



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

April 2010

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A report from the April 2010 meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents

Regents learn of budget challenges ahead for University, state

Difficult budgetary decisions are ahead for both the state and the University of Nebraska, as current projections show Nebraska facing a \$670 million shortfall in the 2011-2013 biennium, NU regents learned during their April meeting.

The \$670 million shortfall projection assumes a 7.2 percent growth in annual revenue. The shortfall could grow if revenue growth does not meet estimates, Chris Kabourek, NU assistant vice president and budget and planning director, told regents.

Already, the University must identify \$17.3 million in reductions in the current fiscal year. So far, the University has eliminated 103 full-time equivalent positions; reduced state support for the Public Policy Center, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center; and reduced support for travel, equipment and building services, Kabourek said.

For 2010-2011, the University faces a \$28 million shortfall, assuming no tuition increase and a 1.5 percent pay increase for faculty and staff, Kabourek said.

State appropriations to NU have grown 32 percent since 2000. Total state appropriations have grown 43 percent.

NU President J.B. Milliken stressed the University's highest priority will continue to be affordable access. As it faces budget challenges, the University must act strategically and invest in priorities such as need-based financial aid and high-quality programs, Milliken said. He also noted Nebraska continues to be in a better position financially than many other states.

Regents hear presentations on impact of health reform, progress at UNMC College of Public Health

Recently passed federal health care reform presents a number of opportunities for the University of Nebraska Medical Center, regents learned. These include more research opportunities, higher numbers of patients, and new benefits for training in primary care, dental health and physician assistants.

The Board also heard an update on the UNMC College of Public Health, which regents established in 2006. The college addresses critical areas related to public health such as obesity, infant mortality and disaster planning.

The college has developed new academic programs and partnerships in sites across Nebraska to meet workforce needs, and new initiatives are on the way, Dean Ayman El-Mohandes said.

The new Harold M. and Beverly Maurer Center for Public Health, for which ground was broken in 2008, is expected to be fully operational by 2011, El-Mohandes said.

Regents name Innovation Campus Development Corp. Board of Directors

During their April meeting, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved appointments to the Innovation Campus Development Corporation Board of Directors. The board will oversee Innovation Campus, the public-private research and development campus now taking shape in Lincoln.

The board includes five members from the private sector and four University representatives. Private-sector members are: Tom Henning, CEO of Assurity Life Insurance Co.; Dana Bradford, president of McCarthy Capital Corp.; Matt Williams, president of Gothenburg State Bank; Tonn Ostergard, president and CEO of Crete Carrier Corp.; and JoAnn Martin, CEO of Ameritas Life Insurance.

University representatives are: NU President J.B. Milliken; UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman; Prem Paul, UNL vice chancellor of research and economic development; and John Owens, vice president and vice chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

“We could not be more pleased with the commitment of the business community to the success of the Innovation Campus,” Milliken said. “The outstanding private-sector membership of the initial Board of Directors for the Innovation Campus Development Corporation reflects this support and enthusiasm. We are looking forward to working with them on this important development.”

Regents also approved articles of incorporation and bylaws for the Innovation Campus Development Corp.

Regents hear update on faculty compensation

The University of Nebraska is making progress on closing the gap between NU faculty salaries and those of NU’s peers, regents learned.

NU’s accountability measures call for average faculty salaries on each campus to meet or exceed the peer midpoint.

At UNL, faculty salaries lag 4.6 percent behind the peer average, an improvement from a 6.5 percent gap in 2009. However, some faculty are still significantly behind their peers, including journalism faculty, whose salaries are 17.1 percent behind their peers.

A special tuition increase in the College of Law to close the large salary gap has seen results, with the gap now only at 2.3 percent.

Faculty salaries at UNMC are 7.4 percent behind their peers, an improvement over the 8.7 percent gap last year. The faculty whose salaries are furthest behind their peers are in the College of Pharmacy, where the gap is 12.7 percent.

Salaries at UNO lag 1 percent behind the peer average; the gap was 4.8 percent last year. The gap between UNK faculty and their peers has narrowed from 3.7 percent to 3.2 percent.

News briefs

- Regents approved the establishment of the University of Nebraska – Boys Town Center on Child and Family Well-Being at UNL. The center will be a collaboration between UNL and Boys Town, with a goal of becoming a nationally recognized center on developing and evaluating mental health, child welfare, behavioral, medical and educational programs for at-risk children.
- Regents approved a new Doctor of Philosophy in Music at UNL. A Ph.D. in music is not available at any other institution in Nebraska, and the degree will meet a demand for highly qualified college instructors to deliver music teacher certification programs.
- Regents approved a professional certificate in public health in the College of Public Health at UNMC. The certificate will help meet the needs of the health professional workforce in Nebraska.
- The Board approved a Center for Global Health and Development in the College of Public Health to allow for international collaborations related to global health issues such as climate change, pandemic disease and bio-security.
- Regents approved the program statement and budget for the Behlen Collaboratory renovation at UNL. The renovation will provide improved space for the High-Power Laser Science Collaboratory, a federally funded research endeavor at UNL.