



The University of Nebraska

Report from the Board of Regents

June 2011

Board of Regents

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

Regents approve NU operating budget, tuition rates for 2011-12

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved NU's 2011-12 operating budget during its June 17 meeting – a budget that President James B. Milliken said represents a strategic investment in talent and a commitment to affordable access, two of the Board's highest priorities.

Milliken credited Gov. Dave Heineman and the Legislature for providing stable state support to higher education this legislative session, thus putting the university in a much stronger position than many of its peers across the country.

Highlights of the operating budget include:

- A 5 percent general tuition increase, continuing a trend of moderate, predictable increases over the past several years. The increase amounts to \$120 to \$150 more per semester for most resident undergraduates, depending on which campus they attend – though most students receive financial aid that covers at least some of their tuition costs. Each NU campus costs significantly less than its peer average, and many peers have announced tuition increases larger than 5 percent this year. “We remain today a tremendous value for the people of Nebraska,” Milliken said.
- Special differentiated tuition rates for the College of Business and College of Engineering at UNL. The new rates will generate additional revenue to be re-invested into the colleges in order to enhance quality. All Big Ten universities and all of UNL's Board-designated peers have differentiated tuition for their business and engineering colleges. Even with the differential rates, undergraduate tuition will remain the lowest in the Big Ten and near the bottom of the Board peer group. Differentiated tuition rates also will be implemented in the College of Public Health at UNMC, which currently ranks lowest among peers for resident tuition and near the bottom for non-resident tuition. The extra revenue will be put toward hiring new faculty to keep up with rising enrollment.
- A 5 percent increase in need-based aid, to more than \$10 million, so that students with the greatest financial need will not be impacted by the tuition increase.
- A 2.5 percent increase in the salary pool for faculty and staff outside the faculty collective bargaining units at UNO and UNK, which will help the university be competitive in the global marketplace for talented employees.
- A shortfall of about \$6 million, which comes on top of \$70 million in reallocations the university has implemented since 2000. The coming biennium will represent the fourth and fifth years of essentially flat state funding for NU.

Board of Regents approves establishment of NU-wide Buffett Early Childhood Institute

The Board of Regents approved the establishment of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska, a university-wide multidisciplinary research, education, outreach and policy center that will seek to transform the approach to early childhood development and education in Nebraska and nationally. The primary focus of the Institute will be on the learning and healthy development of children from birth to age 8, with special attention on children who are vulnerable or at risk because of poverty, developmental delays or other learning or health challenges.

The Buffett Institute has been made possible by a generous gift from Omaha philanthropist Susie Buffett, a longtime advocate of helping to level the playing field for at-risk children and families. An executive director for the Institute who is a recognized leader in the field will be appointed following a national search.

Regents approve new UNL residence hall

The Board of Regents approved the program statement and budget for a new suite-style residence hall at UNL. The new hall, to be located at 18th/19th and R streets, will ultimately replace Cather and Pound halls, which are the least popular halls and have limited physical potential to meet the demands of contemporary students.

The new hall will help UNL continue to be competitive in attracting prospective students, since market research shows that housing is a significant factor for them as they select a university.

News briefs

At its June meeting, the Board of Regents approved:

- Two new professional certificates in the College of Public Health at UNMC – one in community-oriented primary care and one in maternal and child health. Both certificates will help meet a demand for more formally trained public health workers in Nebraska.
- The program statement and budget for the East Campus Recreation Center at UNL. The rec center will feature a two-court gymnasium, group exercise rooms, locker rooms and more. The current Activities Building on East Campus has code deficiencies, is overcrowded, and has other faults such as a lack of air conditioning. The Board also approved the program statement and budget for a new Campus Recreation Outdoor Adventures Center at UNL. A student fee increase to support the recreation projects was approved by 72 percent of students who voted in an election on the issue. Recreational facilities are an important part of a university's attractiveness to students.
- The program statement and budget for renewal work at Centennial Towers at UNK. The upgrades will help keep the housing units safe, attractive and affordable for students.
- The Board also received an update on the campus voluntary retirement programs. David Lechner, vice president for business and finance, said that 77 of 265 eligible faculty members at UNL, 18 of 90 faculty members at UNO and 9 of 48 faculty members at UNK elected to participate in the program, which provides one year's salary to qualifying tenured faculty.

Regents hear presentation on opportunities, challenges related to workforce development

The Board of Regents heard a presentation on workforce development from Richard Hoffmann, associate vice president for academic affairs and research; David Conrad, executive director of NUtech Ventures and associate vice chancellor for technology development at UNL; and Michael Dixon, president of UNeMed Corp. at UNMC. Meeting Nebraska's workforce demands and preparing students to succeed in the job market of the future are key strategic goals for the Board.

Hoffmann said the university has a long history of bringing research to practice. Looking forward, Nebraska Innovation Campus will provide significant opportunities for face-to-face interactions between university scientists and business leaders. Furthermore, a new senior associate to the president for innovation and economic competitiveness, Jim Linder, was recently appointed to provide leadership for the university's efforts in these areas. Conrad noted that it takes a "web of people" to be successful in technology transfer and workforce development. He said challenges include creating a more entrepreneurial culture throughout the university, providing financial support and mentors to individuals with good ideas, and fostering greater collaboration between economic development-focused groups.