



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

January 2008

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

University president announces proposal to expand tuition assistance program to include more families

University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken has announced the university's intention to expand eligibility for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) in the coming years to provide need-based financial aid to more middle class families.

"I want to deepen and expand our promise, our commitment, and more effectively help middle class families of Nebraska with the cost of higher education," Milliken said.

Currently the university will make sure all tuition costs are covered for students whose families earn about \$38,500 or less, and who meet eligibility requirements. However, next year TAP will cover tuition costs for families with an income of around \$45,000 or less.

Regent Chair Chuck Hassebrook said he fully supported this direction. "We need to be helping more families who are challenged by college costs. These families get hit hard."

TAP is a college financing commitment between the university and low-income youth from across the state, guaranteeing that any Nebraska resident undergraduate student who is financially eligible, and who maintains satisfactory academic progress, will have his or her full tuition covered for up to 30 credit hours per year.

Facts about the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Goal: To encourage all young Nebraskans to consider higher education.

Current qualifications: Nebraska resident, undergraduate, full time student.

To apply: A student must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by April 1st. No additional paperwork is necessary.

Awarded: Campus financial officers identify TAP recipients from data on the FAFSA.

Available: To students from all four University of Nebraska campuses.

Regents support development of Nebraska Innovation Campus

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution at the January Board meeting supporting the development of the Nebraska Innovation Campus at the current State Fair Park site in Lincoln. The resolution stated the Regents support the research campus because it "will encourage public-private partnerships, promote the attraction and creation of high-paying jobs in Nebraska, foster innovative research that will attract and keep talent in Nebraska, and serve as a major source of economic competitiveness in the 21st century."

The Nebraska Innovation Campus would provide space for public-private partnerships, allowing private businesses to access faculty research in the development of marketable innovations. The resolution encouraged all interested parties – including the university, the State Fair Board, the Governor and the Legislature – to work together to find a new location for the fair so that it can continue its valuable, century-long traditions.

Learning communities created from Buffett Foundation gift

Three new undergraduate learning communities will be created at the University of Nebraska for students on the Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney campuses, thanks to a gift from the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation.

The William H. Thompson Learning Communities will provide a small college learning environment in a two-year program that features academic support and specific courses for students who have been awarded college scholarships by the Foundation.

The learning communities will each feature a faculty director; additional personnel responsible for teaching, advising and counseling; courses reserved for the Thompson Scholars in their first two years of school; and appropriate advising and co-curricular activities. The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation currently provides scholarships for about 300 students in the NU system, but those numbers are expected to increase.

“The concept of these communities is to give students a positive and supportive experience in their first years on campus to help them succeed at the university,” said Linda Pratt, the university’s Provost and Executive Vice President.

News briefs

- The University of Nebraska Board of Regents has elected Chuck Hassebrook as the chairperson for the 2008 year, and Kent Schroeder as vice chair. Hassebrook is from Lyons and represents District 3; Schroeder is from Kearney and represents District 6.
- An update was provided on the university’s deficit request: The university and the Nebraska State College System have filed a consolidated budget deficit request to purchase a new Student Information System for both institutions. The joint request represents cost savings of \$2.7 million, and significant long-term cost savings for operation, maintenance and personnel.
- The BOR approved the name, Home Instead Center for Successful Aging, for the new geriatrics center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The name recognizes Paul and Lori Hogan, co-founders of Home Instead Senior Care, who donated a major gift for the new center.
- A preview of the FY 2009 operating budget for the university was presented, along with a time table for development of the FY 2010-2011 biennial budget request.

NU Board of Regents passes resolution on Affirmative Action petition

University of Nebraska Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution at the January meeting affirming its commitment to broad diversity among students and faculty at the university. The board took a position on a petition currently being circulated in Nebraska that would prohibit the use of race, gender and other factors in the operation of public higher education in recruiting, hiring and admission decisions at the university.

“For Nebraska to be successful and competitive, we must be able to maximize the talents of all Nebraskans,” University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken said. “That means creating educational and economic opportunities for our citizens by increasing participation in higher education, particularly among those populations traditionally underrepresented.”

Milliken said the university must continue to recruit effectively from under-represented groups, as well as maintain efforts to increase the college going rate in Nebraska. He pointed to a number of programs particularly vital to these endeavors, including: outreach programs to encourage students of under-represented groups to attend the university, programs to encourage minority students to consider specific professions, programs to recruit and retain minority and women faculty, and more.

The BOR passed a resolution that took a stand on the petition. In response to requests for the text of the resolution, you can find it at the following link: <http://www.nebraska.edu/news/resolutions.aspx?i=61> .