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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1997 - 2000

Nebraska Network 21 (NN21)

"Success is the best kind of motivation."

NN21 wants to help education in Nebraska not only survive, but thrive in the changes ahead.

Nebraska Network 21's accomplishments are the result of partnerships between Nebraska higher education institutions and their constituents. This report gives us a chance to share a few of our success stories.

Now we are ready to take the next step. We're working to build on our successes and continue influencing the lives of Nebraskans across the state.

For a complete list of our accomplishments, please visit the NN21 Web site at www.unl.edu/nn21/.

About Nebraska Network 21

Nebraska Network 21 is a diverse group of people working together to meet the learning needs of Nebraskans in the year 2020. Professors, teachers, business leaders, students, community members, educational administrators and young people from across the state are involved in our projects. That is why this initiative is called the Nebraska Network for the 21st Century, or NN21.

Our goal:

Our slogan, "changing the way Nebraskans will learn in the 21st century," is a good summary of what we do, but it only scratches the surface. NN21's vision for the year 2020 is for all Nebraskans to have access to affordable educational opportunities no matter where they live. NN21 brings together education, business and communities to find creative ways to make this happen.

NN21 is based at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, but partners with Nebraska State Colleges, Nebraska community colleges and other University of Nebraska campuses.

A W.K. Kellogg Change Initiative

Nebraska Network 21 is one of 13 higher education change initiatives across the United States funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The Foundation grants are designed to stimulate proactive, long-term planning, innovative thinking and new partnerships. Our five-year \$1.5 million grant ends March 2001.

NN21's Strategy Team

The NN21 Strategy Team provides visionary leadership and supports innovation. We thank everyone who has contributed their time and talents on the NN21 Strategy Team. Current members are:

Dennis Baack, NE Community College Assoc.
Beth Birnstihl, UNL Cooperative Extension
David Brinkerhoff, UNL Academic Affairs
Steve Buhler, UNL English
Stan Carpenter, NE State College System
Don Edwards, UNL Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources
Cecilia Huerta, NE Mexican American Commission
Patricia Kennedy, UNL Business Administration
Ann Masters, NE Dept. of Education
Cynthia Milligan, UNL Business Administration
Will Norton, Jr., UNL Journalism & Mass Communications
Irv Omtvedt, UNL Administrative Liaison to NN21
Gayle Rojas, Scottsbluff
Cecil Steward, Lincoln
Kate Sullivan, Cedar Rapids
Alan Tomkins, NU Public Policy Center

NN21 Teams & Projects

NN21's Teams and Projects find ways to accomplish the NN21 vision. They work in seven areas identified by Nebraskans as important in the 21st century: Diversity, Distance Education, Faculty Rewards and Values, Human-Capital Development, Sustainable Communities, Curriculum, and Food Systems.

Action Teams:

Cultural and Gender Diversity
Distance Education/Outreach
Food Systems in 2020
Human-Capital Development
Nebraska's Preferred Future
Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards
Sustainable Communities
Visionary Food Systems Curricula

Demonstration Projects:

Ag Consortium
Artist Diversity
Biotechnology Education
Community Publishing Company
Dinner Project
Distance Education/TV
Youth Development
Governor's Trade Mission
Just Leaves? Conference
LEAD Alumni Network
Learning Our Story
Marketing the Learning Center
Mead Ag Science Magnet
Native American Leadership
Online Course Catalog
Part-Time Farmers
Rural Inservice by Distance
University Neighborhood
West Central Coalition

Regional Teams:

Nebraska Development Youth Network
Telecommunications Partnership

NN21 Team & Project Leaders:

Acosta, Lidia
Allen, John
Atwood, Roger
Baenziger, P. Stephen
Bateman, Arnold
Bell, Lloyd
Bowlin, Ron
Brink, Dennis
Burkhart-Kriesel, Cheryl
Cady, Steve
Cammack, Cindy
Carranza, Miguel
Classen, Gregg
Conley, Dennis
Decker, Karla
Duncan, Dan
Fiscus, Carolyn

Fraas, Wyatt
Francis, Chuck
Francis, Connie
Fritschen, Robert
Fritz, Susan
Gonzales, Juan
Gonzalez-Clements, Emilia
Hartung, Ted
Hilliard, Stephen
Hodges, Laurie
Hoffman, Jerry
Jackson, Steve
Jose, Douglas
Keck, Connie
King, Jim
Krepel, Thomas
Lamphere, Amy
Lynne, Gary
Mandery, Dea
Marshall, Joy
Mason-Winston, Michelle
McDonald, Rick
McGuire, Catherine
Meduna, Bob
Nielsen, Janet
Nugent, Gwen
O'Hanlon, James
Olson, Paul
Ortega, Suzanne
Parsons, Jerry
Perrin, Richard
Pohlman, Chuck
Price, Linda
Schnepf, Marilyn
Scofield, Sandra
Stanley, Noel
Sterling-Evans, Michelle
Sullivan, Kate
Trenkle, Brad
Tyson, Dennis
Waller, Steve
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CHANGING THE CAMPUS CULTURE

As we enter the new century, one of our key focus areas is changing the campus culture. What does this mean? It means making it easier for faculty to connect more with the public and giving them the proper recognition when they do.

