

# UNL uses satellites to expand educational programs

By Paula Lavigne  
Staff Reporter

Satellite technology is beaming in a revolutionary concept in distance education at UNL by offering classes via satellite to students outside the Lincoln area.

Nancy Aden, program specialist with the department of distance education in the Division of Continuing Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said the majority of the classes offered were at the graduate level.

"The whole effort of using satellite delivery of graduate education is an effort to meet the needs of working students throughout the state who cannot come to Lincoln to attend classes," she said.

Aden said the students would participate in the program through cooperating institutions such as the Panhandle Education Center and various community colleges across the state.

The courses are offered through a program called NEB\*SAT, owned by Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Network. Colleges currently involved with the program include Engineering, Journalism and Mass Communications and Teachers.

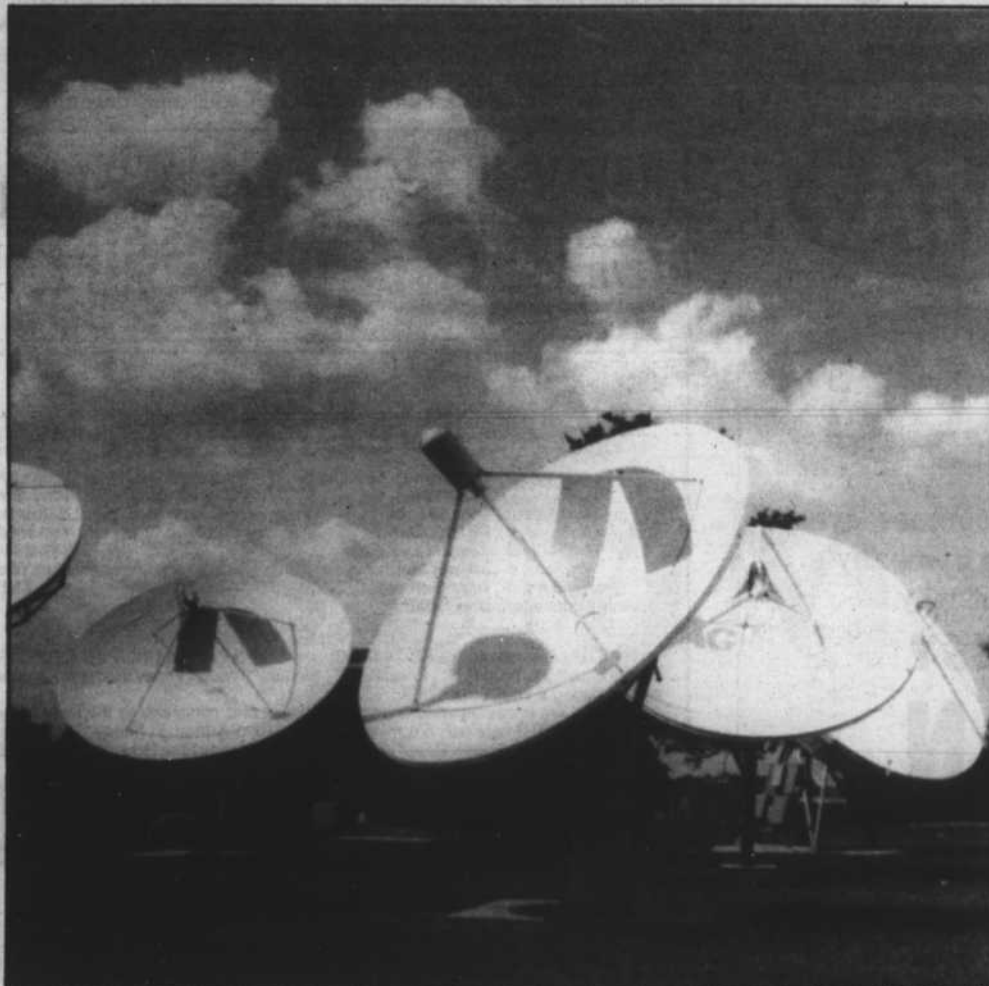
The newest additions to the program are two classes offered by the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. Mass Communication Theory and Issues in Mass Communications: Society, Information, and the Media will both be offered this fall for students pursuing a master's degree in journalism.

