

The Big MEE-z

Meeting students one of chancellor's top goals this year

By PAULA LAVIGNE
Senior News Editor

If you're eating lunch on a bench near the Canfield Administration Building and a middle-aged, slightly balding man in a suit comes up to you and sits down, don't assume he's trying to collect on your student loan.

He's probably Chancellor James Moeser. That's pronounced MEE-zer, and he's going to take advantage of the warmer weather to make his name known among students.

"I knew next to nothing about the chancellor at the University of Texas," Moeser said of his alma mater. "I did learn who he was and came to admire him."

When Moeser arrived in February, the bitterly cold weather prevented him from "taking leisurely walks with students."

After summer stops in England and South Korea for organ performances by his wife Susan Dickerson Moeser and a stop in New York for an American Guild of Organists Convention, of which he is past president, Moeser faces his first full academic year as chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

He has actually met the most UNL students not in Nebraska, but on vacation in London, where 67 of them were studying at Oxford University this summer. The visit encouraged Moeser to push for more international programs at UNL.

In the meantime, he wants to focus on freshmen. The first message he wants to relay is how to use what he calls "unstructured free time" with a balance of pursuing academic goals and having fun, which he will stress during his Sunday afternoon speech at the Big Red Welcome Convocation.

He will also instruct faculty to be rigorous and demanding, so a "degree from this university will really mean something."

To do that, Moeser will pursue the same goals he set for himself last December when he was appointed to the job. One of those goals, to raise admission standards at UNL, has already been achieved and will be implemented next fall.

Moeser has also started to work on the creation of a separate honors college. A faculty group is brainstorming with the Office of Academic Affairs on what an honors college would need, more funds are being allocated to the honors program, and Moeser is bringing in directors of three successful honors programs from other universities.

He said he hoped to develop additional honors courses for the spring semester.

Another goal Moeser has for this fall is to appoint a senior vice chancellor for academic affairs. The second-highest position at the university was left vacant when Joan Leitzel left in June for the University of New Hampshire.

This summer, Moeser appointed Ricardo Garcia to head the Affirmative Action and Diversity Office and will appoint deans for the College of Business Administration and the College of Fine and Performing Arts this year.

Moeser also took a strong stance this summer with a "get tough" attitude on campus discipline and student behavior.

Moeser approved a recommendation that faculty members, coaches and advisers may not contact victims of assault committed by other students. The move was spurred by football Coach Tom Osborne's contact with the girlfriend of former NU running back Lawrence Phillips, after Phillips assaulted her in October.

Moeser said his discussions with Osborne and Athletic Director Bill Byrne have been productive and that all are in agreement over how the departments should operate.