Redefining Scholarship and Faculty Rewards

As we enter the new century, one of our key focus areas is changing the campus culture. What does this mean? It means making it easier for faculty to connect more with the public and giving them the proper recognition when they do.

Nebraska Network 21's report, *The Contexts of Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards*, includes seven recommendations for higher education regarding faculty reward structures.

The Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards included representatives from the University of Nebraska, other institutions of higher education and the general public. They compiled the report through roundtable discussions, site visits, consultations and other activities over a two-year period.

The report argues that definitions of scholarship need to take into account new kinds of faculty assignments and that all academic work should be evaluated fairly and given appropriate support and rewards.

"The recommendations will help make the formal systems of higher education more receptive to change and insure equitable treatment of faculty and staff. The findings helped the team see the close connection between our conceptions of academic work and our receptivity to changes in higher education," according to UNL Professor Stephen Hilliard.

The report is initiating discussion by faculty and administrators at the University of Nebraska, Nebraska State Colleges, and other land grant universities in the U.S.

Copies of the report are available from the NN21 office or online at: www.unl.edu/nn21/serdraft.html .

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Nebraska Network 21 is reaching out in bold and innovative ways to connect higher education institutions, businesses and communities. These partnerships and collaborations are vital to improve educational access to under-served communities in future years.

Nebraska's Distance Learning Catalog: A Key to a Brighter Future

Nebraska Network 21 recognizes that not everyone can take time out from earning a living or raising a family to improve their education and opportunities for the future.

So it funded The Nebraska Distance Learning Catalog, a new Web site that provides access to distance learning courses offered by Nebraska Community Colleges, Nebraska State Colleges, the University of Nebraska system and private institutions.

Distance learning courses let you study at your own pace, download class materials via the World Wide Web, or watch a teaching videotape. Other courses use audio-video links or the Internet to connect students and instructors.

The Nebraska Distance Learning Catalog Web site address is: <http://netdb.unl.edu/distance> .

Leveling the Telecommunications Playing Field for Rural Nebraska

A newly formed Nebraska Network 21 partnership is seeking innovative ways to help rural, less-populated communities be competitive in providing access to technology for their citizens. Because of the low volume in these areas, subscribers of telecommunications companies often find services prohibitively expensive.

An NN21 grant allowed a series of meetings between telecommunication companies, rural communities, educators, businesses and interested citizens so they could discuss possible solutions. It was a unique opportunity to talk about gaps, needs and to share information.

As a result, Nebraska lawmakers are debating legislation that proposes innovative solutions to level the playing field. This will assist less-populated communities in getting the necessary infrastructure that will allow them to compete.

ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Several Nebraska Network 21 projects are testing promising new paradigms that broaden learning opportunities for K-12 students, teachers and adult learners. Growing student participation, new public policy links and diverse, external relationships allow this to happen.

NN21 Makes Agricultural Sciences Magnet School a Reality

Planning is now underway, thanks to a Nebraska Network 21 grant, for a unique agricultural sciences magnet school in rural Nebraska. The school will utilize distance education as well as the University of Nebraska's 9,500-acre Agricultural Research and Development Center (ARDC) near Mead.

The ARDC makes a perfect setting for student internships and land laboratory activities with its various facilities and research sites. Mead Public High School teachers are planning the curriculum with assistance from University of Nebraska faculty and curriculum specialists, agribusiness leaders, and others. Project collaborators include UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UNL's Division of Continuing Studies, and the Nebraska Department of Education.

The effort will encourage young people to consider a career in food science, agricultural technology, horticulture, plant sciences or agribusiness.

City Youth Explore Wonders of Nebraska

When 32 elementary school children from Lincoln spent six days touring Nebraska, they got more than they bargained for. Counting stars, eating s'mores over the campfire, sleeping in a cabin and climbing Scotts Bluff National Monument were among their first-time experiences.

"The trip was a chance to make agricultural and Nebraska history come alive," says Brad Trenkle, a UNL student from Scottsbluff whose idea for the trip became a reality in July of 1999.

Trenkle worked at the F Street Recreation Center in Lincoln and saw the need to show the wonders of Nebraska to children who may never get the chance otherwise.

The trip brought to life a summer learning program to improve the children's language arts skills. It also vastly expanded their knowledge of Nebraska history.

