



2005-06 Biennial Report

Two years of reflection and change

Approved by the Commission

December 7, 2006

**Nebraska's Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary Education**

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2005-06 Biennial Report

Provided pursuant to §85-1412 (12) of Nebraska Statutes.

The past two years have been a time of reflection and change for Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. With a new executive director, four newly appointed Commissioners, and the impending high turnover of state senators and their staff, the time was right to review practices and procedures both in day-to-day agency operations and in the larger scope of Commission work.

This introspection has resulted in a more efficient agency and a more effective and engaged Commission. We are proud to share with you our activities over the past two years as they relate to the Commission's overarching goals and mission.

What is the Commission?

Whether you're a new senator or whether you've been in office for several terms, you may have heard the name "Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education" and thought, *What's that?*

In 1990, Nebraskans saw the need for an independent entity to coordinate the state's public higher education institutions from a statewide perspective, and so amended the state constitution to create the Commission [Article VIII-14].

Our state is not alone in identifying that need. Twenty-eight states have coordinating commissions that work like we do, providing an objective point of view and a statewide—rather than institutional—perspective. Twenty-six states have statewide governing boards to provide that perspective.

Nebraska's Commission is an independent agency with a small staff and 11 Commissioners who are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature. The Commission promotes high quality, ready access, and efficient use of resources in Nebraska higher education by carrying out its duties as outlined in §85-1401 et. seq. of state statutes.

What does the Commission do?

The Commission:

- Implements a statewide, comprehensive plan to guide Nebraska's higher education system, in collaboration with the state's colleges and universities.
- Administers student financial aid and other federal programs.
- Conducts research and publishes reports on issues pertaining to higher education.
- Provides information and advice on higher education to the Legislature.
- Authorizes academic programs.
- Approves proposals for facilities.
- Reviews the institutions' budget proposals and makes recommendations on those requests to the Governor and the Legislature.

These actions mostly affect the community colleges, the Nebraska State College System, and the University of Nebraska.

To assist in carrying out its duties, the Commission meets periodically with the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Community College Association Board of Directors, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees, and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

The following sections will address the points above and will delineate the past two years of activities conducted under each of them.

What does the Commission do?



Implements a statewide, comprehensive plan to guide Nebraska’s higher education system, in collaboration with the state’s colleges and universities.

Nebraska’s *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*

As required by statute, the Commission has developed and periodically revises a plan to provide direction for the future of higher education in Nebraska. The *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education* identifies goals that lead to an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, and synchronized system of higher education.

The *Comprehensive Plan* was developed in collaboration with the state’s colleges and universities and guides the coordination of Nebraska’s public higher education institutions and sectors. The Commission uses the *Plan* to facilitate most of its statutory decision-making processes.

In addition to identifying the overall goals and objectives for Nebraska’s public higher education system, the *Plan* defines the role and mission of each public higher education institution in Nebraska. When developing proposals for new facilities or academic programs, Nebraska’s public colleges and universities must do so in compliance with the *Plan*.

The *Plan* is considered a “living document,” meaning that it is reviewed and revised as the environment for postsecondary education evolves. Substantive changes to the *Plan* are made with care, however, and only after distributing drafts of proposed changes to all affected parties, taking those parties’ concerns under advisement, and holding one or more public hearings in front of the Commission. After the Commission approves the revision, the Legislature’s Education Committee reviews the *Plan* and the revisions thereto at a public hearing and reports its findings to the Legislature.

A Summary of the *Comprehensive Plan's* 14 Major Goals

Meeting the Needs of Students

- Goal 1:** Seek methods to increase participation and success in higher education for all students.
- Goal 2:** Be student-centered and offer lifelong learning opportunities.
- Goal 3:** Provide appropriate support services to help all students reach their educational goals.
- Goal 4:** Provide graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as capable employees and responsible citizens.

Meeting the Needs of the State

- Goal 5:** Be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers.
- Goal 6:** Contribute to the health and prosperity of citizens through research and development efforts, and technology transfer.
- Goal 7:** Prepare individuals for productive, fulfilling lives.
- Goal 8:** Assess evolving needs and priorities and adopt new methods and technologies to address them.

Meeting Needs by Building Exemplary Institutions

- Goal 9:** Fulfill roles and missions in an exemplary manner and compare favorably with peers.
- Goal 10:** Provide fair and reliable funding policies that provide appropriate levels of support to enable institutions to excel.
- Goal 11:** Be effective in meeting the needs of students and the state. Be efficient and accountable in expenditure of state resources.

Meeting Needs through Partnerships and Collaboration

- Goal 12:** Collaborate with one another and with other entities to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively.
- Goal 13:** Work effectively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning and to facilitate articulation.

Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs

- Goal 14:** Advocate a physical environment for public postsecondary institutions that is: supportive of role and mission; well-utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; safe, accessible, cost-effective, and well-maintained; and flexible to adapt to future changes.

The *Plan* can be found online at www.ccpe.state.ne.us/compplan. Changes to the *Plan* in the past two years include the addition of dual enrollment guidelines and capital construction guidelines.

Dual Enrollment Standards

In response to the rapid growth of dual enrollment course offerings in Nebraska high schools in recent years, the Commission conducted a study and impaneled a task force to create standards that are now included in the *Comprehensive Plan*. (See Appendix A, page 25.)

Dual enrollment courses (also known as dual credit courses) are college-level courses offered to high school students for simultaneous credit by both the high school and a postsecondary education institution. Concurrent enrollment courses, by comparison, are offered to high school students for college credit only, often via distance learning technologies (online and two-way audio/video).

The Commission wanted to support and ensure the rigor and quality of dual enrollment courses and their value to students as they enter postsecondary education, so it established a Dual Enrollment Task Force. The task force, composed of representatives of high schools, colleges, the Department of Education, and the Commission, fashioned draft guidelines that were broadly circulated for discussion and comment. As approved by the Commission in August 2005, the guidelines ultimately included in the *Plan* establish what should be considered minimum quality standards for:

- Student eligibility
- Faculty qualifications
- Curriculum expectations
- Assessment of student progress
- Program evaluation
- Instructional context and resources

Capital Construction Guidelines

Funds to support institutional facilities are drawn from an increasing variety of sources, and funding mechanisms are becoming correspondingly complex. As the percentage of institutional revenues coming from state funds continues to decline around the country, public institutions will increasingly seek support from diverse sources, including private donors.

To further support the highest standards in the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects, the Commission adopted additional guidelines to use in its review of those projects. (See Appendix B, page 29.) The guidelines, adopted into the *Comprehensive Plan* in April 2006, assist in the Commission's review and decision-making regarding capital construction projects that use tax funds. The guidelines are not intended to constrict or constrain the constitutional or statutory authorities of institutional governing boards to review, approve, and manage capital construction projects. Rather, they serve to make all interested parties aware of points that will guide the Commission's own deliberations in an increasingly complex environment.

The Commission encourages institutional governing boards to maintain polices and practices governing the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects that, in the public interest, (i) assure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies relating to the award of contracts, (ii) are in compliance with public meetings and public records laws, (iii) assure good value for acquisition of land and facilities, construction of new facilities, and renewal of existing facilities, and (iv) thoroughly review and assess existing hazardous materials, fire and life safety, deferred repair needs, and building system issues, needs, and conditions for all major renovation projects.

Administers student financial aid programs.

Financial Aid

The Commission administers the Nebraska State Grant and the Community Scholarship Foundation Program. The Commission also conducts annual audits of all postsecondary institutions in the state that receive state and federal grant funds.

Nebraska State Grant

Nebraska state grants are awarded to students in consultation with financial aid administrators at Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions. Nebraska state grants can only be awarded to students who are residents of Nebraska, who are attending a Nebraska college or university, and who are eligible for the federal Pell Grant. (The federal government uses Pell Grants to provide financial assistance to low-income students.)

2004-05:

- Total grant dollars awarded: \$8,336,694
- 12,139 students received a grant (42% of Nebraska's Pell Grant eligible students)
 - Public institutions: 8,512 students
- \$573 average award
 - Private, non-profit: 2,195 students
- \$996 average award
 - Proprietary/for-profit: 1,432 students
- \$891 average award
- Average grant awarded: \$687

2005-06:

- Total grant dollars awarded: \$9,917,595
- 13,609 students received a grant (51% of Nebraska Pell Grant eligible students)
 - Public institutions: 9,713 students
- \$627 average award
 - Private, non-profit: 2,247 students
- \$1,007 average award
 - Proprietary/for-profit: 1,649 students
- \$950 average award
- Average grant awarded: \$729

Community Scholarship Foundation Program

The Community Scholarship Foundation Program matches public funds and available private funds to be awarded to Nebraska high school students attending an in-state postsecondary institution.

Program response has been modest in recent years due to reliance on participation of private groups. State funding during the last biennium totaled \$49,750 each year. Unfortunately, not enough community foundations applied to make use of all the available state funds.

2004-05

- 64 students received a scholarship
- Average award: \$948
- Total awarded: \$60,651 (\$30,000 in state funds and \$30,651 in Community Foundation funds)

2005-06

- 61 students received a scholarship
- Average award: \$686
- Total awarded: \$41,826 (\$20,000 in state funds and \$21,826 in Community Foundation funds)

The Commission believes these state dollars would be better used to fund a need-based scholarship program available to needy high school students taking college classes, whether through their high school or directly from the postsecondary institution. So, in its recent postsecondary education operating budget recommendations to the Governor and Legislature, the Commission recommended a shift in funds from the current Community Scholarship Foundation Program to establish a new scholarship program called Access College Early (ACE), to be administered by the Commission.