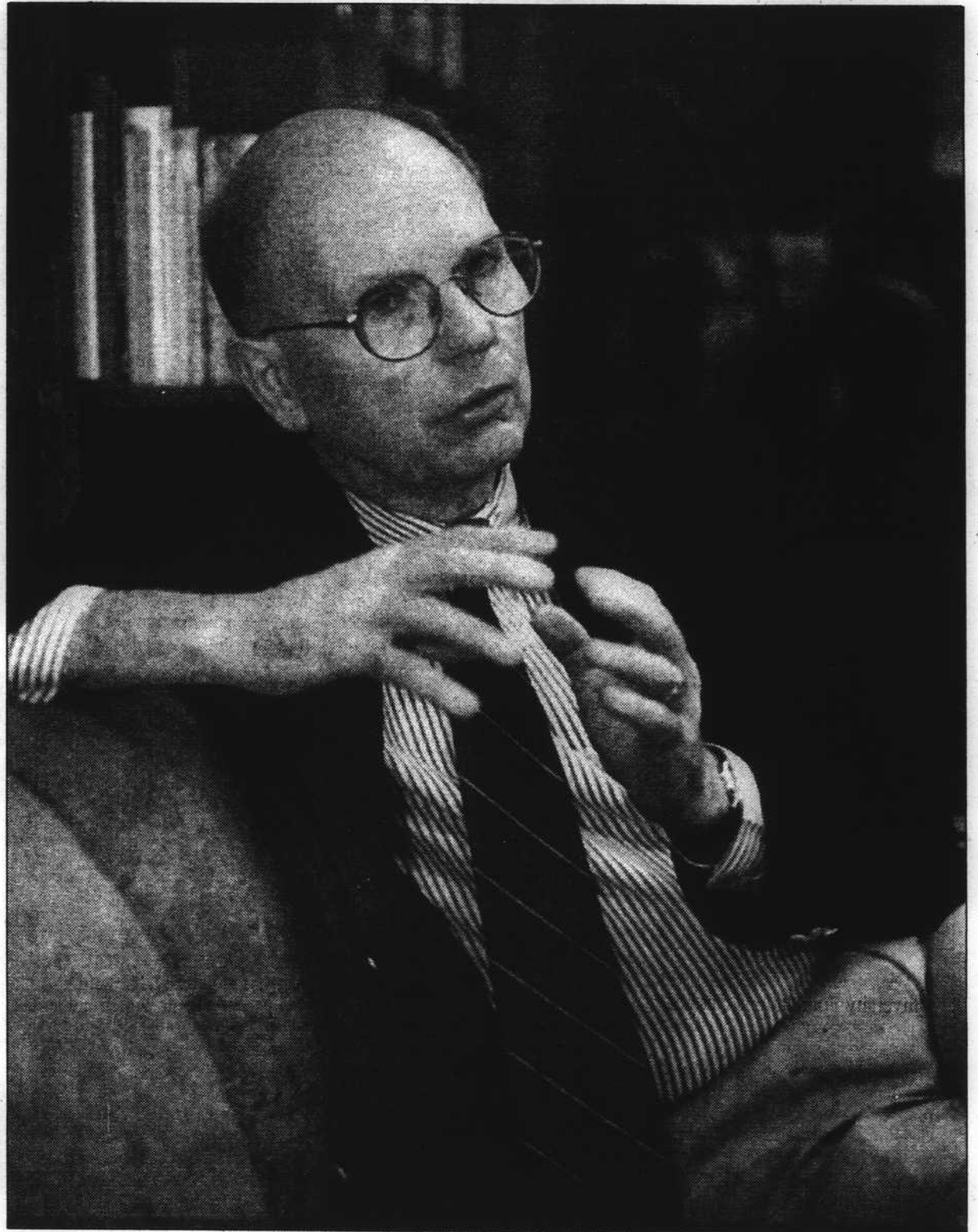
But Moeser said he wanted to stay away from micromanagement. He said he planned stay on the sidelines of specific issues if they did not constitute a major policy change at UNL.

He also has gotten involved with issues outside the university that affect students. He said he took part in discussions with the bars in downtown Lincoln before 37 of them agreed to stop giving away free birthday drinks earlier this month, a policy change that Moeser said would discourage excessive drinking among UNL students.

With all his commitments, Moeser hasn't had time to pursue his long-time hobby of playing the organ. Moeser earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Texas and the University of Michigan in organ performance.

He spent 20 years on the music faculty at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kan., and served for 11 years as dean of the School of Fine and Performing Arts there.

He also served as the dean of the College of Arts and Architecture at Pennsylvania State University from 1986 to 1992. His last career stop before UNL was as provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of South Carolina.



RYAN SODERLIN/DN

CHANCELLOR JAMES MOESER talks about what he hopes to accomplish in his first full academic year as chancellor earlier this week. Moeser came to Lincoln as chancellor last February.

NU President Dennis Smith named Moeser chancellor of UNL in early December, replacing former Chancellor Graham Spanier, who left to become president of Pennsylvania State University.

Moeser said he planned to stay for five to seven years, and has a yearly salary of \$158,000. And when he gets some free time, he will try to immerse himself into the flock of more than 24,000 UNL students.

"I look forward to having a whole

year with the students," he said. He said he had already dropped in on students eating at the Selleck Hall cafeteria.

When that happens, he said, "they don't really know what to think."

"But it's good to know what students are thinking."

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