



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

September 2007

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A report of the September 2007 meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

Regents hear presentation about accountability

Striving to be open and accountable to the public with university academic and financial data was the topic before the University of Nebraska Board of Regents in September with a presentation from David E. Shulenburg, Vice President for Academic Affairs for the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC).

Shulenburg talked about the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), a pilot project that involves providing consistent and comparable information about college performance. The project presents a web-based template for colleges to provide data that includes: graduation and retention rates, financial aid and the costs of college, as well as measures of what students learn between their freshman and senior years in areas such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning and written communication.

“We asked students and families about what information they would find valuable,” Shulenburg explained of the VSA, the result of a partnership between NASULGC and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

“I think this is going to be really valuable, I applaud this direction,” Regent Chuck Hassebrook said. The University, which currently provides much of this data to the public, will implement the VSA program in the coming years.

New fire safety policies approved

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents has approved a new and more rigorous system-wide fire prevention policy which requires:

- Sprinkling of all university-sanctioned housing – including fraternities and sororities – by 2017
- Designation of campus fire safety officers
- Establishment of student conduct regulations
- Confirmation of inspections to assure compliance with state law and Regent policies
- Immediate correction of all deficiencies in fire safety

“This is an important way to show the public we care about our students,” said Regent Bob Whitehouse. “Students and parents put their trust in us.”

Board of Regents meeting broadcast on web: The University of Nebraska Board of Regents committee and Board meetings were streamed live on the University’s web site for the first time in September. Those who want to hear future BOR meetings online can go to the University’s web site, www.nebraska.edu, and tune in.

NU Provost presents report on student engagement survey

A survey of benchmarks for student engagement was presented to the Board of Regents in September by Linda Pratt, Executive Vice President and Provost.

“Assessment is one of our most challenging issues, but it is also one of the most important discussions we will have,” University of Nebraska James B. Milliken said.

Results of the National Survey of Student Engagement included:

- NU students generally don’t differ from students at comparable institutions in their evaluations of the level of academic challenge.
- Seniors engage in more active, collaborative learning experiences than freshmen.
- NU students are more likely to work off campus for pay than students at comparable institutions.
- Freshmen at NU feel strongly supported in achieving academic success.

- NU students tend to have less exposure to students of differing races, ethnicities, religious beliefs, political beliefs and personal values than those at comparable universities.

Update on faculty

The Board of Regents was presented with an update that indicated continued improvement in hiring more women and persons of color on the University of Nebraska faculty.

From 2005 to 2006:

- The percentage of female members of the faculty increased from 32.45 to 32.73 percent
- The percentage of persons of color in the faculty increased from 13.65 to 13.85 percent

News briefs

The Board of Regents approved:

- An affiliation agreement between the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s College of Medicine and Children’s Hospital for the **delivery of pediatric health care**
- A **NanoScience facility** at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- A **Bachelor of Science Degree with a major in Athletic Training** at the University of Nebraska at Kearney

Milliken talks about international value of delegation’s trip to Latin America



U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken

University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken took a moment at the Board of Regents meeting to talk about his recent trip to Latin America as part of a delegation of eight university presidents who went to Brazil and Chile with U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

“I believe this trip had significant implications for U.S. foreign diplomacy,” Milliken said. “This delegation also brought into sharp focus just how important it is for the University to continue building partnerships with other countries, welcoming international students to our campuses, and encouraging our students to study abroad and our faculty to participate in international exchanges.”

Last year the University hosted about 2,500 international students from 120 countries, while more than 1,100 NU students studied abroad or participated in an international exchange program.