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# **2008 Biennial Report**

*Covering the period from December 2006 to December 2008*

Approved by the Commission

December 11, 2008

**Nebraska's Coordinating Commission  
for Postsecondary Education**

140 North 8th Street, Suite 300  
P. O. Box 95005  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5005  
Telephone: 402-471-2847  
Fax: 402-471-2886  
[www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us)

Marshall A. Hill, Ph.D., Executive Director

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## 2008 Biennial Report

*Provided pursuant to §85-1412 (12) of Nebraska Statutes.*

### **Welcome!**

The 2008 Biennial Report provides an “insider’s view” of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education’s accomplishments of the past two years. Pursuant to state statute, the Coordinating Commission utilizes this report to inform its readers of what the Commission does and how well it is achieving its goals.

The Coordinating Commission is proud to share its activities over the past two years and how its accomplishments relate to the Commission’s overarching goals and mission.

### **What is the Commission?**

In 1990, Nebraskans saw a need for an independent entity to coordinate the state’s public higher education institutions from a statewide—rather than an institutional—perspective. To accomplish this, voters amended the state constitution, creating the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education [Article VIII-14].

Nebraska is not alone in desiring an overseeing body. Twenty-eight states have coordinating commissions that work like Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission, providing an objective point of view of institutions statewide. Twenty-six additional states have statewide governing boards to provide a similar perspective. (Some states have both types of agencies.)

## Nebraska's CCPE

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission is an independent agency with 11 Commissioners who are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature. There are 13 employees on the Commission's staff. The Commission promotes high quality, ready access and efficient use of resources in Nebraska higher education by carrying out its duties as outlined in the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education Act.

The Commission's duties primarily affect the community colleges, the Nebraska State College System and the University of Nebraska.

To assist in carrying out its duties, the Commission meets periodically with the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Community College Association Board of Directors, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. These meetings help improve communication and coordination of services among the Coordinating Commission and providers of higher education.

The following sections will address the points above and will describe the past two years of activities conducted under each of them.

### What does the Commission do?

#### *The Commission:*

- Implements a statewide, comprehensive plan to guide Nebraska's higher education system, in collaboration with state colleges and universities;
- Administers student financial aid and other federal programs;
- Conducts research and publishes reports on issues pertaining to higher education;
- Provides information and advice on higher education to the Legislature;
- Authorizes academic programs;
- Approves proposals for facilities; and
- Reviews institutions' budget proposals and makes recommendations on those requests to the Governor and the Legislature.

*What does the Commission do?*

**Implements a statewide, comprehensive plan to guide Nebraska's higher education system, in collaboration with the state's colleges and universities.**

## **Nebraska's *Comprehensive Statewide Plan***

As required by statute, the Commission has developed and periodically revises a plan to provide direction for the future of higher education in Nebraska. This document, the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*, identifies goals that lead to an educationally and economically sound, vigorous and synchronized system of higher education.

The *Comprehensive Plan* was developed in collaboration with the state's colleges and universities and guides the coordination of Nebraska's public higher education institutions and sectors. The Commission uses the *Plan* to facilitate most of its statutory decision-making processes.

In addition to identifying the overall goals and objectives for Nebraska's public higher education system, the *Plan* defines the role and mission of each public higher education institution in Nebraska.

When developing proposals for new facilities or academic programs, Nebraska's public colleges and universities must do so in compliance with the *Plan*.

The *Plan* is considered a "living document," meaning that it is reviewed and revised as the environment for postsecondary education evolves. Substantive changes to the *Plan* are made with care, however, and only after distributing drafts of proposed changes to all affected parties, taking those parties' concerns under advisement, and holding one or more public hearings in front of the Commission. After the Commission approves the revision, the Legislature's Education Committee reviews the *Plan* and the revisions at a public hearing and reports its findings to the Legislature. The Commission completed a revision update to the *Plan* in 2007 and approved a recurring six-year review schedule in September 2008.

