

# Daily Nebraskan

COVERING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SINCE 1901

VOL. 94 NO. 50

## INSIDE TUESDAY

### SPORTS

■ Berringer's performance silences critics, Page 7

### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

■ Velocity Girl to play at The Hurricane, Page 10

PAGE 2: Commuter plane crash kills 68 in Indiana

NOVEMBER 1, 1994

## One in ad endorses regent

By Nick Wiltgen  
Staff Reporter

Four students appeared in a campaign commercial for Regent Robert Allen of Hastings, but only one said he intended to endorse the candidate.

**ELECTION 94**  
Andrew Loudon, president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, appeared in the commercial with ASUN senators Paul Cain and Shawntell Hurtgen and former ASUN senator Kim Arms.

The commercial shows Allen speaking to Loudon and then to the other three students by Broyhill Fountain.

Only Cain, a senator for the College of Arts and Sciences, said he solidly supported Allen's election bid.

"I do support his candidacy," Cain said. "I was in the union and I saw him and I recognized who he was, and he just wanted to know if I'd be interested."

Allen is running for re-election in the 5th District race against Robert Prokop of Wilber.

Loudon, who represents the student body on the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, said Allen asked him at a meeting to help find good locations to shoot commercials.

Loudon, who said he would have done that for any regent, is not officially endorsing any candidate.

"Of course I know Regent Allen through the Board of Regents," Loudon said. "He has been very helpful to student concerns."

But Loudon said it wasn't his place to publicly favor certain regent candidates.

Hurtgen, Government Liaison Committee chairwoman, also said her appearance was not an endorsement.

"Basically, it seemed more like a session of talking to him than a commercial," she said. "I just happened to be there when I met him. They asked me if I wanted to go out, and I did, but it wasn't a planned episode."



Jeff Haller/DN

Mel Thornton shares a smile with his Concepts in Geometry class Friday in Bessey Hall as he teaches about a pantograph. Thornton, a professor of mathematics and statistics, was named Nebraska's Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

## UNL professor named best of year

By Julie Sobczyk  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's professor of the year has no perfect formula for teaching success. But he does have some guidelines.

Mel Thornton, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln mathematics and statistics professor, was named Nebraska's professor of the year recently. The award, administered by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement and Support of Education, recognizes excellence in undergraduate teaching at Nebraska colleges.

Thornton, who has been teaching at UNL since 1969, did not expect to receive the award.

"I was quite surprised," Thornton said. "I had not thought I'd be chosen as Nebraska's pro-

fessor of the year. I'm very pleased."

After 29 years of teaching, Thornton said successful teachers should have certain qualities.

"If I think about what makes a successful teacher, it's excitement about the subject," he said. "If you're not excited about helping people learn, you can't be as effective for the students."

One of Thornton's successes at UNL is a math course aimed at students who may be worried about taking math.

Thornton said he designed Contemporary Mathematics 203 to teach math-shy students the practicality of mathematics.

"The idea is to get students to see new kinds of math other than algebra in high school," he said. "It's a modern kind of mathemat-

ics. It's all around us."

Thornton uses a practice common to English classes to get to know his students — a weekly journal.

"I know more about the students. I read their comments," he said. "At the beginning of the semester, students would say things that let me know they were math-anxious."

"By the middle of the semester, they are amazed that math has different implications, and they can understand its use."

Thornton said his relationships with students made teaching worthwhile.

"I get great satisfaction from talking to students after graduation and having them tell me what we did together made a difference."

But the best part of teaching, he said, is being able to teach a subject he loves — math.

"I'm sometimes amazed people pay me to do something I enjoy doing."

Thornton said he loved to teach. But it's not easy.

"I get frustrated when I have to try to understand how a particular student's mind is working," Thornton said. "I get frustrated when I can't reach them."

Thornton said he had some advice to offer students about being successful at UNL and after college.

"Be motivated. Work hard. Be excited about what you're doing."

"My pet peeve is when people say, 'When I get out in the real world.' UNL is the real world. It's part of your real life."

## UNL research programs experiencing increased growth

By Brian Sharp  
Senior Reporter

At universities nationwide, research is growing like a weed.

And at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, officials are doing all they can to make sure the evolution remains firmly rooted and blossoms.

A recently released annual report from the Office of Sponsored Programs states that UNL received a record \$76.3 million in grants and contracts during the 1993-94 fiscal year. More than half of that — \$40.7 million — went to research.

Don Helmuth, associate vice chancellor for research, said that as UNL continued to expand its research base, the university will have to make difficult decisions about where to invest.

"We are very competitive and becoming more so as time goes by," he said. "But there's no such thing as a university that is competitive in all fields."

Most of the research funding, \$19 million, goes to the Institution of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR).

Sharon Davis, director of sponsored programs, said IANR had a history of being the top dollar getter for many years. And with good reason. Funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture composed the largest portion of federal grants to the university.

Helmuth said agencies granted IANR a lot of money because it is one of the top agricultural research institutions in the country.

Other areas experiencing increased growth and attention are material sciences, such as electrical engineering, physics and chemistry, Helmuth said. Physical and social sciences also are growing, he said.

UNL ranks ninth of 11 peer institutions in spending for research and development, according to a report released by the office the institutional research and planning. Nationally, that ranking is 69th of the top 100 institu-

tions. The University of Minnesota ranked first in the peer group for the 1991 fiscal year, and third nationally, with almost \$331.5 million in expenditures. UNL spent \$87.5 million.

Helmuth said research investment at UNL had doubled in the last decade. With the opening of the George W. Beadle Center for Biogenetics Research, the university should see further funding leaps in the future, he said.

The center isn't scheduled to be in full operation until next spring, and the cycle to receive grants takes about a year, Helmuth said.

Though it's impossible to estimate the percentage of possible growth, Helmuth said the center would make the university a more attractive grant recipient.

Davis said the increased funding UNL received already had an impact at the university.

In the spring 1994, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching reclassified UNL as a Research I university, or

among the premier research institutions in the United States. The amount of grants and contracts played a major role in that, she said.

"That's a real plus for our faculty that they've been able to secure those dollars," Davis said.

The annual report provided the following breakdown of funding for fiscal year 1993-1994: Instruction, \$6.8 million; Public Service, \$12.2 million; Administration, \$6.1 million; Student Services, \$800,000; Student Financial Aid, \$9.7 million.

IANR is the only department that sends its requests directly to the agencies allotting funds, and not through the UNL office, Davis said. The office only receives the proposals after the fact, she said.

In all other cases, the office receives proposals and reviews them for budget accuracy and compliance with various university policies.