



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

March 2008

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A report of the March 2008 meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

University faculty salaries falling behind peer institutions

Faculty salaries at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center continue to fall significantly behind faculty compensation at peer universities, according to a March presentation for the University's Board of Regents.

In 2003 faculty salaries lagged behind peers by 1.4 percent at UNL, and by 5.9 percent at UNMC. Four years later, UNL salaries had dropped to 4.3 percent behind peers and UNMC salaries to 10.9 percent behind peers.

"I have to express my unhappiness about this," Regent Charles Wilson said. "We've been working on this for a long time and we're still not getting there. I'm distressed we're not achieving these goals. This is a serious issue that we're going to have to address. We are losing ground and we can't count on state appropriations to bail us out."

NU officials pointed out that state support for the University of Nebraska increased 4 percent for the 2007-08 school year, an amount that failed to cover the 4.4 percent increase in faculty salaries. Meanwhile, the average increase in state appropriations at UNL peer institutions for the same time period – 2007-08 – was 7.6 percent.

University President James B. Milliken stressed the importance of competitive faculty salaries. "Recruiting quality faculty is key to the quality of the university. It is critically important for us to have compensation that will attract excellence."

UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman agreed. "Salary is the benchmark. It affects our ability to compete with peer institutions."

UNMC Chancellor Harold Mauer continued: "If we want to have a great university, we need to have great faculty."

But Milliken also cautioned against trying to make up the gap with tuition increases. "We must remember that another of our major goals is affordable access. We need to look for a balance, so we don't place the burden on our students. We must strive for affordable access to a quality education, or the promise is empty."

Faculty salaries compared to peer universities

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2005: 3.0 percent lower than peers

2006: 3.4 percent lower

2007: 4.3 percent lower

2008: Estimated to be 5.6 percent lower

University of Nebraska Medical Center

2005: 8.3 percent lower than peers

2006: 9.9 percent lower

2007: 10.9 percent lower

2008: Estimated to be 9.4 percent lower

**Faculty salaries at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska at Kearney are collectively bargained, established to achieve comparability with the mid-point of peer institutions.*

BOR approves four campus construction projects at NU

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents in March approved the program statements and budgets for four construction projects:

- **College of Business Administration building at the University of Nebraska at Omaha:** This new facility will be constructed adjacent to the Peter Kiewit Institute, creating modern facilities, spaces for learning and collaboration, enhanced laboratory facilities and flexibility for future needs.
- **College of Public Health Building at the University of Nebraska Medical Center:** The project is a three-level, state-of-the-art facility located on campus near 40th street north of the Student Life Center.
- **Addition to the College of Nursing building on the UNMC campus:** The multi-story addition – east of the existing building – will provide additional space to accommodate enrollment growth, contemporary methods and technology, and expansion of research.
- **Education Center at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis:** A state-of-the-art classroom facility will replace a number of old, inadequate and deficient classrooms with a new structure that will house the Horticulture Systems Division, provide additional space for the Veterinary Technology Systems and provide a student commons space.

News briefs

- The University of Nebraska Board of Regents heard a presentation on the first annual Housing Fire and Safety Protection report from Rebecca Koller, Assistant Vice President and Director of Facilities, Planning and Management. The report listed campus-by-campus updates on items such as fire inspection results, fire alarm reports, fire protection plans and upgrades, and disciplinary and corrective action taken in the past year. “Parents send their kids to college with the assumption they will be safe here,” said Regent Bob Whitehouse. “We want to do everything in our power to make sure they are.”
- The BOR approved two agreements that marked critical steps in moving closer toward establishing a University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing division in Norfolk: a Joint Affiliation and Operating Agreement, and an Academic Affiliation Agreement between the BOR, Northeast Community College and Faith Regional Health Services.
- Linda Pratt, Executive Vice President and Provost at the university, helped provide an update on planned changes in the general education curriculum: essentially what all students should know regardless of their major. “This is part of a periodic examination of necessary curriculum revisions aimed at creating a more engaging set of requirements to meet current student needs,” she said, “such as skills in critical thinking, literacy, language, technology.”

NU Board of Regents reaffirms two resolutions

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents in March unanimously approved two resolutions originally endorsed at the January meeting. BOR agendas will now list specific resolutions under consideration if they are related to pending public policy such as petition initiatives or proposed legislation. “We are doing this in the spirit of openness,” BOR chair Chuck Hasebrook explained.

The BOR approved two resolutions:

- Opposing a proposed amendment to the Nebraska Constitution that would affect measures used by the university and Board of Regents to achieve improved diversity at the University of Nebraska.
- Supporting conveyance of land now known as State Fair Park to the University of Nebraska for a research and development campus.

Both resolutions can be found at the following link:

<http://www.nebraska.edu/news/resolutions.aspx?i=61>.