**[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/compplan](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/compplan)**

## **A Summary of the *Comprehensive Plan's* 14 Major Goals**

### **Meeting the Needs of Students**

**Goal 1:** Seek methods to increase participation and success in higher education for all students.

**Goal 2:** Be student-centered and offer lifelong learning opportunities.

**Goal 3:** Provide appropriate support services to help all students reach their educational goals.

**Goal 4:** Provide graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as capable employees and responsible citizens.

### **Meeting the Needs of the State**

**Goal 5:** Be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers.

**Goal 6:** Contribute to the health and prosperity of citizens through research and development efforts, technology and attracting external funds.

**Goal 7:** Prepare individuals for productive, fulfilling lives.

**Goal 8:** Assess evolving needs and priorities and adopt new methods and technologies to address them.

### **Meeting Needs by Building Exemplary Institutions**

**Goal 9:** Fulfill roles and missions in an exemplary manner and compare favorably with peers.

**Goal 10:** Provide fair and reliable funding policies that provide appropriate levels of support to enable institutions to excel.

**Goal 11:** Be effective in meeting the needs of students and the state. Be efficient and accountable in expenditure of state resources.

### **Meeting Needs through Partnerships and Collaboration**

**Goal 12:** Collaborate with one another and with other entities to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively.

**Goal 13:** Work effectively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning and to facilitate articulation.

### **Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs**

**Goal 14:** Advocate a physical environment for public postsecondary institutions that is: supportive of role and mission; well-utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; safe, accessible, cost-effective and well-maintained; and flexible to adapt to future changes.

*What does the Commission do?*

**Administers student financial aid programs.**

## **Financial Aid**

The Commission administers the Nebraska Scholarship Program and the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program. The Commission also conducts annual audits of all postsecondary institutions in the state that receive state and federal grant funds.

### **Nebraska Scholarship Program**

The Nebraska Scholarship Program, also known as the “state grant” program, are awarded to students in consultation with financial aid administrators at Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions. Nebraska state grants are awarded to students who are residents of Nebraska, who are attending a participating Nebraska college or university and who are eligible for the federal Pell Grant. (The federal government uses Pell Grants to provide financial assistance to low-income students.)

### **Nebraska Scholarship Program Biennium History:**

#### **2006-07:**

**Total awarded: \$10,388,223**

- 11,860 students received a grant (45% of Nebraska’s Pell Grant-eligible students)
  - *Public institutions:* 7,967 students  
- \$823 average award
  - *Private, non-profit:* 2,172 students  
- \$899 average award
  - *Proprietary/for-profit:* 1,721 students  
- \$1,092 average award

**Average grant awarded: \$876**

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#### **2007-08:**

**Total awarded: \$12,421,824**

- 13,158 students received a grant (62% of Nebraska Pell Grant-eligible students)
  - *Public institutions:* 8,780 students  
- \$884 average award
  - *Private, non-profit:* 2,576 students  
- \$959 average award
  - *Proprietary/for-profit:* 1,802 students  
- \$1,215 average award

**Average grant awarded: \$944**

## **Access College Early Scholarship Program**

The Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program awards scholarships to low-income high school students to enroll in a college course at a participating public or private postsecondary institution while the student is still in high school. The Commission recommended the creation of this program in 2007, funding it through the transfer of funds from a relatively inactive program, the Community Scholarship Foundation Program, to the ACE program.

Current research indicates that high school students who take college courses while in high school:

- increase academic rigor during high school,
- remain in school and graduate at higher rates,
- enroll in college at an increased rate,
- streamline their transitions from high school to college,
- have a head start on their chosen postsecondary programs,
- save money once in college, and
- return for their sophomore years at higher rates.

The Commission believes the opportunity to take college courses while in high school should be available to all qualified students regardless of family income.

### **2007-08 ACE Awards:**

- 363 students from 107 Nebraska high schools received a scholarship
- Average Scholarship: \$316.41
- Total Awarded: \$114,856.21

### ***Did you know?***

Over the past 10 years, tuition and mandatory fee increases have ranged from 62% to 132% for full-time, undergraduate, resident students at Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions.

