

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
March 11, 2020

The Kansas Board of Regents met by conference call on Wednesday, March 11, 2020. Chair Shane Bangerter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Proper notice was given according to law.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Shane Bangerter, Chair
- Bill Feuerborn, Vice Chair
- Ann Brandau-Murguia
- Cheryl Harrison-Lee
- Mark Hutton
- Shelly Kiblinger
- Jon Rolph
- Allen Schmidt
- Helen Van Etten

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Chair Bangerter reported earlier in the day the university CEOs had a call with the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Dr. Lee Norman, to discuss the universities' COVID-19 response plans. During the call the CEOs expressed their concerns about having students return from spring break and potentially spreading the virus. Currently Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, and Emporia State University are on spring break. The other three universities are scheduled to go on spring break later in March. To mitigate the potential spread of the virus, the CEOs discussed the possibility of suspending classes next week (March 16-20) to allow faculty time to convert courses to online delivery, which would begin on Monday, March 23, 2020.

Regent Bangerter stated the reason for this Board meeting is for the Board to hear each university's response plan and determine if the university academic calendars should be adjusted. Regent Bangerter then read the Board's policy on academic calendars, which is listed below, and noted any substantive changes to calendars require Board approval unless there has been a natural disaster or national emergencies declared. Regent Bangerter stated that as of right now President Trump has not declared this event a national emergency.

1. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

(See Chapter III., Section A. for additional academic affairs policies applicable to state universities)

- a.** The Academic Calendar of each state university shall provide for an academic year minimally consisting of two sixteen-week semesters totaling no fewer than 146 instructional days plus five final exam days each semester.
- b.** Each state university shall file a three-year Academic Calendar adhering to holidays and breaks approved by the Board. Each state university shall follow the

calendar as approved by the Board. Any deviation for reasons other than natural disasters or national emergencies must have prior approval of the Board.

- c. The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Board shall have the authority to approve or deny non-substantive revisions to Board-approved three-year calendars and shall periodically report these changes to the Board.

Dr. Norman, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, briefed the Board on the current status of COVID-19 cases in Kansas. At this time there is no community spread of the virus, but he cautioned that the situation can change very rapidly. Dr. Norman stated he reviewed the proposed plans of the universities and understands that returning students are a concern. He agreed it would be appropriate for the institutions to implement a cooldown period by suspending classes next week, for the institutions that are currently on spring break, and then to move to online delivery. The universities can then monitor the situation to determine how to move forward. Dr. Norman also stated the universities need to have a plan in place to maintain social distancing for students that need to live on campus during this period.

President Myers stated Kansas State University is currently on spring break, and he is requesting to suspend classes next week (March 16-20, 2020), which will allow faculty the time to move classes to online delivery. Classes will then resume online beginning Monday, March 23. President Myers stated his biggest concern is for the safety of students, faculty, and staff. He noted the health system in Riley county is very good and capable of responding to normal patient caseloads. However, if thousands of students and staff return and get sick, the health system could be overwhelmed very quickly. President Myers stated there are students who will need to be housed on the campus. These students will be moved to single rooms, and the University will be adjusting its dining to accommodate social distancing.

Chancellor Girod concurred with President Myers' concerns. He noted many universities across the nation are moving to online course delivery to help stop the spread of the virus. Like Kansas State University, the University of Kansas is requesting to suspend its classes next week and begin online delivery on Monday, March 23. KU will then monitor the situation to determine if face-to-face classes can resume after March 30. Regent Murguia would like to remove the reference that online classes will end on March 30. She believes this will confuse students especially if KU needs to keep extending the timeframe.

President Garrett stated Emporia State University is requesting to suspend its face-to-face instruction and move classes to a virtual format. The University may need to suspend its classes next week to allow faculty time to get their classes converted. She noted the campus will remain open but is encouraging students to stay home. President Garrett also reported the University's sporting events will move forward with no fans.

Wichita State University, Fort Hays State University, and Pittsburg State University all have spring breaks scheduled for later this month. The CEOs will monitor the situation to determine if the universities need to move online.

Regent Rolph asked how the universities are handling student athletic events. Chancellor Girod and President Myers stated they are following the guidelines of the Big XII Conference. President Golden stated Wichita State University is currently moving forward with sporting events with no fans. Regent Murguia would like to see a more unified approach to athletics.

All the Regents concurred that it is important to mitigate the spread of the virus while also continuing to teach the students in our higher education system. Regent Feuerborn moved to allow the university CEOs to change their academic calendars based on their local needs to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. The university CEOs will determine the best method of delivering courses and will continue to monitor the situation to determine if face-to-face delivery can resume later in the semester. As for athletic events, the universities are to follow their conference guidelines but should also try to be consistent with one another when possible. Regent Van Etten seconded, and the motion carried.

MARCH BOARD MEETING

Chair Bangerter stated the Board is currently scheduled to meet on the University of Kansas Medical Center campus on March 18 and March 19. The Board discussed whether to move the meeting back to Topeka. Following discussion, Regent Feuerborn moved to change the location of the Board meeting from the University of Kansas Medical Center to the Board office in Topeka. Regent Van Etten seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting will still be held on Wednesday, March 18.

Chair Bangerter stated at next week's Board meeting, each CEO will be asked to give an update on how they are implementing their COVID-19 response plans.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bangerter adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Blake Flanders, President and CEO

Shane Bangerter, Chair