



# The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

March 2007

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## **Board of Regents**

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James B. Milliken  
*President*

*A report of the March 2007 meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.*

## **Regents developing goals and strategies to make university education more accessible and affordable**

Students should have greater opportunities to attend the University of Nebraska due to strategic measures and goals adopted by the NU Board of Regents to make a university education more accessible and affordable.

At the March meeting for the Board, Dr. Linda Pratt – the new NU Executive Vice President and Provost – described initiatives to: recruit top scholars, attract more out-of-state students, and provide additional need- and merit-based financial aid.

### *A few highlights:*

- University officials will create an improved marketing plan for the Tuition Assistance Program, a guarantee and promise that any resident student at NU eligible for a Pell Grant who maintains certain academic standards will have his or her tuition covered.
- The University will work on boosting support for merit-based aid to attract significantly higher numbers of Nebraska freshmen who graduate in the top 25 percent of their graduating classes.
- Officials will develop a strategy to recruit, attract and retain more out-of-state students. Currently about 13.5 percent of NU undergraduate students come from outside of Nebraska.

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## **NU makes fire protection measures top priority**

Fire prevention policies and inspections at the University of Nebraska now meet all local and state fire codes; however, that's not good enough, said Rebecca Koller, director of facility plan management for NU.

Currently more than 9,000 students live in university housing; all bedrooms have smoke detectors and 71 percent of the space has sprinkler systems. However, under a new 10-year plan – that will cost the university about \$16 million – more than 96 percent of student living space on NU campuses will have sprinkler systems. Further, NU will consider a new policy requiring all Greek houses to maintain and test fire alarms, and to begin fundraising for installation of sprinkler systems.

“It is this Board’s responsibility to ensure maximum safety for our students; we need to make this a priority,” said Regents Chair Charles Wilson. “We need to set a date and make sure this gets done.”

## Regents share concerns about NU budget request

Concerns about faculty salaries, program cuts and tuition increases were voiced at the Board of Regents March meeting in response to NU Budget Director Chris Kabourek, who provided an update of the Legislative Appropriations Committee's current review of state budget requests.

NU President James B. Milliken warned that the committee's initial recommendation – budget increases for the University of 2.1 percent and 3.2 percent in FY 2007 and 2008 respectively – would not fund even half of the University's obligation to pay a 4.4 percent faculty salary increase.

After the University and its collective bargaining units failed to reach agreement on salary increases for 2007-09, a Special Master ordered the University to pay a 4.4 percent increase to faculty at UNK and a 4.3 percent increase to faculty at UNO.

Milliken also pointed out NU faculty salaries continue to fall behind those of peer universities. "I see no hope of catching up. Instead of making progress toward closing the gap, we are falling further behind."

Regent Chuck Hassebrook said he is worried about potential tuition increases.

"We have been forced into imposing tuition increases that are outpacing income growth and inflation. This has the potential of profoundly impacting access and admission to the University... This is a time when we need to make investments that are going to make our university and our state strong."

## UNL to offer two new degrees

The Board approved two new degrees for UNL: a bachelor of science in forensic science, and a bachelor of science in food technology for companion animals (pet food).

The proposed forensic science major will prepare graduates to serve a growing need in careers related to crime scene investigation, forensic laboratory science, state and federal government agencies, insurance, military and other scientific fields. The proposed degree in food technology will prepare graduates for the companion animal food industry, a market expected to grow to \$17 billion by 2008. Both degrees will require approval by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education before they are instituted.

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## News briefs

The Board of Regents approved a letter of intent to establish a **College of Nursing Division in Norfolk**, provided the University has adequate funding, and that financial and academic support is available from the Norfolk area. The letter involves agreements between the University, Northeast Community College, and Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk. If established, the new division could share facilities with Northeast Community College in Norfolk, and would offer bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in nursing.

**Dr. Daniel Sarewitz**, Director of the Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes at Arizona State University, addressed the Board about initiatives to strengthen the connection between university research and social benefits related to real-life needs.

## Dr. Linda Pratt named executive vice president, provost for University

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved President James B. Milliken's appointment of Dr. Linda R. Pratt as executive vice president and provost for the University. Pratt will be the University's ranking academic and administrative officer after the president, and will serve as dean of the University-wide Graduate College and presiding officer of the graduate faculty and the Executive Graduate Council. She is the first woman to serve in this position.