In comparison, the median family income of Nebraskans increased just 8% from 1997 to 2005 (the latest year for which data are available).

*From the "2008 Tuition, Fees and Financial Aid Report"*

*What does the Commission do?*

**Provides information and advice on higher education to the Legislature and Governor.  
Conducts research, publishes reports on issues regarding higher education.**

## **Reports and Analysis**

The Commission utilizes extensive databases to produce a wide array of objective, comprehensive reports. This in-depth research provides an independent—and invaluable—voice within Nebraska’s postsecondary education system. No other entity in Nebraska maintains and reports all of these kinds of data.

CCPE research is used by legislators, the governor’s office, reporters, higher education institutions, other state agencies and the public. Following are descriptions of the Commission-produced reports of the last two years.

### ***Did you know?***

In the fall of 2006, Nebraska institutions attracted more students than they lost. During this time, 84 **more** students came to Nebraska’s institutions from out of state than Nebraska lost to colleges in other states.

*From the 2008 “Residence and Migration of First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2006” report*

### **Budget and Financial Analyses**

#### **Postsecondary Education Operating Budget Recommendations for 2009-11**—

October 2008

This is a statutorily required analysis of public institutional budget requests. It includes information about higher education appropriations, affordability, access and accountability; discussions of statewide funding issues; and recommendations. See page 19 for more information. [www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CCPE/Reports/budget/default.asp](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CCPE/Reports/budget/default.asp)

#### **Capital Construction Budget Recommendations and Prioritization for 2009-11**—October 2008

This statutorily required report includes the Commission’s funding and priority recommendations on capital construction budget requests from the Nebraska State College System, the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. See page 17 for more information. [www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CCPE/Reports/capital-construction/default.asp](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CCPE/Reports/capital-construction/default.asp)

## **Budget and Financial Analyses (cont.)**

### **2008 Tuition, Fees, Financial Aid**

#### **Report**—October 2008

This statutorily required report covers public policy issues relating to tuition, fees and financial aid for students in Nebraska and shows how Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions rank on these points when compared to their Commission-designated peer institutions.

Among the report's general findings:

- Higher education is becoming less affordable—and therefore less attainable—for students as tuition continues to rise;
- State appropriations per full-time equivalent student are increasingly threatened by other state obligations;
- Financial aid is a necessity for many students; and
- Participation and success rates for students from median-, low- and very low-income families would likely increase if additional financial assistance could be provided by the state.

*[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/tuition-and-fees/default.asp](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/tuition-and-fees/default.asp)*

## **Academic Analyses**

### **Delivering Courses Beyond Campus**

#### **Walls**—October 2008

This report describes the types of distance education courses available to Nebraska residents, what institutions offer distance education, how distance education is delivered and how many students are taking advantage of distance education.  
*[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/DistanceEd06-07.pdf](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/DistanceEd06-07.pdf)*

### **Academic Programs Database**

For those interested in learning what Nebraska's public colleges and universities offer in various areas of academic study, the CCPE has created a database of the programs and courses available.  
*[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/PiSrch.asp](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/PiSrch.asp)*

### **Survey of Programs and Courses Offered in Nebraska By Out-of-State Institutions**—February 2008

This report provides information on the current course and program offerings as well as a historical perspective that includes institutions approved in the past but no longer offering courses or programs in the state.  
*[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/OutOfState/Survey06-07.pdf](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/OutOfState/Survey06-07.pdf)*

## **Other Analyses, Publications**

### **Estimated College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Counties for the High School Class of 2005-2006**—November 2007

This report provides the CCPE's estimate of college going rate by county for the high school graduating class of 2005-2006. [www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/Misc/College\\_Cont\\_Rates.pdf](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/Misc/College_Cont_Rates.pdf)

### **Residence and Migration of First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2006**—December 2007

This report provides detailed information about the first-time enrollments of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions and the enrollments of Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen at out-of-state institutions. [www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/Residence\\_Migration\\_Report\\_2006](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/Residence_Migration_Report_2006)

#### ***Did you know?***

At the Nebraska graduate level, women enrolled full time started to outnumber men in 2000. Since 2000, the gender gap has widened, due primarily to increased enrollment of women at the Nebraska state colleges and the independent institutions that offer graduate programs.

