



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

March 2010

Board of Regents

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

Board of Regents approves plan for Industrial Arts Building

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents has approved a plan for the Industrial Arts Building at Innovation Campus that calls for the building to be removed on or after July 1, 2010, unless a suitable proposal for redevelopment is received during an open national process.

Following Board approval on March 5, UNL issued a Request for Proposals to allow interested developers an opportunity to present ideas for reuse of the building. Proposals must be consistent with the Innovation Campus Master Plan and must provide evidence of financing sufficient to complete restoration in a timely manner.

If no viable proposal is received by July 1, the University is authorized to dispose of or remove the building to facilitate the development of Innovation Campus. Alternately, the University may extend the RFP deadline if a developer provides assurance before June 15 that it is preparing a proposal consistent with the terms of the RFP.

The Industrial Arts Building was constructed in 1913 for the Nebraska State Fair. However, it has been closed to the public since 2004 because of its state of disrepair. One study in 2007 determined that it would cost \$375,000 to demolish the building and anywhere from \$2.4 million to \$6.1 million to stabilize it for exhibition space.

UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman has said the national RFP will be an accurate test of whether there is potential for reuse of the building.

UNL, UNMC research exceeding strategic benchmarks

Both UNL and UNMC are exceeding research metrics established by the Board of Regents, Board members learned during morning committee meetings.

Total research funding at UNL was \$123 million in fiscal year 2009, according to Prem Paul, vice chancellor for research and economic development. As of March 1 of this year, UNL had received \$66.5 million in federal research funding – about \$14 million ahead of last year's pace.

Major federal grants this year include \$10 million to establish the Nebraska Center for Research on Rural Education. UNL is also aggressively pursuing federal stimulus opportunities, Paul said. The campus has received \$35.3 million in stimulus awards so far, including \$8 million for an addition to the Ken Morrison Life Sciences Center.

Total research funding at UNMC was about \$106 million in FY2009, according to Tom Rosenquist, vice chancellor for research. In the first half of 2009-2010, total research grants and contracts at UNMC are up 14 percent, Rosenquist said.

A federal strategy to double cancer research matches UNMC's strengths, Rosenquist said, given that 50 percent of research at UNMC is cancer-related.

Regents approve JPA agreement with City of Lincoln for arena project

The Board of Regents approved a West Haymarket Joint Public Agency Agreement with the City of Lincoln. The JPA will serve as a coordinating entity to finance construction of the proposed arena in downtown Lincoln, as well as necessary land acquisitions and supporting infrastructure and facilities for broader West Haymarket improvements.

University Athletics intends to use the arena for practices and home games for men's and women's basketball. Lincoln voters will consider a bond issue to help finance the arena project on May 11.

Regents hear reports on workforce development initiatives

The Board heard presentations on some of the University's workforce development efforts, including Online Worldwide, a new Web platform that markets all the University's distance education programs together under one virtual "roof."

Online Worldwide Director Arnold Bateman told regents there are more than 80 degree programs offered via distance, including bachelor's and advanced degrees as well as certificates and endorsements. Overall, Online Worldwide offers more than 1,000 courses in a wide range of fields, including agriculture, biology, business, computer science, education, engineering, journalism and more.

Bateman noted courses offered through Online Worldwide are the same as those offered in the classroom, and that studies show students who take online courses do as well as those who take courses on campus. He said the University has done a careful analysis of market tuition rates in order to set prices that allow NU to remain competitive yet affordable.

News briefs

- The Board approved a program statement and budget for renovation of the sixth floor of Hamilton Hall (home of the Department of Chemistry) at UNL. The \$6.8 million renovation includes reconfiguration of laboratory, laboratory support and office spaces; equipment upgrades; integration of meeting and interaction spaces; and expansion of restrooms. Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2011 and finish in September 2012.

- The Board approved the appointments of three new deans at UNL: Donde Plowman, College of Business Administration; Gary Kebbel, College of Journalism and Mass Communications; and Susan Poser, College of Law.

- The Board approved changes to Board of Regents bylaws related to conflicts of interest and nepotism.

- The Board approved an increase of \$400,000 in the budget of the Keim Hall renovation at UNL for the purchase of additional furniture and equipment. Keim Hall, located on East Campus, is undergoing a \$14.4 million renovation.

- The Board received an enrollment report for Spring 2010. Headcount enrollment is 45,917, a 2.1 percent increase over Spring 2009. Notable increases were seen in nonresident, first-time freshman enrollment (25.3 percent) and nonresident graduate enrollment (9.5 percent).

- The Board approved the selection of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture to provide architectural design services for the Stanley M. Truhlsen Eye Institute at UNMC. The institute is scheduled to be completed by 2012 and will allow UNMC's ophthalmology program to be one of the best in the country.

Board honors UNK Professor of the Year, recognizes Student Regents Collins and Craig

The Board of Regents approved a resolution honoring Richard Miller, professor and chairman of the Department of Psychology at UNK. Professor Miller was named a 2009 United State Professor of the Year by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the first Nebraska educator to win this prestigious distinction. Miller also is a previous winner of the University of Nebraska's most prestigious university-wide teaching award, the Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award (OTICA).

Miller was one of four educators who were named as U.S. Professors of the Year by CASE. He was honored during a luncheon and awards ceremony last November in Washington, D.C.

The Board also approved resolutions recognizing outgoing Student Regents Megan Collins of UNL and Cade Craig of UNK. Board members thanked Regents Collins and Craig for their service over the past year, noting student regents provide valuable voices on the Board.