



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

April 2011

Board of Regents

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A report from the April 2011 meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

Campuses present proposals for differential tuition rates

Leaders from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska Medical Center briefed the Board of Regents on proposals for differentiated tuition rates on their campuses during the Board's April 29 meeting.

The proposals are being considered by President James B. Milliken. A Board policy adopted in 2005 gives the president the authority to approve differentiated tuition rates. Under the Board policy, any proposal for differential tuition must be strategic in nature, aimed at advancing university goals. The policy also requires regular reporting to the Board on tuition differentials, including their impact, if any, on access.

UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman proposed increasing tuition in the colleges of engineering and business by \$50 per credit hour for in-state undergraduates and \$147 per credit hour for out-of-state undergraduates. Perlman noted that even if the increase is approved, undergraduate tuition in the engineering and business colleges would still be the lowest in the Big Ten and near the bottom of the Board-established peer group.

The engineering and business colleges have higher instructional costs than do other colleges, Perlman said. Implementing differential tuition in those colleges will allow them to hire additional faculty and become more competitive as UNL enters the Big Ten and begins development of Innovation Campus.

Nearly 60 percent of public research universities in the country use differential tuition, most frequently in engineering and business programs. All Big Ten universities and UNL's regent-approved peers have differential tuition for engineering and business.

Collegebound Nebraska, the university's tuition assistance program, will continue to apply, so Pell-eligible students still will pay no tuition regardless of their major.

At UNMC, College of Public Health Dean Ayman El-Mohandes proposed increasing tuition to more closely align with the college's peer group. Under the proposal, tuition in the college still would be below the peer average. The additional revenue would be used to hire new faculty to help accommodate the college's growing enrollment.

The Board was briefed on a third tuition variance which Milliken has already approved. The Metropolitan Advantage Program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, which allows students from three southwest Iowa counties to attend UNO at a tuition rate of 150 percent of resident cost, will be expanded on a pilot basis beginning in fall 2012. MAP has been highly successful so far, attracting more out-of-state students to Nebraska at a time when it is critical for the university to serve as a talent magnet for the state.

Faculty salaries at UNL, UNMC losing ground against peer averages, regents learn

Faculty salaries at UNL and UNMC have slipped further behind their peer averages, the Board learned during its April meeting.

Salaries at UNL are now 5.6 percent behind the peer average, compared to a gap of 4.6 percent last year. At UNMC, the gap has grown from 7.4 percent to 8.3 percent.

President Milliken has stated his commitment to bringing a budget to the Board in June that includes funds for salary increases – even though this will mean additional reallocations. Faculty and staff are the university’s greatest assets, and NU must invest in salaries to remain competitive in a national market for talent, Milliken said.

Milliken pointed out that the university has not awarded general salary increases for the past two years.

Compensation for NU’s senior leadership has not increased since 2008-09. Salaries for the chancellors and president lag significantly behind peer averages: 17.3 percent for the UNK chancellor, 18.2 percent for the president, 29.2 percent for the UNO chancellor, 35.9 percent for the UNMC chancellor and 43 percent for the UNL chancellor.

Board of Regents approves new programs in public health at UNMC, UNO

Regents approved three new programs related to public health during its April meeting.

At UNMC, the Board approved one-year certificate programs in emergency preparedness and infectious disease epidemiology in the College of Public Health. The certificates will help meet a growing demand in Nebraska for expanded training in public health. Students will learn emergency preparedness and response skills now required in hospitals, public health departments, business and industry.

Similar programs are offered at only a handful of other public health colleges in the nation.

The Board also approved a Bachelor of Science in public health at UNO – the only such bachelor’s degree in Nebraska. Many of the new health departments in Nebraska are staffed by individuals with no background in public health; this new program will help address that void by providing a pool of graduates who have been professionally prepared.

All three of the new programs will be created through reallocation of existing funds.

News briefs

The Board of Regents approved:

- Approved a new Bachelor of Science degree in microbiology at UNL. The only degree of its kind in Nebraska, the program will prepare students for entry into professional/graduate students or for employment in government, academic or industrial positions. The program will be initiated in fall 2012.
- Approved an early start to select portions of the East Stadium improvements at UNL.
- Approved Fund B, University Program and Facilities Fee allocations at all four campuses.
- Approved a resolution relating to financing for the Truhlsen Eye Institute at UNMC.
- Approved the appointments of Timothy Wei as dean of the UNL College of Engineering; Carmen Maurer as interim corporation secretary for NU; and Jennifer Larsen as UNMC vice chancellor for research.
- Welcomed three new student regents – Lane Carr, a history and political science major at UNL; Elizabeth O’Connor, a political science major at UNO; and Jordan Gonzales, a political science major at UNK.