

## *President's Statement on Diversity*

As we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, we, as the educators of the University of Nebraska, must stand ready to incorporate new ideas and concepts that are vital to the development of our nation as it continues its leadership role in an ever-developing global economy. We must take stock of what makes us a great state and develop those areas that have yet to receive our full commitment, both as an institution, and as individuals. One of the most important of these areas has to do with multiculturalism and diversity.

We, the people of the State of Nebraska, are a mosaic of ethnicities, languages, and lifestyles. We live in an age when we must treat the various cultures and languages in our state as assets, not as weaknesses. At this point in our history, we would do a great disservice to our future generations if we were to encourage people to think that knowing only one culture and speaking only one language would be enough to remain competitive in an age when technology and the internet have brought us all closer together as a world-wide family.

As the individuals who have been charged with leading the University of Nebraska in this new century, we hereby set forth the following overarching goals:

- Support a university-wide effort to recruit and retain the best students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds;
- Work toward an enrollment representation on each campus of the University of Nebraska that is reflective of the state population of each group; and
- Prepare students to become productive, capable citizens in a world of diverse cultures.

We at the University of Nebraska will strive to:

- Create campus climates where acceptance and respect are encouraged and modeled, so all members of the educational community enjoy equitable opportunities for professional and personal fulfillment.
- Support programs that explore and honor the experiences, perspectives and contributions of Nebraska's increasingly diverse communities.
- Create truly diverse communities of faculty and staff that reflect both our multi-cultural society and individual differences and achieve among faculty and staff representative numbers of groups historically denied equal access because of race or gender.
- Create truly diverse communities of students that reflect both our multi-cultural society and individual differences and achieve among students representative numbers of groups historically denied equal access because of race or gender.

We are the University of Nebraska. As the population of our state develops, we must be prepared to change to better meet the needs and address the issues of our increasingly diverse communities. This is not a utopian world, and we must understand that we will be faced with challenges from those who would rather look backward than forward.

However, we must remember that what transpires in the next decade, in the next century, and in the next millennium will depend on the seeds of equality, justice, and opportunity that we plant today.

These goals are in keeping with Board of Regents Policy Goals Pertaining to Equity for People of Color which were originally issued February 1993 and re-confirmed February 1997 and with LB 389 - 1997.

President L. Dennis Smith