

1 of 1 DOCUMENT

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Salary hikes for five top NU officials The money from the University of Nebraska Foundation is in addition to raises from state funds.

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LINCOLN -- Private dollars given to the University of Nebraska Foundation will fund hefty raises -- nearly \$49,300 in one case -- for top administrators at NU campuses.

The NU Board of Regents on Friday approved the pay increases for chancellors at all four campuses and for NU President J.B. Milliken. The salary increases come on top of state-funded raises already given for the 2008-09 fiscal year.

Regents said the foundation money will bring university executives' pay in line with that at peer universities.

"Our objective is to be competitive in our efforts to attract leadership, and when we hire someone, we want them to see that we are willing to give just compensation," said Regent Jim McClurg of Lincoln.

Milliken will receive \$44,852 from the foundation, bringing his total salary to \$366,519. That's an increase of 19 percent over his salary during the previous year, when factoring in his raise from the state.

University of Nebraska Medical Center Chancellor Harold Maurer will receive \$49,262 from the foundation, bringing his salary to \$385,695, a nearly 20 percent increase when the state raise is factored in.

Others receiving foundation dollars are University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Harvey Perlman, \$27,447; University of Nebraska at Kearney Chancellor Doug Kristensen, \$8,637; University of Nebraska at Omaha Chancellor John Christensen, \$5,515.

McClurg said the money comes from foundation donations not designated for a certain fund, which total about \$6 million. The five administrators will receive foundation increases next year, as well, he said. By then, their salaries will fall in the middle salary range of peer institutions.

Kathleen Prochaska-Cue, president of the UNL Faculty Senate, said that overall, she supports the increases but wants university officials to remember that faculty salaries still lag behind those at similar universities.

"I'm fully supportive of this, and I would venture to say most of the faculty is, too," she said. "But along with that, as faculty, we continue to be concerned about our salaries."

Leaders at each NU campus typically have a designated set of schools they compare themselves to for enrollment size, faculty salaries and tuition costs. For example, UNL compares itself with the University of Colorado at Boulder, the University of Missouri at Columbia and the University of Iowa.

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However, regents said they created a different set of schools for comparison under the executives' pay plan. Those schools include the University of Georgia, where the chancellor makes \$354,604, and Texas Tech University, where the chancellor is paid \$378,144.

With the foundation increase, UNL Chancellor Perlman makes \$305,825.

McClurg said the NU salaries would have looked even lower if compared with the usual peer institutions.

Sheldon Steinbach, a Washington, D.C.-based higher education law expert, said NU is making the move to keep its top executives from being courted away by other colleges.

"People will look at this and say, 'My God, why am I paying for this?' But if you don't, you can't attract the best talent to lead your institution," he said.

Steinbach, the former general counsel for the American Council on Education, said large public universities such as UNL could lose top administrators to large private colleges on the East Coast. He said it's not uncommon for universities to tap foundation dollars to increase administrator salaries.

Clarence Castner, the University of Nebraska Foundation president, said his organization also has provided money to keep university faculty from taking other jobs.

"When a faculty member is being courted away, or we're trying to recruit someone, sometimes state dollars aren't just enough, and that's when we step in," Castner said.

UNL's faculty members are paid 5.6 percent less, on average, than faculty at peer schools, such as the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana or the University of Kansas, according to information NU administrators presented to the regents on Friday.

UNMC faculty members are paid 9.4 percent less, on average, than faculty at similar institutions, such as the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

Regent Charles Wilson of Lincoln said he recognizes that faculty salaries are behind: "I think we need to continue to work on that. On one hand, I'm sad that we lag behind on faculty salaries, but we are way, way behind in our leadership salaries."

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Other items regents approved

Purchasing a new computer system that will keep student records, including information about financial aid and scholarships, admissions applications, registration, tuition and billing, and academic records. NU bought the system from California-based Oracle Corp. for \$29.8 million and will share it with the Nebraska State College System.

UNO is seeking designs for a new outdoor athletics complex; a new nursing college in Lincoln for UNMC; and UNL's first payment to the state to move the Nebraska State Fair to Grand Island.

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