President’s Report

October 4, 2011

Board of Regents Meeting 09/09/11 (Items of Interest)

1. Dependent Eligibility Audit:
   - 2.7% of dependents were ineligible; most were older children
   - The audit saved about a million dollars for a hundred thousand dollar investment.

2. P-16 Initiative:
   - Half of the 8 goals focus on increasing college attendance and graduation rates.
   - Goal 7 is to improve time to completion and graduation rates in postsecondary institutions.
     - The 120 hour degree is a strategy under this goal.
   - The Buffett Foundation/Thompson Scholars (Learning Communities) funding has increased each year.

3. 120 Hour Degree:
   - The rationale is that credit loads have crept up over the years; that 15 credit hours per semester will result in more 8 semester completions; and that faster completions decrease the cost of education.
   - Many universities across the nation are decreasing credit requirements.
   - Departments should review program requirements.
     - Credits may be removed from electives, general studies, majors, and minors.
   - UNO & UNL were reported to have been discussing the issue, and UNK was reported to have started discussing it.
     - UNL’s FS President stated that UNL Faculty has not been included in the discussions and that they had concerns about the timeline for making the changes.
   - Exemptions will be made for programs that require extra credits for certification and programs that are defined as not 4-year degrees.
   - The policy reads:
     **RP-5.1.4 Policy on the Baccalaureate Degree**
     1. Purpose: The University of Nebraska adopts the following policy to ensure that students have the opportunity to graduate in four years, if they take 15 hours in each of eight semesters.
     2. Policy: The University of Nebraska baccalaureate degree shall require 120 credit hours.
     3. Exceptions to the Policy:
        (a) Exceptions to the 120 hour baccalaureate degree shall be approved by the Provost and reported to the Board of Regents if any of the following criteria are documented.
          1) Professional accreditation requires more credits for licensing than can be completed to meet standard graduation requirements.
          2) A degree is governed by State requirements for certification that require more than 120 hours to meet standard graduation requirements.
          3) The degree is defined as a five-year degree.
        (b) Any other exception to the 120 credit hours baccalaureate degree must be approved the Board of Regents of the University.
4. Procedure: This policy will be required for students first entering the University in the fall of 2012. Students previously enrolled may be eligible for the 120 hour degree option.

4. Strategic Framework
   • There was some discussion of needs based funding and Pell grants.
   • There has been an exponential growth in Pell grants.
     o There will have to be a decrease in amount and/or eligibility to sustain the program.
   • Bicak stated, privately, that he and Linda Pratt had discussed the need to have UNK's benchmark for external funding changed.