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two major national organizations that directly represent metropolitan institutions. The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities representing Research 1 institutions, and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (referred to as CUMU), which is a blend of comprehensive and Research 1 institutions.

CUMU, of which we are a founding member, has recently completed a survey of its member institutions with the purpose of developing an organizational profile. These data points will be analyzed during the coming year and I will share the outcomes when



less unemployment, better health, less reliance on public assistance, and more engaged citizenship. Without question, Higher Education institutions and their graduates are significant factors in our state and the country's economic competitiveness, now and in the future.

President Milliken also provided a context for the legislature as it considers budget implications for the Nebraska system. He reported that the U.S. has slipped to 12th in the world in the percentage of 25-34 year-olds possessing postsecondary degrees. Although Nebraska ranks second in the nation for high school graduation, we rank 18th in college going rates. Results of a Georgetown University Study reported that by 2018, two thirds of Nebraska jobs will require a bachelor's degree or higher, which clearly brings into focus the critical need for sufficiently funding higher education in our state.

To compound the seriousness of this situation, higher education in our state has grown at a rate 40 percent less than the growth of all of state government in the last 25 years and the University of Nebraska has made more than 68 million dollars in budget reductions in the past decade (including this year). Several factors will ultimately determine the final magnitude of Nebraska's pending fiscal problem, but even the best case scenarios will be difficult.

The President and the Board of Regents have been proactive in preparing for these challenges, as have the campuses. At the system level, all senior academic and business officers including deans have been working collaboratively to identify systemwide opportunities for increasing efficiency, enhancing revenue growth, and reducing expenditures. The University also is reviewing state statutes and mandates to identify possible elimination and/or modification of those that contribute to duplication of effort or have counterproductive financial or management impact regarding our University. Additionally, the campuses have been charged with academic program review, workload and productivity analysis, and business operations and facilities utilization reviews, all of which are currently underway.

Beyond these efforts, UNO has merged our campus Budget Advisory Task Force under the umbrella of the Strategic Planning Committee. I believe this will ensure the broadest possible constituent representation while providing a strategic framework for all decisions. We will continue to have open forums and an interactive web site to share information and gather input and ideas. Obviously, it is imperative that all voices are heard, budget planning activities remain transparent, and internal communication continues as a priority.

In June, as is the University practice, campuses will make recommendations to the President and he in turn will make recommendations for the system, to the Board for their consideration and approval where appropriate.

The economic conditions are indeed daunting, but trust me when I say this is not the time to hunker down and wait for the storm to pass, rather it is the time to be bold. We cannot temper our aspirations for the future and must seize the moment. We will necessarily make the hard decisions, preserve and strengthen our core mission, and continue to move this great institution forward. It goes without saying, that our opportunity to manage this considerable challenge will, in large measure, be dependent

University Village, now owned by the campus, has been upgraded, and student programming support in conjunction with neighboring Maverick Village is being maximized.

And as demand for housing increases, we have responded. Accordingly, Scott Court, on the Pacific St. campus opens next fall with 480 beds, bringing the total number of beds to 2,080 or about 13% of our current student population.

On deck:

The Community Engagement Center received unanimous support from the Regents' Business Affairs subcommittee and will go to the full board for consideration this month. This facility will significantly expand the quantity and quality of our partnership and outreach activities, exemplifying the hallmark of metropolitan universities.

Renovations to the Peter Kiewit Institute (PKI) have been approved by the PKI Board of Policy Advisors with the express purpose of enhancing research space and collaboration. Additional plans are under consideration for the possible expansion of PKI and construction of a research facility between Mammel Hall and the Institute.

Enrollment increased again this year and we are now serving approximately 15,500 students on the UNO campus. But, the real story is in the numbers this year as we saw:

- 10,000 plus, full time undergraduates for the first time in our history; and record number of credit hours being delivered.
- We realized record minority enrollment which stands now at more than 14%, and coupled with international students representing 119 countries, this brings campus diversity to approximately 19%.
- This fall also saw a record number of full time graduate students. Part-time graduates, however, have continued to decline over the past two years and I believe we need to examine this trend and make whatever changes are appropriate.
- The Metropolitan Advantage Program, serving Iowa students from Harrison, Pottawattamie and Mills Counties has continued to draw increasing numbers from across the river, and enrollments have almost tripled since beginning the program. I believe it is time to consider expanding this program to additional neighboring counties located in the 1-29 corridor.

immediately following graduation. Importantly, this program has enhanced AP opportunities and participation throughout our service area and beyond.

- Thompson Scholars Program has grown to over 500 students, while the Goodrich Program continues to be at capacity. Both of these programs are models for supporting students to be successful in higher education and life. The Avenue Scholars, a college readiness program for students at risk, will advance its first complete graduating class of 175 next spring. A significant number of those students will enter UNO directly, while others will enroll in 2-plus-2 programs with our partners at Metro Community College, ultimately joining us at UNO.
- None of these enrollment advances, however, would have taken place without the considerable commitment of time and effort devoted by UNO's NESIS implementation team, who ensured students could apply and enroll in a timely fashion this fall and the campus could conduct business as usual.
- Faculty, staff, and the Office of Sponsored Programs have had a record setting year for external funding. The campus received almost \$17 million dollars supporting basic and applied research and instruction.
- Athletics has established a new leadership team and is making remarkable progress in working with community leaders to ensure financial stability and explore the development of Chili Greens as a University/Community partnership. Athletics has also prioritized connecting with the campus to enhance student life, community engagement, student recruitment, and academic excellence.
- Several graduate and undergraduate programs hold national ranking which continues to signal the academic quality on campus while UNO remains in the top tier of comparable Midwestern Universities with a ranking of 17th out of 145 private and public institutions. The Chronicle of Higher Education ranked UNO among the top 50 Fulbright producing comprehensive institutions in the nation, a first for our campus.
- UNO has received significant national recognition for our engagement effort in being named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, receiving the Washington Center's Higher Education Civic Engagement Award with "Distinction", and being cited as one of 25 "Best Neighbor" institutions for university/civic partnerships.
- The Service Learning Academy supported more than 100 academic courses involving 1500 students, which I believe is about twice the Campus Compact average nationally. The Academy also supports hundreds of university and high school students as they participate in special interdisciplinary projects during Fall and Spring Breaks, Martin Luther King Day, Global Youth Services Day, and

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My favorite author and philosopher, Dr. Seuss, perhaps said it best:

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own and you know what you know. And YOU are the one to decide where to go "

AND WE WILL.

Thanks to each of you for making the University of Nebraska at Omaha special, and let's make it another great year!