What does the Commission do?



**Provides information and advice
on higher education to the Legislature.**

**Conducts research and publishes reports
on issues pertaining to higher education.**

Reports and analysis

With its extensive databases and regular, comprehensive reports, the Commission serves an invaluable function. No other entity in Nebraska maintains and reports all of these kinds of data. The Commission produces a wide array of objective, factual information, providing an independent voice backed by in-depth research.

Our information is used by Legislators, reporters, higher education institutions, other state agencies, and the public. In the past two years, the Commission has produced the following reports.

Budget and Financial Analyses

Postsecondary Education Operating Budget Recommendations for 2007-09 — October 2006

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/budgetreecs07-09

This is a statutorily required analysis of public institutional budget requests. It includes information about higher education appropriations, affordability, access, and accountability; discussions of statewide funding issues; and recommendations and rationales pertaining to institutional budget requests. See page 19 for more information.

Capital Construction Budget Recommendations and Prioritization for 2007-09 — October 2006

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/capitalreecs07-09

This statutorily required report includes the Commission's funding and priority recommendations on capital construction budget requests from the Nebraska State College System, the

University of Nebraska, and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. See page 17 for more information.

2006 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report — June 2006

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/tuitionfees06

This statutorily required report studies public policy issues relating to tuition, fees, and financial aid for students in Nebraska and shows how Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions rank on these points when compared to their peer institutions. Among the general findings are the points that higher education is becoming less affordable—and therefore less attainable—for students as tuition continues to rise while state appropriations per full-time equivalent student are increasingly threatened by other state obligations. Financial aid is a necessity for many students, and participation and success rates for students from median-, low-, and very low-income families would likely increase if additional financial assistance could be provided by the state.

Nebraska Student Loan Volume Report, 1992-93 to 2002-03 — September 2005

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/loanvolume05

This report includes a national summary of student borrowing and charted borrowing trends at the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska State College System, and the community colleges. The data shows that both nationwide and at Nebraska's public colleges and universities borrowing increased considerably from 1992-93 to 2002-03.

Academic Analyses

Survey of Programs and Courses Offered in Nebraska by Out-of-State Institutions, 2003-04 and 2004-05 – August 2006

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/outstateprogs06

Delivering Courses Beyond the Campus Walls (Courses Offered in High Schools) – August 2005

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/beyondcampus05/hs

This report was prepared for the LB 689 Distance Education Enhancement Task Force.

Delivering Courses Beyond the Campus Walls – July 2005

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/beyondcampus05

This report was prepared for the LB 689 Distance Education Enhancement Task Force.

Other Analyses and Publications

2006 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska (sections on enrollment, degrees and other awards, and faculty and salaries)

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/factuallook06

This statutorily required report provides comparative data for Nebraska's public higher education institutions in these five areas: enrollment, degrees awarded, institutional finance, faculty and salaries, and private career schools.

2005 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report — December 2005

www.ccpe.state.ne.us/progressreport05

Created at the direction of the LR 75 Legislative Evaluation Task Force and the LR 174 Higher Education Task Force, this annual report provides data pertaining to progress on three priorities:

- Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska.
- Increase the proportion of students who enroll and successfully persist through degree program completion.
- Reduce, eliminate, and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment.

What does the Commission do?

Authorizes academic programs.

Academic Programs

Existing Academic Programs Review

The Commission is constitutionally required to review, monitor, and approve or disapprove each public institution's existing and proposed new academic programs to provide compliance with the *Comprehensive Plan* and to prevent unnecessary duplication.

From January 2005 through December 2006, 296 existing programs were reviewed. Of those, 244 were approved, 32 were returned to the institutions for further review or additional information, and 20 were discontinued.

A list of all of the programs reviewed by the Commission in the past two years, as well as the action taken by the Commission based on its review, can be found online at www.ccpe.state.ne.us/exprogreview05-06.

The Commission also reviewed 50 program assessments that had previously been returned to the originating institutions. Two were discontinued.

Approval of Proposed New Academic Programs

In the past two years, the Commission reviewed 31 proposals for new academic programs and organizational units at public institutions. Of these, 30 were approved and one was withdrawn from consideration by the institution. Another 50 proposed programs were reviewed and determined to be reasonable and moderate extensions of existing programs, thus requiring no action by the Commission.

For a listing of reviewed programs, go to www.ccpe.state.ne.us/newprogreview05-06.