*From the 2008 "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska" report*

### **2008 Nebraska Higher Education**

#### **Progress Report**—March 2008

This annual report provides data to the Nebraska Legislature with comparative statistics to monitor and evaluate progress toward achieving three key priorities for Nebraska's postsecondary education system. These priorities are:

- Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education.
- Increase the proportion of students who enroll and successfully persist through degree program completion.
- Reduce, eliminate and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment.

[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/Progress\\_Report\\_2008](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/Progress_Report_2008)

#### **2008 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska**—April 2008

This statutorily required report provides comparative data from 1997 to 2007 for Nebraska's public higher education institutions in these three areas: enrollment, degrees awarded, and faculty and salaries.

[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/FactLook](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/FactLook)



*What does the Commission do?*

**Authorizes academic programs.**

## **Academic Programs**

### **Existing Programs Review**

The Commission is constitutionally required to review, monitor, and approve or disapprove each public institution's existing and proposed new academic programs to provide compliance with the *Comprehensive Plan* and to prevent unnecessary duplication.

In the 2008 biennium, the Commission reviewed 318 existing programs. Of those, 292 were approved, 26 were referred to the institutions for further review or additional information, and 85 were discontinued by the institutions.

A list of all of the programs the Commission reviewed in the past two years, as well as the action taken by the Commission based on its review, can be found online at [www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/academics/ReviewedPrograms\\_06-08.pdf](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/academics/ReviewedPrograms_06-08.pdf).

The Commission also reviewed 47 program assessments that had previously been returned to the originating institutions. Two were discontinued by the institutions.

### **Approval of Proposed New Academic Programs**

In the past two years, the Commission reviewed 39 proposals for new academic programs and organizational units at public institutions. The Commission approved all of these proposals. Another 49 proposed programs were reviewed and determined to be reasonable and moderate extensions of existing programs, thus requiring no action by the Commission.

#### ***Did you know?***

The number of students taking courses by synchronous delivery (instructor and students are in class at the same time but not the same place) has remained relatively stable at approximately 6,000 students since 2000. However, the number enrolled in asynchronous courses (instructor and students are in class at different times and places) increased from just over 4,400 in 1998 to 61,640 (duplicated headcount) in 2005.

*From the 2007 "Delivering Courses Beyond Campus Walls" report*

## Out-of-State Authorizations

An out-of-state institution that wants to offer programs in Nebraska must receive Commission authorization, as required by statute. A public hearing is held prior to any institution receiving such authorization. The Commission spent the last several months of 2008 reviewing the rules governing out-of-state-institutions and drafted changes that will clarify eligibility and requirements for applications. These changes received preliminary approval by the Commission in October 2008 and are scheduled for final approval in December 2008.

### **Out-of-state institutions authorized in the 2008 Biennium:**

**Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa**  
Approved December 6, 2007, offering graduate courses in education in South Sioux City, Neb. and other sites in the state. Courses include Achieving Peak Performance, Developing Excellence in Others, Connecting with Today's Youth, Kansas University Learning Strategies, and Teaching Vocabulary and Meaning Using Direct Instruction Techniques.

**University of Missouri-Columbia**  
Approved September 24, 2007, extending approval through 2010 for University of Missouri-Columbia to offer the Master of Library Science in Omaha.

**Crown College, St. Bonifacius, Minn.**  
Approved September 27, 2007 to offer three courses in a blended format in Omaha: Spiritual Foundation for Leadership, Leadership and Diversity and Organizational Communication.

