

UNL continues quest to boost research rank

■ The school's current ranking among research universities is by no means secure, warns vice chancellor for research.

BY BROCK WENDLANDT
Staff writer

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's effort to preserve its tradition as a premiere research university has been anything but prestigious in recent years, said Marsha R. Torr, vice chancellor for research at UNL.

In 1909, UNL was among the 21 schools that comprised the Association of American Universities, which boasted such research institutions as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Chicago. Today, the association includes 62 members.

Although UNL is a current member, Torr said, there are dozens of universities wanting to get in the AAU.

"Universities with far less capacities (in research) are passing us," she said.

"We need to make a conscious decision to hit the accelerator so that they can't pass us by."

In addition to the AAU, Torr said, UNL is struggling to keep its ranking in the Carnegie Foundation For the Advancement of Teaching. Carnegie

“In order for this university to maximize its capabilities in research, and to maintain a high caliber in its faculty, we need to make a more aggressive effort to go after federal funding for research.”

MARSHA R. TORR
UNL vice chancellor for research

is another important measuring stick for research universities.

UNL is ranked as a Research I university in the Carnegie rankings — which is the highest distinction the foundation awards.

Losing this ranking would be a major concern, Torr said, because rankings in Carnegie can be influential in attracting top professors.

Torr emphasized the university's need to remain competitive with the top research universities.

"In order for this university to maximize its capabilities in research, and to maintain a high caliber in its faculty," she said, "we need to make a more aggressive effort to go after federal funding for research."

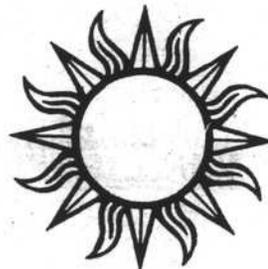
Torr stressed UNL's need to pursue "anchor programs" to help attract grants that would be much larger than the ones the university currently

receives. These programs would deal with materials that could cross disciplines, involve more people and recruit quality faculty.

Dr. John Janovy, professor of biology, agreed that some potential faculty members are attracted by highly funded programs, but he added that many are interested in the people they will be working with and the environment the work will be done in.

"Many times," Janovy said, "obtaining good faculty and giving these people the appropriate time and space will lead to successful research. These researchers will then pursue more federal money on their own."

"It's unclear whether the money or the people comes first as the determining factor in having a reputation as a scholarly institution."



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