Out-of-State Authorizations

An out-of-state institution that wants to offer programs in Nebraska must receive Commission authorization, as required by statute. A public hearing is held prior to any institution receiving such authorization.

In the past two years, the Commission authorized the following out-of-state institutions to offer degree programs at specific locations in Nebraska:

University of Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ

Approved on April 26, 2005, to offer the following six degrees with options: Bachelor of Science in Business; Bachelor of Science in Management; Bachelor of Science in Information Technology; Master of Business Administration; Master of Management; and Master of Information Systems.

Drake University, Des Moines, IA

Approved August 9, 2005, to extend previously granted approval to offer the Master of Science degree in Adult Learning, Performance, and Development in Omaha until 2010.

Mount Marty College, Yankton, SD

Approved August 3, 2006, to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration in Norfolk at Northeast Community College.

Kaplan University, Davenport, IA

Approved April 6, 2006, to offer seminar portions of selected online courses that contribute to the following degree programs in Lincoln at Hamilton College-Lincoln and in Omaha at Hamilton College-Omaha: Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning; Master of Education; Master of Business Administration; Master of Science in Criminal Justice; Bachelor of Science in Business; Bachelor of Science in Management; Bachelor of Science in Information Management; Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN completion); and Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies.

Oglala Lakota College, Kyle, SD

Approved February 2, 2006, to offer courses in English, speech communication, and college success to Gordon-Rushville High School in Gordon, Nebraska. No degree program is associated with these courses.

New Private College Authorizations

The Commission has statutory responsibility to approve or disapprove any proposal to create a new private institution. It also approves or disapproves proposals from an existing institution to change its level of degree offerings, such as changing from a two-year associate degree institution to a four-year baccalaureate degree institution. This process is described in Title 281 NAS Chapter 2, "Rules and Regulations Concerning Establishment of a Two-Year or a Four-Year Private College."

As a result of a national movement of two-year, private postsecondary career schools seeking to offer four-year degrees, the Commission modified Chapter 2 in 2003. The change allows CCPE to work with the Nebraska Department of Education in overseeing nationally accredited private postsecondary career schools offering a four-year degree. Once approved, the private postsecondary career school must seek Commission approval to offer any additional four-year degrees.

In 2005-06, the Commission approved the following application:

The Creative Center, Omaha, NE

Approved on December 8, 2005, as a four-year institution offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

What does the Commission do?

Approves proposals for facilities.

Capital Construction/Facilities

The Commission has three major responsibilities related to capital construction projects at public postsecondary education institutions.

The first is to review, monitor, and approve or disapprove capital construction projects that use more than \$500,000 in tax funds to construct facilities, or more than \$75,000 per year in state funds to operate and maintain. Disapproved projects cannot receive state funds for construction or ongoing operating and maintenance.

From January 2005 through December 2006, the Commission reviewed 22 capital construction project proposals by the institutions. Of these, one was disapproved, one was withdrawn by the institution, and three projects' size and/or budget were reduced.

The second responsibility is to review revenue bond projects and make recommendations regarding their approval or disapproval. From January 2005 through December 2006, the Commission reviewed seven such projects and recommended that the Legislature approve each.

The third responsibility is to review the biennial capital construction requests of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, and the Nebraska State College System. With its statewide perspective, the Commission makes recommendations regarding a unified prioritization of all approved capital construction requests. The Commission makes these recommendations at the same time it makes recommendations on biennial operating budget requests.

The Commission recommends to the Governor and Legislature a list, in priority order, of approved capital construction projects eligible for state funding. Only those projects that were approved by the governing boards and the Commission and are requesting state funding in the biennial budget request are considered. The Commission has identified fire and life safety and deferred repair as statewide facilities priorities for 2007-09.

Access the complete report at www.ccpe.state.ne.us/capitalrecs07-09.

What does the Commission do?

**Reviews the institutions' budget proposals
and makes recommendations on those requests
to the Governor and Legislature.**

Budget Review and Recommendations

The Commission has constitutional responsibility to review and modify the biennial budget requests of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions and make recommendations on those requests to the Governor and Legislature. Through this review, the Commission can assure consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan* and promote effective use of state funds in support of public postsecondary education in Nebraska. The Commission reviews budgets and makes its recommendations in October of every even-numbered year.

In fall 2006, the Commission reviewed 26 requests for additional state funding from the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA), the Nebraska State College System, and the community colleges. Of those 26 requests, the Commission:

- Strongly recommended new general funds for eight requests.
- Recommended new general funds for three requests.
- Recommended some level of funding for 11 requests.
- Recommended no funding for three requests.
- Recommended funding from another source other than state general funds for one request.