## New Private College Authorizations

The Commission has statutory responsibility to approve or disapprove any proposal to create a new private institution. It also approves or disapproves proposals from an existing institution to change its level of degree offerings, such as changing from a two-year associate degree institution to a four-year baccalaureate degree institution. This process is described in Title 281 NAC Chapter 2, "Rules and Regulations Concerning Establishment of a Two-Year or a Four-Year Private College."

As a result of a national movement of two-year, private postsecondary career schools seeking to offer four-year degrees, the Commission modified Chapter 2 in 2003. Postsecondary education continues to change rapidly, influenced by the role of for-profit institutions as well as the ability afforded by technology to provide courses outside a physical classroom. In response to these changes, and having worked with the modified rules for several years, the Commission in 2008 decided to reevaluate Chapter 2. The increased complexity of the higher education world necessitated significant revisions in order to clarify the role of the Commission as defined in state statute and to make clear the procedures required of institutions. These changes received preliminary approval by the Commission in October 2008 and are

scheduled for final approval in December 2008.

During 2007 and 2008, the Commission did not receive any applications for new private colleges. Following procedures established in Chapter 2, however, the Commission did review 16 annual reports from previously approved institutions and authorized one institution to offer an additional baccalaureate degree.



*What does the Commission do?*

● ————— ●  
**Approves proposals for facilities.**

## **Capital Construction/Facilities**

The Commission has three major responsibilities related to capital construction projects at public postsecondary education institutions.

***The first responsibility*** is to review, monitor and approve or disapprove capital construction projects that use more than \$555,000 in tax funds to construct facilities, or more than \$85,000 per year in tax funds to operate and maintain. Disapproved projects cannot receive state funds for construction or ongoing operating and maintenance costs.

From January 2007 through December 2008, the Commission reviewed 22 capital construction project proposals by the institutions. Of these, one was withdrawn by the institution and three projects' sizes and/or budgets were reduced.

***The second responsibility*** is to review revenue bond projects and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding their approval or disapproval. From January 2007 through December 2008, the Commission reviewed 12 such projects and recommended that the Legislature approve them all. Of the 12

projects, one proposal's total project cost was reduced.

***The third responsibility*** is to review the biennial capital construction requests of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and the Nebraska State College System. With its statewide perspective, the Commission makes recommendations regarding a unified prioritization of all approved capital construction requests. The Commission makes these recommendations to the Governor and Legislature at the same time it makes recommendations on biennial operating budget requests.

The Commission recommends a list, in priority order, of approved capital construction projects eligible for state funding. Only those projects that were approved by the governing boards and the Commission and are requesting state funding in the biennial budget request are considered. The Commission has identified fire and life safety and deferred repair as statewide facilities priorities for 2009-11. [www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/capital-construction/default.asp](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/capital-construction/default.asp)



*What does the Commission do?*

**Reviews the institutions' budget proposals and makes recommendations on those requests to the Governor and Legislature.**

## **Budget Review and Recommendations**

The Commission has constitutional responsibility to review and modify the biennial budget requests of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions and make recommendations on those requests to the Governor and Legislature. Through this review, the Commission can assure consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan* and promote effective use of state funds in support of public postsecondary education in Nebraska. The Commission reviews budgets and makes its recommendations in October of every even-numbered year.

In fall 2008, the Commission reviewed 58 requests for additional state funding from the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis, the Nebraska State College System and the community colleges.

Of those 58 requests, the Commission:

- Strongly recommended new general funds for seven requests.
- Recommended new general funds for five requests.
- Recommended funding be appropriated to an already established program for one request.

In addition, there were 14 requests that were part of the continuation budget recommendation, and 28 requests for new building openings. The total dollars for institutional new and expanded requests, including continuation costs, was \$100,477,289 for the biennium.

