



David Clasen/DN

Rick Edwards, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, talks about changes he would like to see made at UNL on Tuesday during the first staff meeting since he returned. Edwards said time away from the university fighting cancer made him think about family and how he would like to live his life.

Edwards returns, gains perspective

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Edwards grew up in a small town in North Dakota, and attended Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa.

After graduating from Grinnell with a degree in economics, Edwards attended Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., for graduate school.

He taught at the University of Massachusetts before former UNL Chancellor James Moeser hired him in 1997.

Moeser, who is now chancellor of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, said he was "delighted" to know Edwards was back at work.

"Rick Edwards was the single best appointment I made at the University of Nebraska," Moeser said.

Moeser said Edwards came highly recommended for the job, and he continued to impress Moeser when the two worked together.

"He's a superb senior vice chancellor," Moeser said. "The university is so fortunate to have him back."

And Edwards said he's fortunate to have had members of

the university nearby during his procedure and recovery.

Edwards' wife, Carolyn, said while the medical procedure was trying, strong support from the campus community benefited everyone.

"It's helped him a lot," she said. "It's helped all of us – the whole family is really grateful."

"I'm impressed with the continued generosity of spirit of my friends and colleagues," he said.

"That's been quite stunning and very much appreciated."

University confronts World-Herald series

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"I'm afraid this will hurt recruitment," he said.

"Now is a big decision time for high school students (to choose a college)," he said.

Despite the possible negative effects on recruitment, Schafer said overall, he thought the series was beneficial.

"I think when citizens of Nebraska read about our budget requests, and other issues we face, it will give them a good perspective on where we need to go in the future," he said.

The series can also benefit students who've been reading along, he said.

"(The series) shows students that they need to take an active role in where the university is going, even if it's just to make their degree worth more in the future," he said.

One possible source of confusion in the series was a list of UNL's "high-quality programs", printed in Tuesday's World-Herald.

The list identified 20 programs that are "highly regarded within the academic community nationally."

Interim Chancellor Harvey Perlman told UNL's Academic Senate the list was not related to the university's ongoing prioritization process.

"That list was not created after elaborate thought," he said Tuesday.

Folsom said The World-Herald got the list from UNL's Public Relations office.

The list was obtained before UNL publicly began its prioritization process, so it isn't an indication of how the ranking of programs is going, she said.

Folsom said The World-Herald has received a "mixed-bag" of reactions so far.

University officials have been complimentary about the balance and accuracy of the series, she said.

The public, though, has more of a split opinion.

Some people have been defensive of the charge the university is simply mediocre, Folsom said, while others have been pleased with the series.

"What we hoped to do was begin a dialogue within the state about the quality of the university," she said.

"It's still too early to tell how effective it was."

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