In addition, there were 18 requests that were part of the continuation budget recommendation, and 24 requests for new building openings. The total for institutional new and expanded requests, including continuation costs, was \$87,512,394 for the biennium. The Commission also reviewed five deficit requests.

The report and recommendations are located at www.ccpe.state.ne.us/budgetrecs07-09.

**Promoting high quality, ready access,
and efficient use of resources
in Nebraska higher education.**

Operational projects and accomplishments

Working smarter

Times change, and in order to keep pace and operate effectively, every office should undergo a review of its processes and strategies. Commission staff began a self-review in early 2005 to reduce costs and increase the efficiency of its day-to-day operations. This effort is ongoing.

Among other things, staff reviewed the reports it produces to determine what information is actually necessary to report, what can be pared down, and what messages still need to be shared. Academic program and capital construction review forms and processes were streamlined so that less materials are printed and mailed. Commission staff also reviewed and updated mailing lists in order to target more specific audiences with hard copy mailings. Whenever feasible, staff replaced “snail”-mailing with e-mailing, allowing the Commission to reach a broader audience more quickly, while remaining cost effective.

These are just some of the ongoing efforts the Commission is making to serve Nebraskans efficiently and with excellence.

New Web site, increased use

One of the most evident changes at the Commission is the new and enhanced Web site, www.ccpe.state.ne.us. In spring 2005, staff began the process of designing and implementing a new Web site. By working with Nebraska@ On-Line, another state agency, CCPE was able to produce the site for no cost other than staff time.

The new site was introduced in August 2005. Some features of the new site include a more

user-friendly layout, better organized materials, a greater amount of information, and easy access to more Commission reports and presentations. A “News, Notes, and Notices” section on the homepage of the Web site gives visitors instant access to the most current information, such as upcoming meetings and public hearings, or new reports available online.

The staff continues to revise and update the Web site. New sections are planned for 2007.

Saving trees, saving money

As mentioned above, the Commission has been moving from print copies to electronic files in an effort to save money and reach a broader audience.

Agenda mailings are one example of this. Up until and throughout 2004, the Commission regularly copied and mailed about 35 hard copies of the full agenda materials—materials that sometimes were more than an inch thick—to Commissioners and several other key persons. Staff also mailed about 400 one-sheet agendas to other interested parties. Today, however, staff limits hard-copy mailings to our 11 Commissioners and three members of the Governor’s and Legislature’s staff. Persons who have indicated interest receive an e-mail notifying them when the agenda and all corresponding materials are posted online. In other words, we’ve gone from copying, addressing, and mailing more than 400 pieces six/seven times a year to mailing less than 15—saving time, paper, toner, and postage. Meanwhile, the list of persons requesting our agenda notification e-mails continues to grow.

The Commission continues to actively seek ways to save on postage, paper, and printing costs to support other communications needs.

New and continuing initiatives

Nebraska Scholars Program

In early 2006, Nebraska was chosen to participate in the State Scholars Initiative (SSI), a national business/education partnership working to increase the number of students who take a rigorous curriculum in high school. SSI awards federal grant money to states to start their own State Scholars programs.

With application materials prepared by the Coordinating Commission, FutureForce Nebraska®, a state-level business/education partnership, applied for an SSI grant in partnership with the Commission and the Nebraska Department of Education. FutureForce Nebraska and its partners work with school, community, and business leaders to implement the program in these pilot school districts: the Papillion-La Vista School District, South Sioux City Community Schools, Chase

County Schools (Imperial), and the Grand Island School District.

The program encourages students in these districts to take a rigorous course of study, one that will give them a boost whether they go to college after they graduate or go straight to work. It is funded at \$300,000 over an 18-month period.

Improving Teacher Quality: State Grants Program Administration

CCPE continues to award Improving Teacher Quality state grants to Nebraska's innovative leaders in education. The grants are funded under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title IIA). Grants are not awarded to individuals, but to partnerships formed by local, high-need educational agencies and a Nebraska college or university. These partnerships design and produce professional development activities to improve the skills of K-12 teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals.

For 2004-05, a review panel awarded funding for one project in math, one in science, one in social studies, one in reading and writing, and two in Spanish. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2004-05 was \$374,771. The total amount recommended for the six chosen projects was \$370,480.

For 2005-06, a review panel selected funding for one project in math, two in science, one math-science combination, one project in social studies, and two in Spanish. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2005-06 was \$432,028. The total amount recommended for the seven chosen projects was \$426,141. The remaining funds were added to the grant money received for 2006-07. For a listing of grant recipients, go to www.ccpe.state.ne.us/ITQ.

The 2006–07 competition is underway. The program continues to focus on professional development activities for in-service teachers. Projects that address the needs of low-performing schools or model the use of technology are also given priority.

