

Daily Nebraskan

COVERING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SINCE 1901

VOL. 94 NO. 125

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March 16, 1995

Penn State to offer Spanier job

By Jeff Zeleny and J. Christopher Hain
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Graham Spanier

Chancellor Graham Spanier will likely be named today the president of Pennsylvania State University, the Daily Nebraskan confirmed Wednesday.

Sources in Lincoln and Pennsylvania, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Spanier was the lone finalist for the position.

The Penn State University Board

of Trustees will vote to confirm one candidate during a special meeting at 12:30 p.m. CST today in Hershey, Pa., said Roger Williams, a Penn State spokesman.

The trustees will announce their decision, and likely Spanier as the new president, at a 1:30 p.m. press conference.

"The hope is that the candidate will be confirmed and present for the press conference," Williams said. The trustees' vote is said to be merely a formality.

Williams said he could neither confirm nor deny whether Spanier was the finalist. Two members of the Board of Trustees also told the Daily Nebraskan that names of finalists were confidential.

Spanier, who has been the UNL chancellor since 1991, worked at Penn State from 1973 to 1982. He began his work as an administrator there in 1979, when he was appointed an associate dean in the College of Human Development.

Spanier, 46, has repeatedly declined to comment on his employment status at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The chancellor met with deans and directors at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday and left town a few hours later.

After the meeting, Eric Jolly, director of affirmative action and diversity at UNL, told the Daily Nebraskan that Spanier would be in State College, Pa., today and Friday. But Jolly

said he did not know why Spanier would be there.

The UNL public relations office declined to say if Spanier was in Pennsylvania, but said he was out of town.

Speculation about Spanier's future at UNL began last week, when the Daily Nebraskan was first to report that he declined an offer to be president of the University of Washington in Seattle.

Since then, UNL officials have been relatively quiet about the possibility of Spanier leaving Nebraska.

Student Regent Andrew Loudon told the Daily Nebraskan on Wednesday that he had been informed of Spanier's involvement in the Penn State presidency.

"I have received strong indications

that he is going to accept the job," Loudon said. He declined to elaborate.

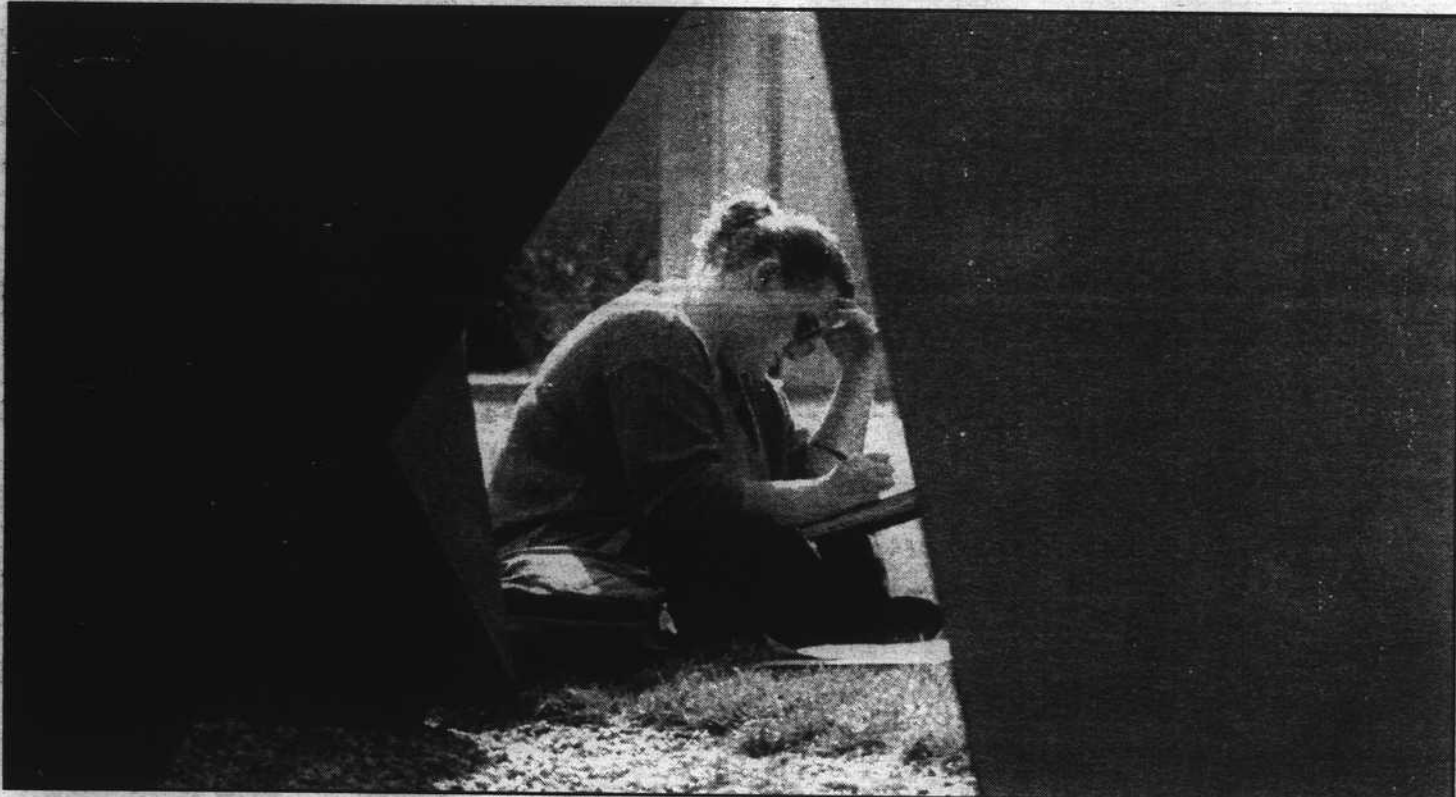
Penn State President Joab Thomas has said he would retire Aug. 31. Thomas' annual salary for governing the 69,000-student university system is about \$200,000. The UNL chancellor earns about \$150,000 a year.

