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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Correction:
Stan Liberty, dean of the college of Engineering and Technology, said in a speech Thursday \$3.6 million would be funded under the Technology Reinvestment Project (a multi-agency initiative). The source of the funds was misreported Friday. The Daily Nebraskan regrets the error.



A&E
Relativity and Reality

Lincoln's Mercy Rule signs a four-album contract with a New York label. Page 6

Wednesday
50/24
Today, early morning fog, otherwise partly sunny and warmer.

President ready to move NU to forefront

Engineering issue tops Smith's agenda

By Kara G. Morrison
Senior Reporter

Dennis Smith said he was a little "blurry-eyed" Tuesday morning, hours after his 2 a.m. arrival in Lincoln.

But on his first day as University of Nebraska president, Smith said his vision for the NU system was still clear.

"I'm eternally optimistic," Smith said after two hours in office. "I'm quite excited about the potential of moving Nebraska to the forefront as a comprehensive university system."

Smith performed his first official duty as NU president Tuesday by announcing the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's selection as one of 21 universities nationwide to be the site of a multimedia technology center.

His next task, he said, was to find his desk. Smith said he planned to meet with presidential staff members and get acquainted with his office Tuesday.

Smith also planned to do his research this week on the first major decision he will face as NU president: recommending a solution to the engineering college situation.

Smith said he had not seen the final report on engineering education at NU, but he expected to review the report this week.

The report, detailing the findings of an independent panel of consultants hired by the NU Board of Regents, was due Monday, Smith said.

The panel was asked to look into options to improve engineering education in the state, including possibly establishing a separate engineering college at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Smith declined further comment on the engineering issue until he read the report, but he said he would be gathering input on the situation during the next few days.

Smith said he planned to meet with members of the NU Board of Regents all week.

The president said he did not think the engineering debate had caused ongoing problems between campuses.

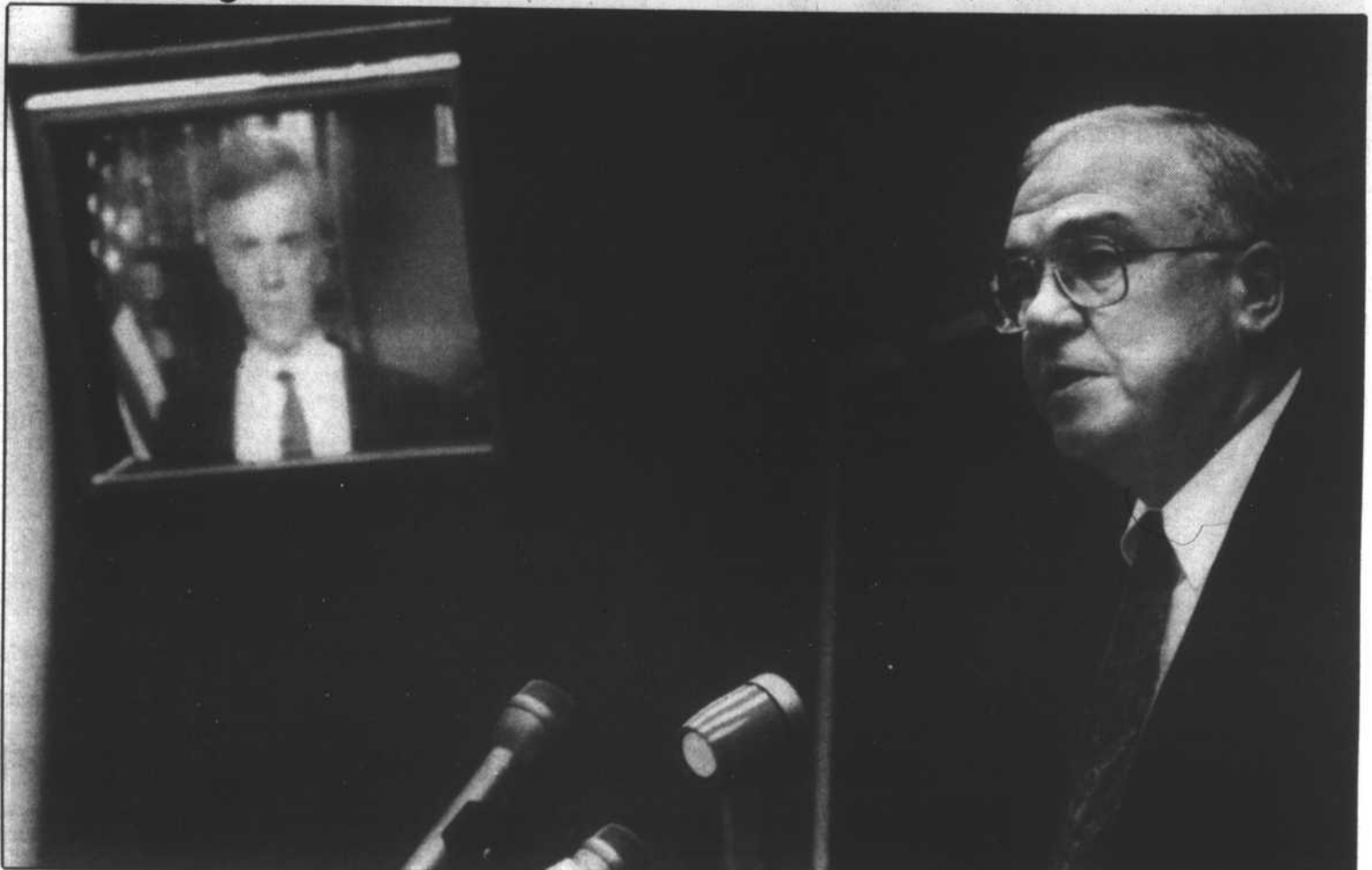
"I've met with all the chancellors at some length, and I don't see a problem," Smith said. "We will be working as a team."

