



# The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

September 2010

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*A report from the September 2010 meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents*

## President Milliken: NU has opportunity to continue momentum

The University of Nebraska understands the state's budgetary challenges and is prepared to do its part in solving them, but temporary economic conditions should not hold NU back from leveraging its momentum into continued success, President James B. Milliken told the Board of Regents Sept. 10.

In presenting a fiscal update to the Board, Milliken noted that despite the difficult economy, the university is enjoying significant momentum in a number of categories, including enrollment, research and fundraising.

"This is a time when we've seen retrenchment across the country that has been more significant than in Nebraska," Milliken said. "Combine that with the momentum that we have today – with the highest research funding in our history, the largest enrollment in 17 years, the Aksarben Village development, Innovation Campus – and I would suggest that not only is this a time for us to preserve what we have, but for us to advance.

"Because I think this is a special moment in the history of the University of Nebraska. And while we need to cope with these budget challenges, I don't think they should hold us back."

State agencies have been asked to identify the potential effects of a 10 percent reduction in state funding, which for NU would equal about \$50 million. Already in the past decade, the university has made \$58 million worth of reductions, with another \$10.1 million to be made this fiscal year, Milliken said.

To proactively manage budgetary challenges, the university has put processes in place to identify opportunities to reduce costs, share services, operate more efficiently and enhance revenue, Milliken said. NU's Strategic Framework, which outlines priorities including affordable access, excellent academic programs, research growth and workforce development, will serve as a guide.

"We have said for some time that we understand that the state is in a difficult economic condition, and we've said that we're going to do our part," Milliken said. "But we have asked that policymakers recognize the very high priority of education, and of the University of Nebraska in particular."

## University of Nebraska enrollment up 1.8 percent over fall 2009, highest in 17 years

Enrollment at the University of Nebraska plus the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture has reached its highest total in 17 years, with growth seen on all four campuses and in the key groups of undergraduates and first-time freshmen. Undergraduate enrollment rose 2.7 percent, exceeding the 1.5 percent annual growth metric set by the Board of Regents.

Total enrollment is up 1.8 percent, to 49,897 – the highest since 1993 and the sixth consecutive increase for the university. Undergraduate enrollment increased on all four campuses, first-time freshmen rose by 3.5 percent, and enrollment in professional programs such as medicine and law increased 6.4 percent. Enrollment at UNMC is at a record high.

NU President James B. Milliken said more families are realizing the importance of a college education to individuals and to society. He also said the university's efforts to ensure affordable access through programs like Collegebound Nebraska, which provides free tuition to qualifying students, is playing a key role in enrollment success. Enrollment totals by campus:

UNL: 24,610 (+2.1 percent)

UNO: 14,665 (+0.3 percent)

UNK: 6,753 (+1.5 percent)

UNMC: 3,486 (+7.7 percent)

Neb. College of Technical Agriculture: 383 (-9.9 percent)

**Total NU + NCTA: 49,897 (+1.8 percent)**

## NeSIS project 'on time, on budget'

Implementation of the Nebraska Student Information System is on time and on budget, Provost and Executive Vice President Linda Pratt told the Board of Regents.

NeSIS is a unique collaboration between NU and the Nebraska State College System, serving students on all seven campuses. The system manages virtually every aspect of students' engagement with their school, including course enrollment, billing and housing. The collaboration with the state colleges is expected to result in significant cost savings.

Regents passed a resolution thanking the numerous employees who lent their time and expertise to the project.

## UNL announces voluntary separation incentive program

Chancellor Harvey Perlman announced that UNL has begun a pilot voluntary separation program that will offer one-year salary buyouts to tenured faculty members who are age 62 or older and have at least 10 years of service.

The program will give faculty flexibility in their retirement options, and will also create potential cost savings for UNL. As many as 270 individuals, or 30 percent of UNL's tenured faculty, may be eligible to participate.

## News briefs

- The Board heard a presentation from Roger Breed, Nebraska education commissioner, on the state's education priorities and challenges. Breed highlighted the Nebraska P-16 Initiative – chaired by Gov. Dave Heineman and co-chaired by Breed, President Milliken and other state leaders – which seeks to improve educational outcomes in Nebraska. Breed told the Board that all U.S. job growth in the last 40 years occurred in jobs requiring at least some college or a college degree.

- The Board approved gifts in connection with the global Water for Food Institute and with the Paul F. Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program at the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

- Regents approved a temporary program allowing a change in the definition of "full-time equivalent" for the purpose of health care coverage. In a time of budget challenges, the program will allow campus leadership the means to restructure jobs while retaining valuable employees. The program is effective for changes made from Sept. 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011.

- The Board approved a master lease with the Nebraska Innovation Campus Development Corp. Approval of the lease was the initial step to authorize the Development Corp. to begin development of Innovation Campus.