Questions about Spanier's future continued to arise on the UNL campus this week. As chancellor, he has been praised for his commitment to academics and diversity. His opponents have said Spanier had a liberal agenda that could be detrimental to the university.

James Griesen, UNL vice chancellor

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DEEP THOUGHTS



Jon Waller/DN

Freshman music education major Karl Perkins studies before class near Sheldon Art Gallery Wednesday afternoon. Wednesday's high reached 72. It will be another warm day today, with a high around 75. Morning fog should turn into sunny skies. Tonight it will become partly cloudy with a low around 40. The last day of classes before spring break will be cooler with a high in the lower to mid-60s.

Gun proposal requires good mental health

By Matthew Waite
Senior Reporter

Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady said Wednesday that he keeps a file in his office that scares him.

In that file are permits to own handguns that he says he probably shouldn't have granted, but had to legally.

Some of the permits he has granted have had deadly results.

Casady named four people — Tanner, Jeff, Jennifer and Chris — that died from murders or suicides involving handguns.

"They were carrying permits that had my name on it."

Casady made his remarks before the Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee, which was hearing testimony on LB778.

The bill, sponsored by Sens. Don Wesely and Chris Beutler of Lincoln, would provide law enforcement officers with mental health information about people applying for handgun permits.

Casady told the committee that under current Nebraska law, people can be denied permits only if they have committed felonies or are mentally unstable.

As of now, he said, law enforcement officers have no access to mental status information.

Another incident where mental health information would have saved a life, Casady said, happened just this month. He said a Lincoln man was granted a permit, bought a handgun and shot himself, all in a matter of hours.

Casady said that often times, when he knows a problem will come from a permit, all he can do legally is sign the permit and hope.

"Hope doesn't always work," he said. In opposition to the bill, Frank Schlangen said that he had been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic and had been hospitalized several times. He said the last time was 1987.

Schlangen said he agreed that there needed to be restrictions on mentally ill patients getting handguns. But he said there needed to be uniformity on county health boards, which are often made of people inexperienced in mental health.

After the hearing, Casady said he did not feel personally responsible for deaths related to permits he had granted, but he couldn't help but feel terrible.

"You wish there was something you could have done," he said. "If the Legislature doesn't give us the tools to make an informed decision, I don't see how they can, with a straight face, give us this responsibility."

In executive session, the committee decided not to vote on the bill until mental health infor-

See HEARING on 8

Micron publicity helps lure Pfizer

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Although Micron Technology Inc. did not choose Omaha for its new plant, the national publicity will help lure other corporations to the state, officials said Wednesday.

One of those corporations, Pfizer Inc., is considering Lincoln as a site for its corporate headquarters, now in New York.

Pfizer already has a plant in Lincoln, which it purchased from SmithKline Beecham Animal Health. Pfizer's Lincoln plant specializes in animal pharmaceuticals.

Mary Simmons, director of business recruitment for the Nebraska Department for Economic Development, said Micron's loss raised the odds for future investments.

"That kind of publicity is expensive to go out and buy," she said. "We've just got to keep going."

Publicizing recent legislation that would provide tax incentives for new businesses also would help recruiting efforts, said Eric Carstenson, senior vice president of government affairs and finance at the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

"This legislation projects the image that Nebraska is good for business," he said.

He did not say if Pfizer met the requirements of the legislation. However, he did say he was working with several businesses that did.

Simmons said she could not compare Micron to Pfizer, but she said the department was working with several projects.

"Every project is the next Micron," she said. "Micron was just publicly played out in the press."

The department researches the needs of each business and tries to meet its criteria, she said. The projects are kept confidential so the competition does not discover Nebraska's strengths.

Simmons said the department presented support industries, education, utilities and transportation as incentives for each business.

"We have long romances and short romances, and Micron was a relatively short romance," she said. "I can't make predictions for Pfizer."

Bob Fauteux, Pfizer spokesman, said a site evaluation team would spend a few months studying the sites and then report to the company.

The team will look at the personnel, business and financial perspectives of each site, he said. Fauteux said Pfizer did not have a specific deadline and would not name other sites in the study.

Fauteux said he was unaware of the Micron

decision, but Pfizer also may look at the financial prospects of tax incentives.

Nebraska legislative bills 828, 829 and 830 will provide incentives for businesses that can provide 500 jobs and \$50 million investment or 250 jobs and \$100 million investment.

Fauteux said he could not discuss the investment or employment aspects of Pfizer's new headquarters, but they would uphold Pfizer's standards for nationwide, research-based global health care.

Pfizer would face competition from at least six other similar companies in Nebraska, including Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in Lincoln, Pharma Chemie in Syracuse, MVP Laboratories in Ralston and Western Laboratories, ABS Corporation and Chemical Safety Products in Omaha.

Pfizer reported sales of approximately \$8.3 billion in 1994 and spent more than \$1.1 billion on research and development.

Pfizer purchased SmithKline Beecham for \$1.45 billion. Both companies are leaders in animal pharmaceutical production in the United States.

SmithKline Beecham's operations in Europe and Australia also complement Pfizer's presence in Latin America, Japan and Southeast Asia.