

NU libraries facing tough budget problems

By Brian Sharp
Staff Reporter

No money.
No books.
No service.

While academic libraries across the country struggle to deal with rising costs and limited funds, few are facing the problem to the same degree as the University of Nebraska.

The cost of books, periodicals, etc. are increasing at a rate of 10 to 15 percent annually. The budget for NU libraries is not.

Kent Hendrickson, dean of libraries, said while the shortfall hadn't led to total disaster, it had created a critical problem.

"The inflation has been with us ... at this level as long as 10 years," Hendrickson said. "As that continues, our funding from the state has not kept pace."

Hendrickson said increases in library funding had been averaging around 3 percent.

"It's really impossible to get the things we need," he said, "let alone protect what we have on the shelf."

Library officials estimate they've had to cancel well over 1,000 serial titles in the past two years. When it comes to books, NU is buying 11,000 volumes less per year than 10 years ago.

There's also the problem of preserving what they have. A lot of works are printed on paper that is acidic, meaning they will become brittle, dis-

colored and then turn to dust if not preserved.

Hendrickson estimated at the very least, 25 percent of the libraries' collection is in danger.

"It's a very, very expensive problem," he said. "We have had very few treated, most have to be done on the basis of grants."

Congress has approved millions of dollars to preserve an estimated 3 million books. Unfortunately, there are 120 million books considered "seriously endangered."

And it's doubtful that any of that money will be seen at libraries like NU's.

Those types of programs and grants are going to places like Yale, Hendrickson said, and NU just has to hope that some of the money will trickle down.

Meanwhile, NU libraries' problems continue.

Hendrickson said he anticipated having to cut \$400,000 in acquisitions in the near future.

It's a cut that's becoming somewhat of a tradition. Over the past six years, the libraries have had to make three similar cuts.

Randall Haack, director of budgets and analysis, said NU's request of \$1.2 million for libraries was among the highest priorities submitted to the Legislature.

But that doesn't guarantee the money will be there when the final budget is approved.

Haack said NU had presented a similar scenario in the past, and when



Jason Ievkulich/DN

Using special binders and cases, eight workers at Love Library work against the ravages of time and acetic paper to save over 1.2 million books which are in jeopardy of turning to dust.

the Legislature had money, the funds had come through. But it hasn't had money for some time, he said.

"The problem is that there has been a lot of competing priorities," Haack said, "and the Legislature has had to

make some tough decisions."

This year will be no different, with the Legislature estimated to start out facing a \$60 to \$100 million deficit.

Haack said a recent ranking of the top 108 research libraries placed UNL

74th. Of its peer group, only two placed lower.

"That kind of speaks of the problem we're facing," Haack said. "And the university library is the heart of the campus."

Officials blame violence, neglect for changing face of classroom

By Deborah D. McAdams
Editor

Teaching used to be a profession for proper young ladies and unmarried women, but that's no longer true.

"Teaching has changed," said Jane Close-Conoly, associate dean of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Teachers College. "It's broadening way beyond the classroom."

One reason is violence.

Nearly 3 million thefts and violent crimes occur on or near school campuses each year, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said in Carnegie Quarterly. That translates into 16,000 incidents per school day. Close-Conoly said the Teachers College tried to prepare students for the realities of the classroom.

"We see people come here from small-town schools in Nebraska, and think they'll just go back there and teach," she said.

Most of the available teaching jobs are in rough, inner-city schools, or schools with few resources, she said.

Students aren't even admitted to the teacher's college until they've passed a battery of tests, Close-Conoly said. Once admitted to the college, one of their first courses in the college addresses the number of hours teachers work as well as classroom diversity.

Many Nebraska schools are becoming more culturally diverse, she said, and more graduates find themselves facing a classroom of American Indian or African American children.

Teachers must also be prepared to handle violent behavior, which plagues

children from all cultural backgrounds.

"What do you do when a child comes toward you in a violent way? All of the people who want to be teachers take special education because kids who are behavior disordered are in special-ed classes," Close-Conoly said.

"Even when there's not violence in the class, the teacher's being pulled in a thousand directions. There's kids who've been abused, kids who haven't eaten a decent meal," she said.

Teachers are dealing with more students who don't have stable homes, she said. Many live in residential care or foster care, and school is the only continuity they know.

"Poverty and neglect are the major



James Mehling/DN