said.

Bogardi said the universities selected critical environmental issues worldwide, such as air pollution and nuclear waste disposal, to study. He said education and research were the two components of the project.

Last summer, UNL faculty gave

presentations in Hungary on how to deal with environmental degradation, Bogardi said. In the spring, experts from Hungary will speak at a seminar series, "Global Perspectives of Water in the Environment."

Bogardi said the Ministry of the Environment in Hungary asked some UNL faculty to provide a one-week course on environmental risk analysis.

Bogardi said UNL also was participating in environmental research. He said the National Science Foundation awarded a three-year grant to the program to study the effects of climate change on Nebraska and Eastern Europe. The program is affiliated with the department of meteorology at the University of Science in Budapest.

"Both Nebraska and Hungary have very similar topographic and climatic conditions," Bogardi said.

Bogardi said that, as a byproduct, the programs might boost agribusiness between Nebraska and Hungary.

"Hungary is changing to a farm-market economy," Bogardi said. "We can offer them a lot to establish a system. I believe Nebraska has potential to enter Eastern European markets by utilizing trade in farming exports."

"In order to enter markets, engineers, social scientists and economists must learn conditions and learn how to think internationally," he said.

McElroy

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set the date for his trial. McElroy has been charged with attempted second-degree murder, making terroristic threats and two counts of using a firearm to commit a felony.

On Oct. 12, McElroy, 43, allegedly attempted to fire a loaded semi-automatic rifle at students in his actuarial science class in Ferguson Hall on UNL's City Campus.

The rifle jammed, and no one was injured.

Lancaster County deputies arrested McElroy at his Bennet home about 30

minutes after the incident.

McElroy has since filed a civil rights complaint in U.S. District Court claiming UNL students and professors had interfered with his education.

Richard Wood, general counsel for UNL, said the university had not yet been served with the charges.

"When service is made, we will respond," he said.

In addition, McElroy filed a suit claiming that Lancaster County deputies, a UNL police officer and a Lancaster County judge illegally seized items from his home and car.

On Oct. 21, UNL police searched McElroy's home and confiscated blood-stained clothing, ammunition and loaded handguns.

Regents

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general counsel, said no investigation into the incident was planned.

"Nobody did anything wrong," he said.

Payne said the chartered flight was "simply a matter of convenience."

"A round-trip drive for me (from Kearney) takes about four hours, and it's about seven hours for Don (Blank)," Payne said. "It just doesn't

make sense to drive for that long when you can fly."

Blank said that although a commercial flight would have been cheaper, it would have taken much longer.

Blank and Payne said they were surprised at the attention paid to this particular incident.

"This is nothing that hasn't been done before," Payne said. "It's not precedent-setting, and it was perfectly legal and ethical."

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