



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

October 2010

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

International student enrollment at NU hits record high

International student enrollment at the University of Nebraska has reached a record high of 3,018 for fall 2010, the Board of Regents learned during an enrollment report at its Oct. 15 meeting.

This fall's total is an 8.7 percent increase over fall 2009, when 2,776 international students were enrolled at NU's four campuses. The university drew international students from 136 different countries this year, the most popular being China, India and Japan.

"The University of Nebraska's success in attracting more international students to our campuses is excellent news for our students, our communities and for Nebraska," NU President James B. Milliken said. "In today's global economy, students need to interact with and learn from people from many different cultures in order to be competitive. A robust international community is one way we can enrich our students' education – and our state."

Global engagement is one of the priorities of the NU Foundation's Campaign for Nebraska. Last fall, Milliken announced goals to double the number of international students at NU by 2019, and also to provide every undergraduate an opportunity to study abroad. In addition, the university is actively exploring new opportunities for international student exchanges, faculty collaborations and research partnerships that could leverage NU's strengths in agriculture, water, energy, medicine, early childhood education and other areas.

Regents learned of other enrollment successes as well. Enrollment of nonresident undergraduates increased 5.8 percent, exceeding the Board's strategic benchmark. One contributing factor is the Metropolitan Advantage Program (MAP) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, which offers residents of three southwest Iowa counties contiguous to the Omaha metro area the opportunity to attend UNO at a significantly reduced tuition rate. For fall 2010, 513 students are enrolled at UNO through MAP, compared to 456 last year.

Regents also learned that freshman retention rates increased slightly, from 80.6 percent in 2008 to 80.8 percent in 2009. Finally, the university's yield of students who graduated in the top 25 percent of their high school class increased from 47.7 percent in 2009 to 47.9 percent in 2010. The Board's strategic goal is to increase NU's yield of top-quartile graduates to 50 percent.

Regents approve Memorial Stadium expansion, Haymarket Park practice facility

The Board of Regents approved an expansion of Memorial Stadium that will add 5,000 seats and other amenities to the East Stadium. The project is designed to meet a demand among fans for additional seating while still preserving Nebraska's sellout streak, which is the longest in the nation. The project also will help UNL remain competitive as it transitions into the Big Ten Conference.

About 20,000 square feet of the expansion will be dedicated to UNL research. UNL envisions a research center that will use cutting-edge technologies to better understand the behavioral foundations that contribute to health, injury and disease.

Regents also approved an agreement with NEBCO Inc. for the design and construction of an indoor practice facility at Haymarket Park. The facility will be used by the Husker baseball and softball teams. No state funds will be used for either project.

NU health care plan operationally sound

The Board heard a presentation from David Lechner, vice president for business and finance, on health care developments at the university. Lechner reported that NU's health care plan is operationally sound, an important reason being that the President and Board have made prescient, timely decisions to modify plan design. As a result, NU has built up good reserves and has been able to spare employees from shouldering increases in health care premiums in recent years.

However, Lechner said the university faces a number of challenges going forward, including the potential costs of implementing federal health reform and maintaining competitive benefits packages for employees especially when the prospect of budget constraints is combined with increasing health care costs.

Regents approve Water for Food Institute

The Board of Regents approved the establishment of a global Water for Food Institute at the University of Nebraska. The research, education and policy institute will be committed to helping the world efficiently use its limited fresh water resources, with a focus on ensuring the food supply for current and future generations.

"The University of Nebraska is well-positioned to play a significant role in solving one of the great global challenges," NU President James B. Milliken said.

Milliken said the university is about to begin a search for the first director of the institute.

News briefs

- The Board approved the purchase of student housing in Curtis from the NU Foundation. The purchase allows the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture to acquire 68 beds of housing at an attractive price. When combined with planned new housing of 76 beds, the purchase enables NCTA to meet the requirements of LB959 and thereby gain capital funding for the Education Center project appropriated by the 2010 Legislature. The Board also approved a resolution related to financing for the Education Center and student housing projects at NCTA.
- Regents approved the program statement and budget for the Community Engagement Center at UNO. The proposed center, which will be privately funded, will enhance UNO's nationally recognized community engagement efforts.
- The Board approved a gift of the design and funds to construct an addition to the Lied Center for Performing Arts at UNL. The addition will provide meeting and exhibition space for the Lied Center.
- Regents were presented with results of the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement. Overall, students at UNL, UNO and UNK reported strong satisfaction with their experience on campus, and they responded comparably to their peers on engagement benchmarks such as student-faculty interaction and level of academic challenge.