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STATE'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ASSISTING WITH HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF EFFORTS

(TOPEKA) – Today Reginald L. Robinson, President and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, provided the following update on Hurricane Katrina relief efforts to the members of the Legislative Budget Committee:

“Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am here on behalf of the Kansas Board of Regents to provide you with an update on specific Hurricane Katrina relief efforts taking place at Kansas institutions of higher education.

While I know that a general outpouring of support through fundraising and collection of vital supplies such as food, water and clothing is taking place at all 36 higher education institutions across the state, over the past 24 hours I have received the following specific examples of how our institutions are assisting their counterparts in the affected Gulf Coast region:

- Fort Hays State University (FHSU) has offered to house an entire academic program from a university in the affected area. FHSU's Virtual College has identified 88 students in the three affected states and has offered to help them in any way possible, from assisting them in dropping classes to making arrangements for incompletes or postponing assignments. The FHSU Alumni Association has offered to replace diplomas free of charge for alumni in the affected areas who have lost their personal possessions. And, FHSU has offered affected students the opportunity to enroll late without any punitive charges.
- The University of Kansas (KU) has been contacted by 20 parents of students who had planned to attend Gulf Coast colleges to inquire about admissions. KU is waiving late fees for students who meet regular admissions standards. As of yesterday, 11 students had been admitted at the Lawrence campus. The KU Law School has also received inquiries from Gulf Coast law school students. Displaced students will be eligible for a KU Endowment Loan up to \$2,000 to help with immediate financial needs.
- The University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) is working with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop a Hurricane Katrina Response Unit to help serve the

2,600 patients from hospitals in the New Orleans area that are being evacuated to hospitals in a twelve state area. The Unit will report to the NIH the list of services KUMC has available and will continue to provide updates on the capacity for transfers. The Department of Defense is coordinating the transportation of these critically ill patients. KUMC is also exploring possible ways to utilize telemedicine technology. In addition, KUMC is working with the American Academy of Medical Colleges to assist displaced Tulane Medical School students. While Baylor University will be accommodating Tulane's first and second year students, Tulane's third and fourth year students will have access to a national database that will assist them in locating clinical rotations. Displaced students will also have opportunities to attend medical classes around the country without enrolling.

- Kansas State University (KSU) is waiving late fees for affected students, and the KSU College of Veterinary Medicine has contacted veterinary colleges at both Louisiana State University and Mississippi State University with offers of assistance but both facilities were not directly impacted and do not require assistance at this time.
- Washburn University (WU) will admit any student adversely affected by Hurricane Katrina and will charge Kansas resident tuition rates regardless of residence status. One student from Tulane University will be enrolling and starting classes next week. WU is primarily publicizing this opportunity electronically – through “blogs” and higher education-related web pages.
- Manhattan Area Technical College is exploring relief opportunities such as loaning Electric Power students to Westar to work on de-energized power systems in the Gulf Coast.
- Two students from Highland Community College (HCC) will be deployed with the National Guard to the Gulf Coast for a period of at least two to four weeks. HCC will work to assist them with completing their current coursework, or will issue full refunds if the work cannot be completed.
- Pratt Community College has offered to enroll, without charge of tuition and fees, students who are enrolled at community colleges in the affected Gulf Coast region.
- Hutchinson Community College will allow affected students to enroll in online classes at in-state rates for the Fall 2005 semester.
- North Central Kansas Technical College in Beloit is exploring opportunities to send its students, which include electricians, carpenters, brick layers, welders and technology network coordinators, to the affected Gulf Coast region to assist in rebuilding efforts.
- Seward County Community College is offering housing at no cost to affected students.

- Wichita Area Technical College (WATC) is working with local businesses to deliver semi-trucks, from WATC's Commercial Driver Education Program, loaded with supplies to the Gulf Coast.
- Wichita State University is waiving late registration fees, providing grants for application fees, and is working to provide immediate admissions, registration and housing assistance for affected students.

Institutional CEO's have also informed me that they have been in direct contact with national higher education associations and have reached out to their counterparts from the Gulf Coast region to offer any and all support. While in many cases it is still too early to fully assess the impact to higher education campuses in the affected states, Kansas institutions are fully engaged with a variety of higher education associations who are coordinating national relief efforts.

Through correspondence with my counterparts with the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization, I have learned that eight public and five private higher education institutions in New Orleans, enrolling 75,000 students, will not be opening this fall. 40,000 of these students both live and attend school in New Orleans which means they have lost both their homes and their schools. The institutions in New Orleans will lose \$60 million in tuition revenues alone. In Mississippi, seven of the eight institutions are relatively undamaged. But, the situation in Southern Mississippi, where 15-18,000 students are enrolled, is still relatively uncertain as communication has not been fully restored.

The U.S. Department of Education has announced that it will waive several regulations governing federal student-aid programs for students and colleges affected by Hurricane Katrina. There are a number of student-aid rules that automatically go into effect for students and institutions in federally declared disaster areas.

Mr. Chairman, as the extent of the damages to colleges and residents of the Gulf Coast region becomes clearer in the coming days and weeks, the Kansas Board of Regents and the state's 36 higher education institutions will continue to find ways to assist those affected by this unimaginable disaster."

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