Actions of the Board of Regents

–The Board approved UNK’s request to offer a BA in philosophy. Members expressed concern about the viability of the program in light of several years of declining enrollments in philosophy at UNL and UNO. Recent graduation rates are UNL=6; UNO=5; Bellevue=4. However, members cited to factors that led them to approve the proposed program. The first was that the program differed from the previous proposal by including courses from outside the department, specifically non-Western thought. The second factor was that the proposal was of no cost to the University. There was some debate about hidden costs but the consensus was that since there were no direct additional costs, then this proposal was similar to an earlier one on golf management that received Board approval.

–The Board approved the proposed joint UNK-UNO Master of Fine Arts in Writing proposal with little discussion other than asking why UNL was not also a part of the program.

–The Board approved residence hall room and board rates that include increases in each of the next four academic years. Students on a 20-meal plan can expect to see a 12.5 percent increase during the next academic year. The following two years would include 6.75 percent annual increases, and the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 academic years would include 5.5 percent annual increases. The current cost for a student in a double occupancy room and on a 20-meal plan is $4,436.

–The Regents were presented with a residence hall master plan Friday that includes in its first phase demolishing and replacing Case and Ludden halls and selling off University Heights. Future phases would include renovation of Men’s Hall and Randall Hall, demolition and replacement of Conrad Hall, demolition without replacement of Mantor hall and repair of other facilities.

–The Board received the 2004-04 Diversity Report. UNK’s figures were substantially different from our sister campuses. In the past 8 years, the number of full-time, tenure/tenure track multicultural faculty has increased 143% while total faculty numbers have decreased. Student enrollment also shows positive changes. Applications from African American students are up 46% over the past 3 years and Hispanic applications are up 227%.

–The Board approved a food service contract with Chartwells to operate food services through June 30, 2011. As part of the contract, Chartwells will make $1.7 million in upgrades in four years and will provide an estimated $70,000 to $77,600 annual commission to UNK.

–The Regents looked at preliminary NU budget requests of $1,408,565,211 in 2005-2006 and $1,462,846,900 in 2006-2007. The estimated budget for 2004-2005 is $1,354,764,646. These figures do not include money to cover possible salary increases. Funds to support system-wide initiatives include 3,000,000 for priority programs, $1,000,000 for diversity hires, and $584,000 for need-based aid. The board will take final action on the budget at its June meeting.

–The Board approved a new tuition assistance program that will provide all students who receive Pell Grants with additional funds that will cover full tuition after applying any other GRANT funding the student receives. Regent Miller opposed the program saying that it sent the wrong message to high school students, a message that meritorious performance is not important. The program will require that students maintain a 2.5 GPA to continue to receive the aid.
The Board accepted the University's Distance Education Strategic Plan. UNK's principal academic emphases in the plan included the following new degree programs and courses: MS in the Teaching of Psychology, Certificate in History, Master of Fine Arts, Travel and Tourism program, Curriculum and Instruction Degrees: Special Education Advanced Practitioner option, Montessori Early Childhood specialization and additional courses, MA Master Teacher in Physical Education, Teacher Education Program courses, CSIS courses and Physics courses.

Summary of Faculty Senate accomplishments, 2003-04 Academic Year

- Academic/Administrative Fall Retreat
- Proposal to reinstate Summer Commencement
- Input to Budget cutting recommendations
- Participation in NCA review process
- Electronic access to Senate activities/minutes
- Helped preserve disciplinary integrity of academic programs
- Strengthened the role of the Senate in recommending faculty for administrative service
- Continued to support major initiatives from previous years, e.g., 1Y@UNK
- Lobbied for a coordinated plan that addresses marketing, recruitment and retention activities
  Obtained legal approval of the revised Senate Constitution and Bylaws