A Nebraska Network 21 grant allowed the trip to happen. Trenkle hopes to secure permanent funding to continue the project.

Artist Diversity Demonstration Project

Meeting state-mandated multicultural education can be a challenge for smaller school districts. With Nebraska's predominantly white population, many students have little opportunity for meaningful live interaction with persons from different racial or cultural backgrounds. This program uses the perspectives of artists from diverse backgrounds to offer learning opportunities and insight into the experiences of people from other races or cultures. Live visits, an interactive Web site and videos are used with students in seven high schools across Nebraska.

Multicultural Program Gives Youth a Chance

The "Give Youth a Chance" Demonstration Project in Norfolk made a lasting impact on more than 60 multicultural youth and their families. Learning, character development and fun were components of the Saturday program. Partners included the University of Nebraska, Norfolk schools, local businesses, Madison County Cooperative Extension, Madison County Health and Human Services and others.

Seventh Graders Receive Bank Loan and Launch Web Site

Ten seventh grade students in Taylor, Nebraska, used their letter jackets, bicycles, and other collateral to obtain a bank loan to start a Web-based publishing company in their community. Their teacher and University of Nebraska economics education leaders received an NN21 grant to develop a community Web site that describes Taylor's people, businesses and history.

The young Webmasters hope to grow their company in the future so they can remain in rural Taylor.

The project is also underway in Henderson, Nebraska.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

To meet the learning needs of Nebraskans in the 21st century, higher education institutions will need to continue to change. Evolving structures, new budget sources, innovative curricula and changing policies are improving educational access for all Nebraskans.

Distance Education Holds Great Promise for Nebraskans

In a state with a small, heavily rural population, distance education holds great promise for making education accessible to all, no matter where they may live.

State distance education policy was addressed by five white papers commissioned by the NN21 Distance Education/Outreach Action Team.

Distance education and other key policy makers are studying *Looking to the Future . . . Distance Education Issues in Nebraska*, a printed summary of these reports. The White Papers in their entirety, as well as the summary, are available at the NN21 Web site: www.unl.edu/nn21/wpapers.html and www.unl.edu/nn21/wpaperssummary.html.

Health Experts Discuss Value of Herbs

Why do herbs attract so much interest yet are so neglected by scientists in the United States?

Health professionals, pharmacists, nutritionists, researchers and others gathered in Lincoln to discuss the pros and cons of herbal medicines. Sponsored by Nebraska Network 21, materials and information from the *Just Leaves?* conference are now being used in courses by UNL's Department of Nutritional Science and Dietetics and the University of Nebraska Medical Center's College of Nursing--Lincoln Division.

Nebraskans Give High Marks to Education, but Want More by Distance

A strong majority of 1800 Nebraskans believes that the University of Nebraska, Nebraska's private colleges and universities, state colleges and community colleges are doing a good to excellent job in meeting their educational needs. Although the people give higher education in Nebraska good marks on meeting their needs, 88 percent also believe it is important for colleges and universities to develop more courses using distance learning methods.

The finding is part of a Nebraska Network 21 report, *Nebraskans' Educational Needs, Access to Technology and Perceptions of the University of Nebraska*.

Nebraska legislators, higher education and K-12 boards, various administrative councils, and other policy makers are using the report to guide their decision making. It can be found on our Web site: www.unl.edu/nn21/baseline.html.

NN21 Initiates Governor's Task Force on Agricultural and Natural Resource Education

Governor Mike Johanns established a 28-member Task Force to look at ways to integrate agricultural literacy into the lives of all citizens from pre-kindergarten throughout life. It also provides leadership to stimulate preparation of a more diverse, competitive and productive workforce for agriculture and natural resource systems.

The Task Force resulted from efforts of the NN21 Visionary Food Systems Curricula Action Team and its stakeholder-led Steering Committee.

Pulling Together for Agriculture

All higher education institutions in Nebraska offering programs in agriculture and natural resources have come together to coordinate educational programs and student recruitment activities. It's all part of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Consortium Demonstration Project. Articulation of transfer credit and coordination of curricular offerings are ongoing activities.

COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING

Creating Communities of Learning

"A community is a group of two or more people who have accepted and transcended their differences, enabling them to communicate openly and work together effectively toward their common goal," according to author Scott Peck.

Nebraska Network 21 is working with a diverse group of leaders to create synergies that can lead to better communities. For example, a current leadership program is being adapted to meet the needs of the Native American community in Macy. And in Albion, the NN21 Action Team for Sustainable Communities worked collaboratively with the

School at the Center project to develop a Food Systems Inventory. This tool was used by Albion High School students to generate community discussion about food, from production to consumption.

A *Communities of Learning* video and discussion guide were developed by the NN21 Human-Capital Development Action Team.

NN21 wants to help education in Nebraska not only survive, but thrive in the changes the years ahead will bring.