Smith would not speculate when asked if he foresaw other immediate problems or major decisions as NU president.

"I really don't like to emphasize problems," he said. "I certainly have many other people who do that for me."

Smith, formerly executive vice chancellor at the University of California-Irvine, officially took over former NU president Martin Massengale's position Tuesday.

During Smith's first day, Massengale attended a meeting in Chicago.



University of Nebraska President Dennis Smith speaks with Sen. Bob Kerrey via satellite during a press conference Tuesday at the Walter Scott Engineering Center. Tuesday was Smith's first day as NU president.

Travis Heying/DN

UNL technology center to open in May

By Kara G. Morrison
Senior Reporter

UNL was selected as one of 21 universities nationwide to be the site of a high-tech information technology center, UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier announced Tuesday.

Spanier, along with NU President Dennis Smith and Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns, made the announcement at a press conference at the Walter Scott Engineering Center.

The Nebraska New Media Center, to be located in Mabel Lee Hall at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, will train faculty and students on state-of-the-art audio, video and database technology, Spanier said.

The multimedia center will allow students and faculty from a wide range of academic fields to learn and create new multimedia-based curriculum, Spanier said.

Sen. Bob Kerrey, who participated in the press conference via satellite, said the center was one initiative in his plan for a technology superhighway.

Projects like the center, he said, will ultimately result in a better-trained work force and will bring new job opportunities to the state.

"There is a special skill ... in being able to use the language of multimedia," Kerrey said. "We've got to build human talent by training workers and entrepreneurs."

Kerrey said the center would improve the University of Nebraska's educational capabilities by creating "new ways to teach and to learn."

Alvah Kilgore, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at UNL, said the 2,000-square-foot facility in Mabel Lee Hall would open May 6.

The center, with two full-time staff members, will include a 24-station student training

area and an adjacent six-station faculty development area, Kilgore said.

The center, which Kerrey described as a cooperative effort between academia and industry, will help develop educational uses for new multimedia technology.

Ultimately, Spanier said, the center will put UNL at the forefront of educational technology and will begin transforming traditional classrooms to high-tech, interactive ones of the future.

Smith, who officially began his duties as NU president Tuesday, said he was encouraged by the fact that he had been in office only 1 1/2 hours and already was helping announce a cooperative advancement in a high-tech field.

The center, he said, could produce infinite possibilities for outreach education at NU, including the University of Nebraska Medical

See TECHNOLOGY on 3

UNL athletes set sights on 1996 games

Olympic hopefuls aim for the best, dream of Atlanta

By Todd Neeley
Staff Reporter

While the buzz begins to die around Lillehammer, Norway, some UNL students' dreams focus on Atlanta and the 1996 Summer Olympic games.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln gymnast Dennis Harrison said the chance to compete for the United States in the Summer Olympics was something for which he had worked since he became a gymnast at age 7.

Although getting to the Olympic games has been his ultimate goal, Harrison said he had not had time to think about making the team.

"I'm not really focusing on it until the season is over," he said.

Harrison, a senior from Omaha, placed 11th at the 1992 Olympic trials. He needed to place in the top



Harrison



Christie



Grace

seven. "I think that experience will help improve my chances in 1996," he said.

Watching the 1994 Winter Olympics, Harrison said, made it difficult to wait for his chance to compete in the Olympics.

"I would like to see the Summer Olympics start this summer," he said. "But at least I have two more years to prepare."

Jason Christie, a sophomore on the gymnastics team, agreed that seeing the Winter Olympics on television served as a motivation.

"I love to watch the Olympics," he said. "It makes me want to train harder."

Like many other athletes, Christie has been waiting and working hard for his Olympic chance.

"I've been in gymnastics for 13 years," Christie said. "The Olympics have always been on my mind."

Richard Grace, a junior gymnast at UNL, spends about three to four hours a day for six days a week in the gym.

Although the workouts are in preparation for upcoming meets, he said, the hard work also is directed at someday becoming an Olympian.

"It's everything I've been working for," he said. "It has been a lifetime goal."

One former UNL wrestler said

making the Olympic wrestling team had never really been a goal.

Rulon Gardner, a graduate assistant on the UNL wrestling team, said that until he began working out with Olympic champion Bruce Baumgardner in 1992, he didn't give the Olympics much consideration.

"I never thought of myself as Olympic caliber," he said.

But now that he is considered one of the top four contenders in the country for the Olympic team, Gardner has begun to take his chances more seriously.

"I think my greatest moment is yet to come," he said. "I think everything builds up to a higher goal."

But if he doesn't make the Olympic team, Gardner said, he has already found some satisfaction in what he has accomplished.

"Just to be one of the best in the country is a goal in itself," he said.

Other potential U.S. Olympians from UNL could not be reached for comment. They include former volleyball player Lori Endicott, baseball player Darin Erstad and former wrestler Corey Olson.

Barney to plead guilty to murder

From Staff and Wire Reports

Scott Barney will plead guilty Thursday to first-degree murder charges in the 1992 slaying of University of Nebraska-Lincoln student Candice Harms, Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said Tuesday.

Lacey said he canceled an original deal to have Barney plead guilty to lesser charges of second-degree murder and robbery after Barney failed a polygraph test.

Barney led police to Harms' body in December 1992 in exchange for a promise from prosecutors that they would not seek the death penalty against him. Barney also agreed to provide authorities with information about the case.

Last November, Roger Bjorklund was found guilty of first-degree murder and use of a weapon to commit a felony in the case.

Sentencing hearings for Bjorklund will begin next week in Lancaster County District Court and are expected to last three weeks. Bjorklund could face life in prison or the death penalty.