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Fond memories to follow Moeser to North Carolina

MOESER from page 1

A good fit
Despite being a Nebraskan for the past four years, Moeser said his attributes will fit the bill at Carolina. He'll face some of the same challenges at UNC he faced at UNL. Moeser has committed himself to helping the university raise \$1.5 billion — a goal he says will take nine years to accomplish.

The money is necessary to maintain the programs and initiatives that make the school the best, he said.

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, said Moeser's fund-raising efforts at UNL have been one of his top accomplishments.

During his tenure, Moeser helped to secure a \$32 million donation from Carole and Edward McVaney, both UNL alumni.

The money is going to the J.D. Edwards Honors Program in Computer Science and Management and the construction of the Esther L. Kauffman Residential Center.

After Mildred Topp-Othmer died and gave \$125 million of her estate to the university, Moeser set up a plan to use the money for 24 endowed professorships.

He also used the money to add stipends for 60 graduate teaching assistantships.

Moeser has used "personal warmth" to talk to alumni and people across the state and nation in his fund-raising efforts, Griesen said.

"He's been a good salesman for the university," he said.

Moeser said UNC also needs to raise faculty salaries in order to maintain its prestige.

He will likely face resistance from students when he proposes a tuition increase, he said.

He received a similar attitude this year from faculty and staff members after the university was forced to reallocate money from programs to pay for things the state's appropriation to the university didn't cover.

Some of the appropriations went to salary increases instead.

Moeser will also have to work with other administrators at UNC to work toward the passage of a billion-dollar bond issue to repair buildings that are aging on campus.

At 61 years old, Moeser said he has the abilities to take on the challenges.

"It's a very good fit," he said.

Aiming high

Ask others around the university what legacy Moeser will leave behind, and they will give a somewhat vague answer: an extraordinary commitment to excellence.

The general idea sums up the number of small visions Moeser has had since he came to the university in February 1994, said Richard Edwards, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs.

He's improved recruitment of the state's best students. He's reached out to the state through an innovative distance education program.

He created the Future of Nebraska Task Force, which seeks to boost funding for programs that could have national prominence. He worked with the Life Sciences Task Force.

Edwards said Moeser's commitment to making the university a premier institution academically characterizes his administration.

"This has been the most constant and strongest thread, this call to excellence and high quality," Edwards said.

But some across campus have been critical of Moeser's vision, he said.

"It's understandable that people on campus and off disagree whether his methods or focus is right," he said. "But no one challenges the overall notion."

That overall notion is to do what is necessary to be a high-class university.

Moeser said he feels proudest of his efforts to bring excellence to the university through a refocusing on academics.

UNC is known for its football empire, Moeser said, so it hasn't always had the right perspective when it comes to the athletic-academic balance.

He said it's improving, though.

"I think we've worked hard with alumni to support the academic success of this university, not just the win-loss record of the football team," he said.

UNC is known for its basketball empire, of course. But Moeser said the school has its priorities more in balance.

"I have a sense that athletics is not as dominant a feature," he said.

Remembering the red

Even though he will become a North Carolinian in a few months, Moeser said he will always feel connected to Nebraska.

He said he and his wife, Susan, have developed an appreciation for Nebraskans' warmth, selflessness and connection to the land.

"The accomplishments of Moeser will be seen as the necessary building blocks."

Richard Edwards
senior vice chancellor
for academic affairs

"We've gotten immersed in the culture of Nebraska," he said. "We've gained an appreciation for the people of this part of the country and their sort of rugged individualism."

He's been immersed in other parts of the culture, too. He said he would remember for a long time the day former Husker Football Coach Tom Osborne told him he would retire.

It was at the beginning of the season — months before media, the players or the people of Nebraska found out.

"I had to carry that with me the whole season," he said.

He said he will also remember meeting with leaders of American-Indian tribes on Sept. 1, 1998. The agreement said the university would turn over the tribal remains still housed at UNL.

"I will remember that moment with the Native Americans, when we signed that agreement they weren't expecting us to sign."

Now that he is leaving, it is questionable whether Nebraskans will remember Moeser's influence years from now.

Edwards said Moeser's accomplishments will be remembered if the university maintains "maturity" and is "self-confident" in its direction.

If it is, then the administrators who succeed him will build on the foundations Moeser built.

"If we are successful in doing that, the accomplishments of Moeser will be seen as the necessary building blocks," Edwards said.

Moeser said he hoped he is remembered for his contributions to academic excellence and the effort toward improved climate at UNL.

But if he isn't, he has one hope for the next chancellor.

"I think (my advice) would be not to shoot too low with one's aspirations, keep them high," Moeser said.



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