

# UNL offers classes via satellite

By Paula Lavigne  
Senior Reporter

Students across the United States can take classes at UNL without leaving their living rooms through the university's distance-education classes.

With satellite or computer links, the classes allow people who cannot come to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to take advantage of the university's resources.

Three weeks ago, A\*DEC, a distance education consortium of state universities and land-grant colleges in the United States, replaced the satellite link AGSAT.

Janet K. Poley, A\*DEC president, said the university could offer academic courses, non-credit extension programs and short courses.

The access is more important than the method used, she said.

"It's simply a distance education program to extend the walls of campus," she said. "We really don't care what technology we use."

The set-up works like this: An instructor at UNL teaches from a classroom or studio equipped with video cameras.

The cameras can be manually operated or hooked up to a voice control. When students speak, the camera focuses on them.

The technology on the receiving end is simple. Remote students may go to receiving sites such as community colleges or extension centers, or they can have the classes beamed to their backyard satellites.

In most cases, the students on both ends can have an open, two-way audio exchange. A toll-free number allows remote students to call in with questions.

Some classes have a two-way video exchange, where not only can the remote student see the instructor, but the instructor can see the students. Currently, this exchange is not available to most remote students.

Joan Laughlin, associate dean of the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences, said her college also offered masters degree programs via satellite for interdepartmental human resources and family science.

Laughlin said the distance-learning classes were suited for non-traditional students — most of them between 30 and 50 years old — in rural Nebraska.

A survey of 104 students in the distance program showed that if the degree programs were not available at remote sites, 56 percent would not have taken the class, she said.

Almost 100 percent of the students were female, she said, and 62 of the students had children living at home,

which made it impossible for them to move or commute to Lincoln.

Students were asked to rank the classes on a scale of one to seven, with seven being the highest, Laughlin said, and the average ranking was six.

Nancy Betts, associate professor of nutritional science and dietetics, taught a distance-education class last semester.

"It took some getting used to," she said. "At the beginning, I was terrified by being on TV altogether."

In the end, she said she grew to like television teaching because it allowed her to use high-tech video and visuals.

Her class had two-way audio but one-way video. She said that presented a problem because she couldn't read the body language of the remote students.

The students on campus were traditional graduate students, she said, while the remote students were older and had been out of school for a number of years.

The on-campus students had a stronger science background, she said, so she did not know when she had to explain concepts.

"Sometimes it's hard to tell what's happening," she said. "The students are a little nervous about being on TV, and are a little nervous about calling in."

## New postmark seals state's approval

By Catherine Blalock  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska football fans have yet another way to remember the Cornhuskers' National Championship.

They now can get a postmark featuring a Nebraska football helmet and the words "National Championship Station Memorial Stadium Finished Business."

Nebraska post offices introduced the postmark last week. By Tuesday, 1,450 postmarks had been distributed.

Diane Persson, a post office employee, said requests for the postmarks were at first coming mostly from rest-

dents in Nebraska who were sending letters and postcards to others in the United States. Now, requests are coming from across the country, Persson said.

"We're averaging 200 a day," Persson said.

The postmark is available until May 21 at the Main Post Office. Fans can also get the postmark at Memorial Stadium on Friday. Two National Championship Postal Stations will be open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. under the north and south sides of the stadium.

"It's a collector's item," said Susan Frink, a spokeswoman for the Main Post Office. "It's there to honor the

football players and fans. Fans are having fun cancelling out the Florida stamps."

Fans also can buy National Championship postcards for \$1. The postcards have a picture of the Sears championship trophy on them.

Fans are limited to 50 free postmarks per person. After that, they must pay 5 cents for each extra postmark.

The postmark can be printed on anything, Persson said. However, she said, flat and nickslick surfaces work best.

The only requirement is that the item to be postmarked has a first-class stamp on it.



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