New staff

- Marshall A. Hill, Ph.D., became Executive Director of the Commission in February 2005.
- Katherine Green, J.D., joined CCPE as its Planning and Policy Coordinator in May 2006.
- Seth Derner began his duties as FutureForce Nebraska Coordinator and State Director of the Nebraska Scholars Program in July 2006.
- Trish Souliere became Administrative Specialist for the Nebraska Scholars Program in August 2006.

Derner and Souliere were hired using funds from the State Scholars Initiative grant and FutureForce Nebraska.

Dual Enrollment Standards

These standards are found in Chapter Five of the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*.

Nebraska Dual Enrollment Standards

Defining Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment programs are intended to meet the needs of academically advanced students, to provide enrichment for students who have special, academic, or vocational needs, or to provide technical education. Dual enrollment courses will articulate with degree programs at postsecondary institutions. Academic courses will articulate with baccalaureate degree programs or associate degree programs, diplomas, and certificates. Vocational or technical courses will articulate into applied associate degree programs, diplomas, or certificates.

In this document, dual enrollment programs are often referred to as “dual-credit programs” or “programs.” Students enrolled in such programs are referred to as “dual-credit students.” Dual enrollment programs and dual-credit students are distinguished from concurrent enrollment programs and concurrent enrolled students in the following definitions:

Dual-credit students: High school students who take a course for both college and high school credit. High schools count these students in their average daily attendance.

Concurrent enrolled students: High school students who take college courses for college credit only (no high school credit), while remaining enrolled in high school and counted in their school’s average daily attendance.

Standards

The following minimum standards apply specifically to dual enrollment programs developed and maintained by school districts and cooperating colleges and universities.

Students

- 1) Student eligibility for the program is determined by participating high school and college/university officials; however, eligible students will typically:
 - a) Be juniors or seniors; and

- b) Meet the prerequisites of the course or otherwise demonstrate the ability to achieve success in the course; or
- c) Be formally identified as high ability or gifted students by the school participating in the dual enrollment program.

Students will complete a dual enrollment application signed by a high school official.

- 2) The college/university has the following recommended academic guidelines to increase students' opportunity for academic success. Eligible students will typically:
 - a) Have attained a GPA of 3.0 or better; or
 - b) Earned an ACT composite score of at least 20 or an equivalent score on another valid assessment; or
 - c) Earned an ACT sub-score of at least 20 or equivalent on another valid assessment relevant to the offered dual enrollment course or courses; or
 - d) Rank in the upper one-half of their high school class; or
 - e) Demonstrate through some alternative means the capacity for academic success in the desired course or courses. (Examples include student portfolios, letters of recommendations, and student performances/exhibitions.)

The preceding student eligibility guidelines may be waived in special circumstances by the appropriate secondary or postsecondary officials.

- 3) Participating students are admitted and registered by the appropriate postsecondary institution with mutual consent of the district and college/university.
- 4) Eligible students are provided appropriate course materials, including policies, college procedures, course outline/syllabus, and assessment materials if not specified in the course outline.
- 5) Eligible students receive guidance regarding their program responsibilities, weighted credit options, if any, and specific grading practices.
- 6) Institutions provide participating students information clearly describing institutional procedures for academic credit transfer. Institutions are encouraged to provide the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education with information or Web site links describing institutional credit transfer policies and procedures so that the Commission can maintain a Nebraska dual enrollment Web site.

Faculty

- 1) Instructors meet approved requirements for teaching at the department/college level. Minimally, instructors for academic courses hold a master's degree. Instructors meet district teaching requirements for program participation. All faculty have the mutual support of the district and college/university participating in the dual enrollment program.
- 2) High school and postsecondary faculty receive appropriate orientation and training (e.g., curriculum, assessment, policies, and procedures) for participation in the program.

- 3) Collaboration between high school and postsecondary faculty is encouraged and faculty development is available where appropriate.
- 4) High school and postsecondary faculty maintain contact throughout the program. In some instances, this contact is facilitated by technology.

The preceding faculty guidelines may be waived in special circumstances by the appropriate secondary and postsecondary officials.

Curriculum

- 1) Courses must reflect college-level experiences and rigor as well as district and state standards and practices.
- 2) Course outlines or syllabi (including at minimum a description of content, teaching strategies, performance measures, grading standards, resource materials, objectives/outcomes, and course calendar) utilized in the program meet district(s), state, and college/university standards.
- 3) Courses in this program are of the highest quality and intended to challenge eligible students while preparing them for transition to postsecondary education.

