



# KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

1000 SW JACKSON • SUITE 520 • TOPEKA, KS 66612-1368

TELEPHONE – 785-296-3421  
FAX – 785-296-0983  
www.kansasregents.org

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## LEGISLATIVE AUDIT POINTS TO BOARD'S LONG-STANDING FOCUS ON STATE UNIVERSITY EFFICIENCIES

### *Many of the Recommendations Have Already Been Implemented, Saving Millions of Dollars & Board Creates Campus Task Forces to Explore Further Cost-Savings Measures*

(TOPEKA) – Today the Legislative Post Audit Committee received a performance audit, entitled *State Universities: Can State Universities Provide Postsecondary Education More Efficiently To Reduce Costs?*, from the Legislative Division of Post Audit (LPA). The report, which the Committee requested in April 2008, and which did not capture the actions taken by the state universities to deal with recent budget cuts, confirmed that the Board's long-standing focus on state universities is well-placed.

“Due to the gradual decline in state funding support, the Board sharpened its focus back in 2005 on finding and implementing cost savings measures and efficiencies on all of our state university campuses; the report confirms that this priority is well-placed,” said Regent Jill Docking of Wichita, Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents. “The Board certainly values the lessons and information that can be gained from an independent third-party analysis. However, I had been hopeful that this report would have included meaningful comparisons of our state universities with their peer institutions across the nation. Our universities differ in size, mission, and even face different regional and geographic considerations. Comparing KU to Fort Hays or K-State to Pittsburg State isn't a meaningful exercise.”

Over the past year the state universities have been forced to absorb a 12% or \$76 million budget cut, essentially taking funding back to Fiscal Year 2006 levels. Today, the state provides about 25% of what is required to operate the state universities, down from about 50% two decades ago. As a result, the universities have implemented a multitude of budget reduction and cost-savings measures so they are able to continue the delivery of high quality programs to Kansans. Approximately 655 employee positions were eliminated, laid off, or held vacant, and approximately 448 classes were eliminated in an effort to reduce the budget. And, efficiency measures such as the combination of academic departments, the out-sourcing of certain services, and the improvement of purchasing practices have been implemented.

“Our state universities have done a good job preserving quality in the face of such drastic budget reductions, and they have worked to stretch state dollars as far as possible. The LPA report supports these efforts, and it provides some additional cost-savings ideas as well,” noted

Docking. “As a result, the Board will direct each of the state universities to create a special efficiency task force to locally analyze the LPA recommendations. The task forces, which will be composed of university officials and private and community business leaders, who will bring with them an important outside perspective, will report back to the Board by the end of the calendar year. The Board will then submit a comprehensive report to the Legislature in January. In addition, the Board’s Academic Affairs Committee, chaired by Regent Gary Sherrer, has already been tasked with reviewing the distance education-related recommendations contained in the report.”

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***About the Kansas Board of Regents:***

The nine-member Kansas Board of Regents is the governing board of the state’s six universities and the statewide coordinating board for the state’s 32 public higher education institutions (seven public universities, nineteen community colleges, and six technical colleges). In addition, the Board administers the state’s student financial aid, adult education, GED, and career and technical education programs. The Board also authorizes private proprietary schools and out-of-state institutions to operate in Kansas, and administers the Kan-ed network, a statewide network that provides broadband Internet access and distance learning capabilities for schools, hospitals, and libraries.

For more information, contact Kip Peterson at (785) 296-3421 or at [kipeterson@ksbor.org](mailto:kipeterson@ksbor.org).

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