



The University of Nebraska Report from the Board of Regents

April 2008

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

College Portraits provide more information for families, students

Families and students are finding more online information on University of Nebraska campus Web sites about the facts and figures of college, Linda Pratt, Executive Vice President and Provost, told the Board of Regents this month.

Web sites called College Portraits - now online at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and expected soon at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln - offer data about financial costs and financial aid, student engagement with the learning process, and core educational outcomes, Pratt explained.

"I think this is wonderful data," said Regent Chair Hassebrook, who also asked about efforts to share similar information with even younger Nebraskans, such as elementary and middle school students and families.

University President James B. Milliken pointed out several related initiatives:

- The university is participating in the KnowHow2GO campaign, which helps young students and their families begin early college preparation.
- This spring about 8,000 Nebraska middle school students received university packets with information about planning for college academically and financially.

The College Portraits are part of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), an initiative that provides college information that is consistent, comparable and transparent.



For NU College Portrait Web sites check these links:

- UNO: <http://unoportfolio.unomaha.edu/vsa/>
- UNK: <http://www.unk.edu/factbook/vsa/>

University of Nebraska's research shows significant growth

Research at the University of Nebraska has experienced noteworthy success with external competitive funding nearing \$200 million, according to an update for the Board of Regents on research initiatives, funding and benchmarks.

The research initiative at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has grown 108 percent since 2000, according to Prem Paul, Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development at UNL. Tom Rosenquist, Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, pointed out that federal grants are still the foundation of research funding, but added that the university must begin to look to public-private partnerships as a significant part of the research portfolio.

Both Paul and Rosenquist urged continued investment in research facilities as well as in faculty salary and compensation for recruiting and retaining quality researchers.

The university's strategic framework specifically lists research - the pursuit of excellence and regional, national and international competitiveness in research and scholarly activity - as one of its major priorities.

Regents hear presentations on budget, SIS updates

- The University of Nebraska is moving ahead to replace its Student Information System (SIS), Linda Pratt, Executive Vice President and Provost, and David Crouse, chair of the Steering Committee to study SIS, told the Regents in April. University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken explained that the complicated process became even more complex with the historic collaboration between the university and the Nebraska State College System. The two institutions filed a consolidated budget deficit request - which represents significant short- and long-term savings - and were granted \$20 million in funding from the Nebraska Legislature this past session. Pratt and Crouse noted that the planning process for the new SIS includes representatives from all NU campuses and the State College System.

- The University of Nebraska is finalizing details on the 2008-2009 budget, Chris Kabourek, Assistant Vice President and Director of Budget and Planning, reported. The final proposed budget and tuition rates will be presented to the Board of Regents in June. Currently university officials are analyzing a potential budget shortfall for the upcoming fiscal year and re-evaluating all spending decisions. Increases in planned spending for next year are due to factors such as: NU faculty salaries and benefits, utilities, building operation and maintenance, priority academic programs, student and faculty diversity and need-based financial aid.

News briefs

- The Board of Regents has approved the program statement and budget for a new residence hall on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus at the northeast corner of 17th and R streets. The new five-story hall will house 500 to 550 students in suite-style units and be completed the summer of 2010. Currently about 6,000 students live on campus at UNL. The project will be funded through student fees and facilities revenue bonds.

- Regents approved the program statement and budget for renovation of the Barkley Memorial Center on the UNL East Campus, a project to provide space for research and scholarly activity in the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders - specifically in Hearing, Balance Evaluation and Rehabilitation. The project will be financed with private funds.

- A proposal to increase resident tuition by \$4,000 per year for the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Pharmacy was discussed in April. Courtney Fletcher, Dean of the College, said the increase would address educational needs and new nationwide accreditation requirements. Fletcher pointed out that UNMC tuition for resident pharmacy students is now the lowest in its group of comparable peer institutions, and would remain competitive after the proposed increase (slightly below the peer group average).

University moving ahead with strategic plan for entrepreneurship

The University of Nebraska is developing a strategic plan to establish goals and benchmarks to strengthen and improve entrepreneurship education, training and outreach, says Pete Kotsiopoulos, Vice President of University Affairs and coordinator of economic development initiatives.

Kotsiopoulos reported that major strides in the past year include:

- Establishing a working group - a powerful collaboration of officials from all four campuses - to develop benchmarks and accountability measures for the strategic plan.
- Hosting the second annual Nebraska Summit on Entrepreneurship in February with hundreds of educators, business leaders, government officials and entrepreneurs from across the state.
- Creating a new Web site to help people navigate the wide variety of entrepreneurial services offered by the university - <http://www.nebraska.edu/entrepreneurship> - with a goal to become a one-stop entrepreneurial clearinghouse for all of the state's offerings.

Entrepreneurship is one of the goals identified in the university's Strategic Framework that aims at building a talented, competitive workforce and knowledge-based economy in Nebraska in partnership with the state, private sector and other educational institutions.