Assessment

- 1) Assessment policies and procedures are consistent with district and college/university practice.
- 2) To assure the academic rigor of courses for which college credit will be awarded, universities or colleges participating in dual enrollment programs will include valid student and faculty assessment measures that are consistent with the typical assessment measures of such university or college.
- 3) Ideally, curricula should progress logically and neatly with greater complexity and depth as students pass from secondary to postsecondary education. Therefore, jointly developed assessment policies and procedures of K-12 schools and postsecondary education institutions should be designed to align dual enrollment curricula with state course content standards. Additional statewide cooperative work is needed to accomplish this objective.

Evaluation

- 1) The district(s) and college/university review the program on an annual basis.
- 2) Program participants are tracked following graduation through postsecondary experiences when possible. Tracking elements may include district(s) data (e.g., class rank, GPA, ACT where available, AP exam where available and appropriate, and course outcomes and grade) and postsecondary data (e.g., GPA, major, number of hours completed, and enhancements, if appropriate to program).
- 3) Data sharing occurs consistent with the policies of the district(s) and college/university.

Instructional Context and Resources

The instructional context and appropriate resources are determined by district(s) and college/university officials.

School districts and postsecondary education institutions should work together to ensure broad access to dual enrollment courses for all students, irrespective of the students' financial resources. Postsecondary education institutions are encouraged to offer tuition remissions or find other means of support for eligible students qualifying for free or reduced lunches or otherwise demonstrating financial need.

School districts that receive state aid related in part to significant numbers of students challenged by poverty or English language limitations should consider using such aid or finding other means of support to fund the tuition expenses of eligible students who would not otherwise be able to enroll in dual enrollment courses.

All public high schools must comply with the provisions of the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act, Sections 79-2,125 to 79-2,135, (RRS). The Act requires that all K-12 education must be free in the public schools. However, students may be charged tuition by the college for college credit. If dual enrollment arrangements between schools and colleges make it impossible or very difficult for a student to take a course as a high school course only and without cost for college tuition, such arrangements might be considered a violation of the Student Fee Authorization Act and Article VII, Section I of the Nebraska Constitution, on which the Act is based.

Capital Construction Guidelines

These standards are found in Chapter Six of the
*Comprehensive Statewide Plan for
Postsecondary Education.*

Guidelines for Commission Review of the Acquisition, Construction, and Renewal of Capital Construction Projects

Nebraska public postsecondary education aspires to maintain the highest standards in the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects. Maintaining public trust in this process is a responsibility shared by institutions, governing boards, and the Coordinating Commission.

To support the highest standards in the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects, the Commission has adopted the following *Guidelines* to assist in its review and decision-making regarding capital construction projects that utilize tax funds. These *Guidelines* are not intended to constrict or constrain the constitutional or statutory authorities provided institutional governing boards to review, approve, and manage capital construction projects. Rather, they serve to make all interested parties aware of points that will guide the Commission's own deliberations in an increasingly complex environment.

Funds to support institutional facilities are drawn from an increasing variety of sources, and funding mechanisms are becoming correspondingly complex. As the percentage of institutional revenues coming from state funds continues to decline around the country, public institutions will increasingly seek support from diverse sources. Despite that necessity, Nebraska public postsecondary institutions should acknowledge and embrace their public missions, seek to deliver the greatest value for the state's investments in higher education, and pursue practices that support maintenance of the public trust.

Public higher education officials must comply with numerous laws, regulations, and policies governing capital construction and related projects. Higher education officials also should acknowledge and embrace the *spirit* behind those laws, regulations, and policies, and its leaders encourage individuals, organizations, foundations, and facilities corporations created to benefit public institutions to do the same.

Many generous donors provide needed support to our institutions, and their preferences and interests should rightly receive careful consideration. Nonetheless, public higher education institutions and boards should ensure that donor preferences do not place undue future burdens on public taxpayers to pay for increased project, operating, or maintenance costs.

The Commission encourages institutional governing boards to maintain policies and practices governing the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects that in the public interest (i) assure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies relating to award of contracts, (ii) are in compliance with public meetings and public records laws, (iii) assure good value for acquisition of land and facilities, construction of new facilities, and renewal of existing facilities, and (iv) thoroughly review and assess existing hazardous materials, fire and life safety, deferred repair needs, and building system issues, needs, and conditions for all major renovation projects.

Examples of such policies and practices are provided in the following *Guidelines* that the Commission has endorsed to assist it in its review of these increasingly complex issues. The examples are not intended to comprise a comprehensive or exclusive list.

