Report from the March 9, 2007 Board of Regents Meeting

The full agenda packet is available online at http://www.nebraska.edu/board/board_agendas.shtml or hardcopies of the agenda and presentations are available by request in my office. Included in the packet is a copy of the official BOR minutes (BORMin3-9-07.pdf) and the summary report (BOR-Report-March-2007.pdf)

Morning Working Committee Sessions:

Business Affairs Committee

Budget Update: Current funding projections from the legislative appropriations committee are $16.2 million less than university mandatory expenses (utilities, mandated faculty salary increases, building depreciation, etc.). To just meet mandatory expenses the university needs budget increases of 5.7% and 5% over the next biennium; the current increases in the committee proposal are 2.1% and 3.2%. The university’s request assumes a 5% tuition increase.

There is an additional $4 million shortfall (even if the appropriations committee fully funds the mandatory expenses) for funding other NU initiatives (diversity, Programs of Excellence, etc.)

Fire Protection: The Regents heard a report on the current state of fire protection in all university buildings. With the exception of University Heights, all unsprinkled buildings are of the “virtually fireproof” construction (concrete walls, floors, firedoors) that make it difficult for fire to spread from unit to unit. All facilities meet governmental codes and no violations have been recorded in a decade. Costs to add sprinkler systems to all remaining UNK residences would cost $10 million.

Economic Development Task Force

Linking University Research and Social Benefits: The Regents heard a report from Daniel Sarewitz, Director of the Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes and Professor at Arizona State University. In short, his report suggested that the best research is “use-inspired basic research” in the model of Pasteur’s investigations. This style of research attempts to create new knowledge while benefiting society. In order to foster this research innovation, Universities must allocate resources to start new initiatives, use strategic hiring from outside the university to bring in experts, bring Deans and Chairs on board or replace them with people that are supportive, eliminate barriers to collaboration and reward such collaborations with resources, garner the support of the state legislature and governor who should provide investments in the university and state, have strong presidential leadership that provides use of incentives to promote socially beneficial basic research, and make significant funding available at the top-most levels that is both discretionary and strategic in its application.

Academic Affairs Committee

The presentations given to the Academic Affairs Committee focuses on several goals in the Regent’s Strategic Framework:

Need-Based Financial Aid: The three year target for need based-financial aid is to increase aid by 10% annually. The one-year goal is to work toward raising awareness of the tuition assistance program (TAP). TAP funds are available to Pell-eligible students to cover the difference between the Pell grant and the full-cost of tuition.

Nebraska Top-25% Students: The one-year goal is to increase enrollment of first-time Nebraska freshman who graduated in the top 25% of their graduation class above the 2005-2006 figure of
42.9%. The three-year goal is to increase enrollment of first-time Nebraska freshman who graduated in the top 25% of their graduation class by 3% annually.

Out-of-State Students: Each of the undergraduate campuses has increased the number of students attending from out-of-state; however, data indicate that many of these students do not graduate. The one-year goal is to develop a plan to retain more non-resident students. The three-year target is to increase the number of out-of-state undergraduate students by 1% annually and to increase the retention rate for out-of-state undergraduate students by 1% annually.

Merit-Based Scholarships: The one-year and three-year goals are both to increase the support for merit-based aid by 10% annually.

BOR Meeting

Those BOR items affecting UNK:

- Regent Schaefer presented a KUDOS award to Jane Petersen, coordinator of Training and Instructional Support at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.
- The BOR passed a resolution of Commendation for the UNK ID Card committee:
  Whereas, members of the University of Nebraska at Kearney community are dedicated to providing advanced services to all students, faculty and staff; and
  Whereas, a technologically safe and convenient identification card system is a critical service component in today’s university environment; and
  Whereas, since the fall of 2005, members of the University of Nebraska at Kearney I.D. Card Committee have dedicated countless hours of diligent work to select, configure, strategically plan, install and expand UNK’s I.D. card system; and
  Whereas, UNK’s upgraded card system, referred to as the “Enhanced UNK Card Program,” now provides access for 39 doors on campus, tracking for approximately 1,700 meal plans, 4,000 Loper Dollars accounts, 25 locations that accept Loper Dollars, two self-service deposit stations and an online card office. It also provides students, faculty and staff with the benefits of banking functionality using official university identification cards, including the convenience of selected ATM access and purchases; and
  Whereas, the dedication, flexibility and continuous input of members of the I.D. Card Committee have resulted in a tremendously successful, virtually seamless transition and expansion of UNK’s ID card system.
  Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the University of Nebraska Board of Regents congratulates all members of the University of Nebraska at Kearney I.D. Card Committee for their outstanding work and uncommon commitment to UNK’s students, faculty, and staff.
- The BOR passed a resolution thanking Student Regent Mike Eiberger for his year of service on the Board. Following tradition Mike offered a few comments and sang the Loper fight song.
  Whereas, Michael Eiberger has served with distinction as Student Regent and President of the Student Senate of the University of Nebraska at Kearney; and
  Whereas, Regent Eiberger has conscientiously and effectively advocated for the advancement of student government throughout the University of Nebraska system and at the University of Nebraska at Kearney; and
  Whereas, Regent Eiberger has diligently represented the students of UNK in all issues affecting their campus, their education and their future careers, and has
worked in cooperation with his fellow Student Regents in bringing issues of
significance before the Board of Regents; and
Whereas, Regent Eiberger has been a popular and respected campus leader, as
evidenced by his election by the student body as UNK’s 2005 Homecoming
King; and
Whereas, Regent Eiberger created and established The Loper Legion, served on
various UNK search and screening committees, was appointed to the
Economic Development Task Force of the Board of Regents and organized a
student-led campus beautification project; and
Whereas, beyond his commitment to the Board of Regents and Student Senate,
Regent Eiberger has served as a Chancellor’s Ambassador, Diplomat,
Resident Advisor, Summer Advising and Enrollment Program Advisor, an
office holder and active member of various campus organizations and a
frequent volunteer in campus and community projects; and
Whereas, Regent Eiberger’s additional contributions to the University of
Nebraska at Kearney through his participation in Phi Beta Lambda and the
Midwest Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls have been
significant.
Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the University of Nebraska Board of Regents
expresses its sincere appreciation for the exceptional contributions of Regent
Michael Eiberger during his term of office and wishes him well in all future
endeavors.
• The Leo Daly architecture firm was approved to provide design services for the UNK
utilities infrastructure project.
• Dr. Linda Pratt was approved as the new NU executive vice president and provost, and
Dean of the Graduate College.
• The Regents heard a presentation on the analysis of research funding levels at each of the
campus with respect to the Regents Strategic Framework. The goal for UNK (and UNO)
is to increase its federal research funding by 15% annually on a 5-year rolling average.
There was a problem in the methodology for calculating UNK’s progress toward meeting
the goal. When computed as dollar figures (rather than by annual percent increase), the
FY2001-2005 average annual funding was $1,417,438 and the FY2002-2006 average
annual funding was $1,681,986 reflecting 18.7% increase. Rather than failing to reach the
funding goal, UNK actually exceeded the goal admirably. UNMC and UNL attained their
given goals while UNO did not. The failure at UNO can be explained by a mathematical
defect caused by a large 1-year spike in funding in FY2002 that may have biased the
sample. UNO was able to increase its funding by a still impressive 9.1% on a much larger
base than UNK ($7.9 million this year vs $7.2 million for last year’s average). The
Regent’s are re-considering both the methodology and goals for UNO and UNK.