

Executive Memorandum No. 3

Functions and Responsibilities of the President's Office

The primary purpose of the President's office is to serve the Board of Regents as the principal administrative office for the University, with particular concern for educational and physical planning, policy recommendations, budget development and control, program coordination, governmental affairs and for providing general leadership for the University in achieving its objectives.

In seeking to achieve these objectives, it is the general responsibility of the President's office:

1. To free campus administrators to the maximum extent possible from external administrative demands, thereby permitting them to concentrate on educational leadership and internal management;
2. To delegate to the Chancellors the authority necessary to permit the effective organization and administration of their campuses consistent with the overall policy of the Board of Regents; and
3. To provide the communications mechanism necessary to inform the Board of Regents of campus needs and programs and to transmit the views and concerns of the Regents to the campuses.

The President's office should serve primarily in a leadership, policy, and coordination role rather than in an operational role. However, in selected University-wide areas, the best interests of the University may well require the location of some operational responsibilities in the President's office. In the interest of improving services to all campuses and/or to provide more efficient management of available University resources, it may be desirable in the future to coordinate certain activities. Such coordinations should be undertaken only where a distinct advantage to the University system as a whole or to the citizens of the state is in view. Finally, every effort must be made by the President's office to assist all components of the University in achieving the overall mission of the institution with special emphasis, as always, on minimizing unnecessary bureaucratic involvement.

Specific Responsibilities

In addition to the general responsibilities of the President's office, certain specific responsibilities should be recognized. In this regard, the office of the President is required:

1. To provide University-wide leadership in achieving the goals of the University as approved by the Board of Regents;
2. To provide university-wide leadership in developing both short-range and long-range plans for the University, and to present these plans to the Board of Regents for approval;
3. To prepare for consideration by the Board of Regents the annual operational and capital construction requests of the University;
4. To explain and defend the budget requests as submitted to the Legislature, with responsibility for the coordination and utilization of all the resources available from the entire University in this explanation and defense;
5. To prepare subsequent to legislative appropriations the operating budget of the entire University for final approval by the Board of Regents;
6. To provide general supervision of the operating budget of the University through periodic budget audits;
7. To conduct a continuing inventory of the physical plant of the University and the condition of the physical plant; to develop a continuing analysis of the utilization of the University's physical plant; to conduct continuing studies of the long-range and short-range space needs of the University; to provide planning and minor architectural service to the campuses; to prepare a list of suitable architects for consideration by the Board of Regents for new capital construction and major remodeling; and to supervise the awarding of contracts for new construction, remodeling, and renovation, and the fulfillment of these contracts;
8. To oversee implementation of an internal audit program to assure sound fiscal management and the implementation of the policies of the Board of Regents;
9. To coordinate educational programs throughout the University where such coordination has a potential for improving the total quality of the educational effort of the University, or where such coordination has the potential for improving the economic efficiency of the University's operations without a corresponding decrease in educational quality;

10. To coordinate all requests for grants and contracts from both public and private sources and to represent the Board of Regents in satisfying the budgetary and administrative requirements of each such grant or contract;
11. To administer the university-wide program of graduate studies;
12. To establish and maintain an office of institutional research and academic planning and to provide a continuous source of data to assist the administrative officers and the Board of Regents in understanding the educational operations of the University;
13. To establish policies for the coordination of purchasing for the University in a manner that will maximize economic advantages of centralized purchasing with a constant view to user satisfaction and convenience;
14. To coordinate university-wide personnel policies, including such matter as retirement, insurance, sick leave, vacation, salary levels for non-professional employees, labor negotiations and grievances, and general conditions for employment and separation;
15. To establish and maintain an effective office of equity and diversity to assure that every effort is being made to comply both with the spirit and the letter of federal and state laws and regulations governing equal opportunity for students and employees alike, and to assure that the University is in compliance with affirmative action laws governing universities;
16. To maintain an effective liaison with the Board of Directors and the officers of the University of Nebraska Foundation and the campus alumni associations, and to provide assistance in every way to these organizations to achieve their important goals;
17. To coordinate the continuing education and outreach programs of the University of Nebraska, with the exception of the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service, so that the citizens of the state will have an opportunity to take advantage of the multiple educational programs offered by the entire University and to do so in the most convenient and economical manner. It is expected, therefore, that the entire University will offer its services to the citizens of the state through a centrally coordinated program.

Operational Relationships

The President's office shall function with the advice and counsel of the members of the President's Council – the Chancellors of the four university campuses, the other vice presidents, and such other officers as the president shall deem appropriate.

This Council shall normally meet on a regular basis for the purpose of inter-campus and university-wide communication, policy discussion, problem identification, and in general to improve the effectiveness of the operations of the entire University.

In addition to the advice and counsel drawn from the President's Council, the President shall normally meet as needed basis with the Inter-campus Faculty Liaison Committee – a council composed of representatives designated by the faculty governing bodies of each of the four university campuses. This council shall meet to discuss problems of mutual interest, to explore policy matters which are primarily academic in nature, and to discuss other matters which affect the academic welfare of one or more of the campuses of the University.

The effective operational relationship among the members of the staff of the President's office and the corresponding staff officers on each of the campuses is a matter of extraordinary importance if our decentralized system of University administration is to work. While no description of formal administrative relationships can replace an attitude of constructive cooperation among colleagues and peers, the spelling out of the following fundamental guidelines will be helpful in avoiding misunderstanding and malfunctions within the system.

First, it should be made clear that the staff officers on each campus are administratively responsible to the Chancellor of that campus except in rare circumstances which would be understood by all involved. Similarly, officers of the President's staff are administratively responsible to the President. It would be unfortunate, however, in day-to-day operations to permit these administrative lines of authority to serve as barriers to effective staff operations.

Second, in the conduct of the day-to-day affairs of the University, it is necessary that the President rely heavily on senior staff officers. It is in this spirit that the Chancellors and their senior staff officers are expected to work freely and cooperatively with the Vice Presidents in their areas of particular responsibility. Conversely, it is anticipated that senior staff officers in the President's office will feel free to work directly with the Chancellors and members of the Chancellor's staff in the implementation of established policies and in working through details of these policies. Inevitably, misunderstandings will occur, but open and honest discussion of the issues involved will normally resolve these differences at the staff level. Occasionally, it may be necessary to bring areas of disagreement to the President for resolution and he/she in turn may, of course, bring these to the attention of the President's Council.

The important ingredients in making the University function are men and women of professional competence, mutual good will, and a common understanding of the goals of the University and a commitment to the successful achievement of these goals.

Finally, if there are cases where any of the foregoing policies are found to be out of harmony with the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents*, they will be adjusted to bring them into line with the letter and spirit of the *Bylaws*.

Reference: January 9, 1976
April 17, 1993

Edited for conformance April 2011
Retained for historical clarification and precedence