



NEWS RELEASE

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Summit Focuses on Roles of States in Expanding Postsecondary Opportunities

Nebraska leaders and 11 other Midwest states gather for annual meeting and policy summit

Representatives from Nebraska's higher education sectors joined other Midwestern education, government and business leaders in Minneapolis November 17-19, 2008 to discuss improving college access and completion. The summit, coordinated by the Midwestern Higher Education Compacts (MHEC), was part of *Making Opportunity Affordable*, a multi-year initiative of Lumina Foundation for Education and focuses on efforts to improve the overall productivity of colleges and universities.

MHEC commissioners representing Nebraska at the meetings were Regent Randolph Ferlic, University of Nebraska System; Linda Ray Pratt, executive vice president and provost for the University of Nebraska; and Marshall Hill, executive director for the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Over 200 were in attendance.

“It is clear that to achieve this goal we must find ways to make our colleges and universities affordable and productive by controlling the per-unit cost of delivering education and training,” said Charlie Shields, MHEC chair and Missouri Senate Majority Floor Leader. “Accomplishing this objective will require a fundamental change in the way higher education does business.”

Opening the summit was Rich Karlgaard, publisher of *Forbes Magazine* and author of *Life 2.0: How People Across America Are Transforming Their Lives by Finding the Where of Their Happiness*. His keynote address focused on addressing education and entrepreneurship as the foundation for securing the future of the Midwest as well as producing the talent necessary to compete by applying the “Twelve Types of Innovation That Will Save Your Company” to higher education.

Participants from each of MHEC's twelve member states engaged with each other in “difficult dialogues” to develop creative approaches and ways to problem solve the challenges facing higher education. Delivery systems, institutional structures, governance and culture issues were addressed.

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Lumina provided generous funding for this summit, which focuses on education as the key to remaining competitive in a global information- and knowledge-based economy.

Following the two-day summit, MHEC commissioners and guests gathered for the MHEC annual meeting where they heard regional and national updates from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the Council of State Governments. Commissioners reported on higher education issues discussed during their respective 2008 state legislative sessions and highlighted some of the issues expected to surface in the 2009 legislative sessions.

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), founded in 1991, consists of twelve states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. MHEC sponsors a variety of programs to reduce costs, to increase student access and to conduct policy research and analysis. The Compact is statutorily created and governed by a board comprised of five commissioners from each member state. Commissioners include legislators, governor's representatives and higher education leaders. For more information about the Compact, please visit www.mhec.org or call 612-626-8288.

About Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) is a state constitutional agency that serves as an independent voice within Nebraska's higher education system. It serves to promote sound policies that apply to the best interests of taxpayers, students and Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. The CCPE recommends policy to the legislative and executive branches to improve and support postsecondary education. The CCPE also reviews and recommends operating budgets, administers the Nebraska State Grant program, approves academic degree programs, and reviews for approval new tax-funded building projects proposed by Nebraska's public institutions. The CCPE is governed by 11 commissioners appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Nebraska State Legislature. For more information about the CCPE, please visit www.ccpe.state.ne.us.

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