



Travis Heying/DN

UNL Interim Chancellor Joan Leitzel speaks to faculty and students at the annual State of the University address Friday. Leitzel promised continued commitment to education and research.

### Address

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Renovation of Burnett Hall will begin this year.

Leitzel also described several university programs that are new this fall. The Comprehensive Education Program will begin with 100 and 200 level courses. The program makes it easier for students to transfer to UNL, particularly from community and state colleges, she said.

Another new program will help freshmen establish firm ties to UNL. The Freshmen Learning Community has 70 members this fall. Participating students will take three classes in common and live on the same residence hall floors.

Leitzel said the goal of the program was to encourage firm roots at UNL by living and learning together.

UNL's work toward diversity is another accomplishment that will be carried throughout this school year, Leitzel said.

"We have worked toward diversity at all levels," she said, "not just one certain level."

*"We know our programs are exceptional. Positive commentary is reaching back to the high schools and hometowns about the strength of our honors program."*

**JOAN LEITZEL**  
Interim chancellor

Although Leitzel said she was optimistic about the new year, she noted some challenges.

One challenge will be keeping faculty salaries competitive, she said.

Students also might find new challenges, she said, because further financial-aid cuts are likely.

But overall, Leitzel said, she is confident about UNL's future. "We have a good understanding of future needs," she said, "and we will continue that progress."

## UNL student dies after fall in Uzbekistan

By Julie Sobczyk  
Senior Editor

What should have been a summer of helping others ended in tragedy for one UNL student.

Brad Holmes, a senior secondary education major, died July 17 after falling from a ledge outside his fourth-floor apartment in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, part of the former Soviet Union.

Holmes was traveling in Uzbekistan with eight other college students for Focus International, an organization that recruits students for cultural exchanges overseas. The students embarked on the trip to teach Uzbek students about America and American students.

Holmes' death occurred after he tried to climb onto the ledge outside his apartment window. He had locked himself out of his apartment that night and was unable to wake his roommate to get in. His death was ruled an

accident by Uzbek authorities.

Holmes was active in Lincoln's Trinity Baptist Church and Christian Challenge, a UNL campus ministry.

"Brad was a key student leader in our college ministry," said Doug West, associate pastor of Trinity Baptist Church. "He was a great role model for younger students."

West said about 12 church members traveled to Holmes' hometown of Hershey for his funeral. The trip helped church members deal with his death and express grief, West said.

Brett Yohn, director of Christian Challenge, said the ministry felt a deep loss without Holmes.

"He was someone we can't replace," Yohn said. "We feel a deep hole, not only in our hearts, but in our group."

Ron Havlovic, Holmes' best friend and roommate of three years, said it was hard for him to move on after the death.

"I'm learning how empty my life is without him," said Havlovic, a junior psychology major. "There is a void in my life. He touched me dearly."

Because of his friend's death, Havlovic said he had learned to be more of a risk taker and a leader.

"He was always the initiator, and I was the follower," he said. "Now I have to do more of the initiating."

To help Holmes' friends at UNL handle his death, West said the church would have a prayer gathering on campus Sunday.

"It will be a time to honor Brad and a great time to bring people who knew him together," West said. "It will be a time to thank God for his life, express our love for Brad and move forward."

### Landscape program wins a national award

From Staff Reports

Nebraska has won a second national championship ... of sorts.

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum received a national award recognizing its statewide program to improve community landscapes. The program targeted 49 Nebraska towns and cities, granting money for 53 projects.

The Award for Program Excellence was given to the state organization by the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta.

Communities matched grants of more than \$1 million, which came from the Peter Kiewit Foundation of Omaha.

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