Notes from the October Board of Regents Meeting (October 29, 2004; Lincoln).

All of the agenda items pertained to UNL or UNMC. However, there were a couple of items that may have ramifications for the UNK campus.

Resolution from Academic Affairs Subcommittee (motion carried):

Whereas, the University of Nebraska has recruited and retained many distinguished faculty with endowed professorships who contribute significantly to the quality of programs offered by the university in their respective disciplines; and

Whereas, increasing the number of endowed professorships provides a significant opportunity to contribute to academic programs; and

Whereas, the University of Nebraska is engaged in competition with other major universities throughout the country to attract and retain the highest quality faculty members possible; and

Whereas, state support for endowed professorships on a matching basis would leverage additional private funds for this purpose and improve the competitive position of the university;

Now therefore be it resolved, that the University of Nebraska Board of Regents supports the development of a matching program for endowed professorships for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature for their consideration.

Resolution from Business Affairs Subcommittee (motion carried):

Whereas, the University of Nebraska owns 726 buildings with a replacement value exceeding $3 billion; and

Whereas, a high percentage of these buildings are in need of repair or renovation; and

Whereas, the passage of LB 1100 provided the University with resources to renovate or replace sixteen structures badly in need of repair; and

Whereas, the projects authorized under LB 1100 are all either complete or nearing completion and there has been no significant new investment in building renovation since the passage of LB 1100; and

Whereas, the University is in the process of developing a proposal to take to the Legislature requesting additional bonding authority and financial resources to embark on a new investment in building renovation,

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Regents endorses the concept and scope of the proposed new investment in building renovation projects to be taken to the Governor and Legislature for approval during the 2005 legislative session.

Now, therefore, be it further resolved, that the Board of Regents unanimously directs the University administration to continue development of this proposal and work with the Governor and State Legislature.

Other Items:

The Board of Regents approved the five proposed agreements, two with NELNET, Inc., one with National Educational Loan Network, Inc., and two with Union Bank and Trust Company, for the FFELP/School as Lender Program at UNL to provide student loans to graduate and professional students.
Jay Noren, Executive Vice President and Provost: The following is summarized from the fall enrollment report:

Total enrollment at the University of Nebraska for fall 2004 is 45,116 headcount and 37,996 FTE (decline of 2.0 percent headcount and 1.7 percent FTE compared to 2003). Student credit hours decreased 1.2 percent from 544,324 to 537,880. Student credit hours range from 3.6 percent decrease at UNL to 12.2 percent increase at UNMC.

Despite these trends, several elements of the 2004 enrollment data show impressive improvement:

- Increased average ACT scores, including the highest ever for UNL freshmen
- A large increase in transfer students: 9 percent at UNL and 5.9 percent at UNO
- UNO and UNK both show increases in the number of new freshman students – 6.7 percent at UNO and 3.6 percent at UNK
- Enrollment of ethnic minority students at UNL increased 8 percent

In a broader context these fall enrollment data, as well as trends during the past five to ten years, call attention to several important factors affecting the University:

- Insufficient financial aid
- Increased Higher Education Costs
- Declining number of Nebraska high school students

In response to these issues and trends President Milliken has called for energetic initiatives to pursue key objectives including:

- Substantially increase need-based aid for Nebraskan students
- Increase the college-going rate among Nebraska high school graduates (currently 59.3 percent – near the national average)
- Stimulate early interest in higher education among Nebraska K-12 students, starting in middle school
- Educate Nebraska families about the cost of a college education and provide comprehensive information on all types of available financial aid
- Increase the percent of citizens with a Bachelor’s degree or higher (currently 23.7 percent compared to national average 24.4 percent)
- Increase enrollment of out-of-state students