Guidelines for Commission Review of the Acquisition, Construction, and Renewal of Capital Construction Projects

Open Processes

Nebraska's public higher education institutions and boards use transparent and open processes and practices as they plan and make decisions about capital construction projects. Some examples of such open processes and practices include:

- Maintaining Transparency. Board decisions regarding capital construction projects are made in announced, public sessions (other than those exempted under open meeting laws) and disclosed in public documents. Modifications to those documents, and documents developed through contracting processes delegated by governing boards, are subject to public examination under the Nebraska public records statutes.
- Expecting and Supporting Professional Codes of Ethics. Individuals, entities, and boards involved in the capital construction process are guided by their respective professional Codes of Ethics, including conflict of interest policies, use of quality construction standards, and standard business practices.

Good Value in Acquisition of Facilities

Public higher education institutions and boards seek good value as they consider acquiring facilities, either by purchase or gift. Some examples of such "seeking good value" practices include:

- Considering Alternatives. An analysis of possible alternatives is made prior to the acquisition of any facility to determine the most effective approach to meeting the identified need (e.g., purchase vs. lease vs. new construction vs. renewal of existing facilities).

Decisions about the most cost-effective approach include considerations of both initial and long-term costs.

- Determining How Much to Pay. When purchasing a property, tax valuations or independent appraisals are used to assure that a justifiable price is paid.

Good Value in New Capital Construction Projects

Nebraska's public higher education institutions and boards seek good value as they make decisions about new capital construction projects, whether constructed directly by an institution or through a private developer. Some examples of such "seeking good value" practices include:

- Competitive Selection Process. Competitive proposals are sought and received from developers or construction contractors for any new facility built on institutional property, in accordance with applicable statutes and governing board policies.
- Development Fees. Development fees assessed in the purchase of new construction are generally based on an up-front cost-plus fee basis and do not generally exceed rates typical for the local market.

Good Value in Renewal of Existing Facilities

Nebraska's public higher education institutions and boards seek good value as they make decisions about the renewal of existing facilities. Some examples of such "seeking good value" practices include:

- Thoroughly Assessing Current and Future Needs. A thorough survey of existing hazardous materials, fire and life safety, and building system issues, needs, and conditions is made for all major renovation projects. These surveys help provide accurate cost estimates and may eliminate costly future work.
- Ensuring Attention to Broad Safety, Accessibility, and Repair Concerns. Major fire and life safety, accessibility, and deferred repair needs are addressed when major renovation projects are undertaken, including repair or replacement of roofs and other exterior building envelope work.

Sources of Funding for Various Types of Space

As previously stated, funds from diverse sources support the construction, acquisition, renewal, and ongoing operations and maintenance of campus facilities. Nebraska's Governor and Legislature have the final responsibilities for determining whether and how state funds are provided for capital construction projects; the Coordinating Commission is charged to approve capital projects and make funding recommendations on such projects. Those recommendations are based upon some general considerations, listed below, that focus mainly on the use of tax funds. Regardless of these general considerations, institutions are encouraged to cultivate non-tax sources of funding to enhance offerings and allow state funds to have the greatest impact on key institutional and state needs.

Instructional, Instructional/Administrative/Operational Support, and Public Service Space.

Tax funds generally support the design, construction, and/or ongoing facility operations and maintenance (O&M) of needed instructional, instructional/administrative/operational support,

and public service space.

Research Space. In Nebraska, as in other states, funding for research space at public institutions has traditionally come from a variety of sources, including federal, state, and private sources. Opportunities to advance economic development, improve public health or safety, match external funds, renew existing space, or support key institutional missions are circumstances that institutions should consider in asking for (and the Legislature in determining) the provision of state funds for the construction and O&M of research space.

Other Types of Space. Funds from non-tax sources support the design, construction, and ongoing facility O&M of other institutional space, such as:

- Alumni or foundation program space.
- Auxiliary enterprise space.
- Self-sufficient intercollegiate athletic program space.
- Self-sufficient student support space such as student housing, parking, student centers/unions, student medical services, recreational facilities, and student auxiliary services (e.g., childcare services, bookstores, etc.).

Other Issues

Institutions, boards, and the Commission consider individual capital construction projects within the context of broad institutional and state needs, while maintaining the flexibility to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

In most instances, state tax support should be focused on projects that address important state needs or institutional role and mission. In general, if such a need is not readily apparent for a particular project, the percentage of non-tax support made available for that project should be relatively high. Tax funds should be used to support projects that respond to high state and/or institutional needs, while projects responding to lesser state and/or institutional needs should increasingly rely on non-tax funds.

Additional considerations may include:

Cost-Benefit Ratio. Potential cost savings or other benefits to the state may make a project more attractive.

Matching Funds. A high level of non-tax matching funds may make a project more attractive and justify greater reliance on state support.

Ongoing Facility O&M Commitments. Alternate (non-tax) sources of ongoing O&M support may make a project more attractive. In cases where alternative funds are appropriate and available, meeting long-term commitments with dedicated alternative funding streams may enhance project justification.