

# Teachers College celebrates 90th year

By ROBYN THOMPSON  
Staff Reporter

Ninety years ago, the UNL Teacher's College Board of Regents set forth the college's mission:

"The aim of the college will be ... to improve the quality of teaching in particular and to provide thoroughly prepared teachers for (Nebraska) schools."

On Saturday, the college celebrated its 90th anniversary of achieving that mission during a luncheon and all-college birthday party on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus.

Ninety of the college's most esteemed graduates returned for the event, including Gene Buddig, president of Major League Baseball's American League; and Federick Edelstein, director of constituent relations for the U.S. Department of Education.

"Ninety years is a long time," said Teachers College Dean James O'Hanlon. "It gives us a chance to look back at what we've accomplished and look toward the future."

O'Hanlon said the college's history reflects the history of Nebraska because the college has met the state's changing education needs throughout its history.

Today, about one-third of the state's teachers and half of Nebraska school administrators graduated from the college, O'Hanlon said.

But in the early 20th century, the state experienced a population boom and lacked enough teachers to educate its youth.

The college solved the problem in the 1920s by increasing its student enrollment, which escalated the number of graduates to be educators.

In the 1950s, school districts lacked enough teachers to instruct students with disabilities or other special needs, so the college again trained its students to meet that need.

The Teachers College was the first college in the country to use

technological advances to teach hearing-impaired individuals.

Today, two centers have been instrumental in aiding students with disabilities: the Center for Instructional Innovation Research and the William E. Barkley Memorial Center.

Although the college often has changed its programs to help the state, O'Hanlon said three goals have remained constant:

- Improving the quality of teachers.

- Providing teachers to serve the state.

- Providing teachers to serve students with special needs.

But excellent students are the college's strongest foundation, he said.

For decades, students have been drawn to the college because of good experiences with UNL alumni who are teachers in their hometowns.

These experiences entice students to teach, which maintains the quality of schools, O'Hanlon said.

O'Hanlon said that although superior students were a driving force in the college, dedicated professors also are essential to the college's 90 years of success - professors such as Al Seagren, a 35-year veteran of the college.

"It had always been a lifetime dream to be a professor at UNL," Seagren said.

Seagren said he remained at UNL throughout his career because the college frequently offered new challenges and professional opportunities.

Although the college's official birthday party ended Saturday, students and staff will continue the celebration with events spread throughout the rest of the year, O'Hanlon said.

Later this spring, the college will dedicate its Teachers College Park, which is located between Henzlik and Mabel Lee halls on City Campus.

"It's going to be a lot of fun," O'Hanlon said. "We're going to enjoy celebrating."

# Student teachers head south

## UNL students find opportunity in Houston schools

By BRAD DAVIS  
Senior Reporter

Because state budget requirements have created a questionable job market for teachers in Nebraska, some students in UNL's Teachers College are heading south for their student teaching.

Tom Wandzilak, director of field experiences and certification for the college, said 10 University of Nebraska-Lincoln students are completing their student teaching requirements in the Houston metropolitan area this semester.

He said between 125-150 students completed their student teaching requirements each semester. Last semester, he said, between 20-25 students went out of state to meet their requirements.

Wandzilak said a Nebraska legislative action that placed limits on property taxes and school spending may cause some school districts to cut their new-hire budgets, which has caused increasing numbers of UNL students to look elsewhere to be assured employment.

The Houston area, Wandzilak said, is experiencing tremendous growth, creating student teaching and job opportunities for UNL students that may not be available in Nebraska.

About 25 UNL students - more than 20 percent of those set to student teach - have expressed interest in going to Houston to student teach next fall, he said.

Wandzilak said UNL students can apply to his office to teach most anywhere, although people wanting to go out of the state must be strong students and have a 3.0 GPA.

Paul Arnold, an education specialist from the Houston-area Educational Service Center, said about 800,000 students attended the 56 schools in the city's metropolitan area.

“UNL has such a tremendous reputation for turning out quality teachers.”

PAUL ARNOLD  
Houston-area educational specialist

The Houston-area school districts are growing by about 16,000 students a year, which, along with teacher attrition, creates a need for about 7,000 new teachers each year, Arnold said.

Because Texas is not producing enough teachers for its schools, Arnold said, his region began recruiting student teachers from UNL last fall.

The intention of bringing in out-of-state students is to lure them into full-time jobs when they graduate, he said.

"UNL has such a tremendous reputation for turning out quality teachers," Arnold said, "We thought we'd start with one of the best."

Two UNL students completed their student teaching in the Houston area last fall, and both are now working full time in the area, Arnold said.

Ten students from Nebraska are student teaching in the Houston area this semester. Arnold said he hopes that number grows.

Houston-area schools could hire all of the UNL students that graduated each year, Arnold said.

However, Wandzilak said students' loyalty remained with Nebraska schools.

UNL senior Jennifer Baker, who is student teaching in the Houston suburb of Aldine, Texas, this semester, said her teaching experience has been far different from what she learned in college.

Baker, who teaches a third-

grade class, said the Aldine district focuses on preparing students for a Texas standardized test.

"They're very traditional here," Baker said. "They're big into standardized testing and lots of worksheets. It's not as hands-on. The university in Lincoln is very 'whole language.'"

She said the "whole language" approach to teaching, which UNL trains its students to use, "immerses children into books and literature."

Having to use worksheets and assigning percentage grades for every activity, Baker said, was a "big letdown." However, she said seeing a different side of teaching would better prepare her for a career anywhere.

Shannon Schwiager, a UNL senior, is teaching both second- and third-grade classes in Aldine.

Schwiager said because of the traditional teaching style in the Aldine district, she would rather work in Nebraska. But she said that if she could find a more progressive school in Texas, she would take a position there.

Both UNL students emphasized that although the teaching methods were different in the Houston area, their experiences have been positive.

"(The teaching methods are) just a different philosophy," Baker said. "I'm really proud of the program that I've come from in Nebraska - down here I just wasn't prepared for how traditional it was."

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