Students must be admitted to the respective graduate college before they are allowed to take satellite courses and must pay any additional distance fees to cover library expenses and expenses attached to remote sites. They must also meet any stipulations set forth by the graduate college.

Ninety-nine percent of the students involved in the graduate level satellite courses are pursuing their degrees, Aden said.

"UNL is one of the few institutions in the state that offers graduate degrees by satellite," she said. "We're serving the people of the state education that they cannot get in their local community."

Satellite courses are an important part of the



James Mehling/DN

Using satellite technology, courses can be transmitted across the state enabling people to stay at home for

university outreach mission, Aden said, and with improved technology, the possibilities for expansion will only increase.

Another program, called AgSat, also utilizes the convenience of satellite technology. AgSat is a consortium of land grant colleges and state universities around the United States. The AgSat headquarters are located on the UNL East Cam-

pus.

Jan Poley, AgSat president, said AgSat was a distance education consortium whose members produce academic credit courses and extension teleconference workshops that can be offered nationwide.

Although AgSat's focus is on agriculture, Poley said, it includes a very broad set of

agricultural topics including production, environment, marketing, economics, nutrition, child care and families. The classes can be taken for formal credit or as nonformal workshops.

An agrimarketing class can originate at UNL and be offered at another member university or a university in Idaho can offer a course on feeding young children which can be shown to day care providers across the nation.

“With formal or nonformal education in a state like Nebraska, we have people in the Western part of the state who can't drive to Lincoln every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.”

— Jan Poley,  
AgSat President

Poley said convenience and flexibility were important factors involved with offering satellite courses.

"With older people who are caring for their families and working, there's a time factor there," she said.

"With formal or nonformal education in a state like Nebraska, we have people in the Western part of the state who can't drive to Lincoln every Monday, Wednesday and Friday."

In many states satellite courses aren't just a convenience — they're the only option people have, Aden said.

Most states offer courses through a variety of organizations, Aden said.

The classes can be taken at a member university with a satellite uplink, a community or county downlink, or at home via a backyard satellite dish. Aden said the classes could be taped and saved on video cassette for additional review or future reference.

"We'll use any technology available for delivering educational opportunities in viewing sites or homes or anywhere that makes sense," Aden said.

# Tenure causes controversy

By Brian Sharp  
Staff Reporter

It's like a marriage where one partner says "I do" for a lifetime and the other says "Well, maybe."

But while the tenure system may appear to leave universities on the wrong end of a one-way contract, Alvah Kilgore, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, said it's not that way.

Kilgore said tenure had succeeded in correcting a system gone wrong.

It used to be that professors were taken advantage of, he said. They were let go when they neared the end of their career, or spoke out against the wishes of their employer. With the protection tenure provides, academia has moved forward.

But that's not to say there isn't room for improvement.

Fred Choobineh, president of the academic senate, said the purpose of tenure was to separate politics from academics.

"(Tenure) allows you to pursue knowledge ... without fear of stepping on somebody's toes, or without fear of being persecuted for your opinion."

"You have to maintain that (separation) if you are going to move forward," Choobineh said.

But Leo Sartori, a tenured physics professor, said that in science, if faculty hope to receive tenure, it needed to go where the money was.

"(The process) tends to push people into research that will attract grants," Sartori said. "There's also a strong incentive ... to pursue a safe research, which is more likely to lead to publishable results."

That means losing freedom, he said, and

## TENURE breakdown

	Male	Female	Total Tenure-Track
Black American	2	0	13
Indian	3	0	4
Asian	28	1	80
Hispanic	5	1	19
White	657	114	1178
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>1294</b>

SOURCE: UNL Office of Institutional Research and Planning

See TENURE on 3

Amy Schmidt/DN