The 2009-2011 report and recommendations are located at

**[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/budget/default.asp](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/budget/default.asp)**



*Nebraska's Coordinating Commission  
for Postsecondary Education*

**Promoting high quality, ready access and efficient use of resources  
in Nebraska higher education.**

## **Operational Projects and Accomplishments**

### **Introduction**

The past two years have been a period of exceptional growth in helping Nebraska's lawmakers and citizens become more aware of the progress and challenges for Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions. The following narratives provide a summary of the CCPE's activities and accomplishments over the last two years.

### **Forums and New Initiatives**

#### **College Access Challenge Grant**

In August 2008, the CCPE received \$330,000 in grant funds from the federal College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP). The CACGP is a two-year formula grant program that's designed to increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in post-secondary education. The CCPE will use CACGP funds to support the ACE Scholarship Program; the FutureForce Nebraska® program "Making the

Connection;" the Cornhusker Council—Boy Scouts of America's "Learning for Life" program; and several university-, state college- and community college-sponsored programs.

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#### **Nebraska Scholars Program**

In early 2006, Nebraska was awarded \$300,000 to participate in the State Scholars Initiative (SSI), a national business/education partnership working to increase the number of students who take a rigorous curriculum in high school.

FutureForce Nebraska, a state-level organization designed to partner businesses with education programs, teamed with the CCPE and Nebraska's Department of Education to administer the program.

The Nebraska Scholars Program is a low-cost strategy designed to guide high school students toward a rigorous core curriculum. FutureForce/SSI worked with four demographically diverse pilot schools

to develop and promote the Nebraska Scholars Program during the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years. Federal funding for the SSI program ended January 2008 and ongoing financial support for this program is not available from the federal government. In it's 2009-2011 biennium budget request to the state, the CCPE has requested \$110,000 per year to continue the Nebraska Scholars Program.

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### **E-Transcript Initiative**

The Commission and the Nebraska Department of Education launched the Nebraska e-Transcript Initiative in October 2007. Nebraska's e-Transcript program is an electronic transfer service that allows students to send transcripts and other supporting documents from their high schools or colleges to any participating institution in the country.

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### **Education Forum**

The Commission and institutional partners hosted the *Postsecondary Education and Nebraska's Future* forum December 5, 2007. This forum invited education leaders and Nebraska state legislators to learn more about postsecondary educational challenges in the United States and progress being made abroad. In particular, panel leaders discussed how to improve Nebraska's college-going rates. Dennis Jones, president of the National Center of

Higher Education Management Systems and one of the country's most well-respected experts on higher education, presented Nebraska's higher education performance in comparison to national and international data and discussed how Nebraskans can respond to its current challenges.

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### **Joint Meetings**

The Commission held several joint planning meetings with governing boards from the state colleges, community colleges and State Board of Education over the past two years to discuss higher education issues in Nebraska. A joint meeting with the State Board of Education is scheduled for December 11, 2008.

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### **Legislative Breakfasts**

The Commission held a Legislative Breakfast at the beginning of the 2007 Nebraska Legislative Session to welcome new senators and make all senators aware of current educational issues relating to higher education. Another Legislative Breakfast will be held January 22, 2009.

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## **Forums and New Initiatives (cont.)**

### **Web Site Revisions**

Commission staff revised the CCPE's Web site in 2008 to update information and make page layouts consistent.

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### **News Clippings Catalog**

In 2008, CCPE staff compiled and categorized over 1,200 collected newspaper article clippings related to the CCPE from 1978 to the present. Newspaper clippings will be made available on the CCPE's Web site.

## **Continuing Initiatives**

### **Improving Teacher Quality: State Grants Program Administration**

The CCPE continues to award Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) state grants to Nebraska's innovative leaders in education. The grants are funded under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (Title IIA). Grants are not awarded to individuals, but to partnerships formed by local, high-need educational agencies and a Nebraska college or university. These partnerships design and produce professional development activities to improve the skills of K-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and principals.

For 2006-07, a review panel awarded funding for one project in literacy, one math-science combination, one in social studies, one for para-professionals and one in Spanish. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2006-07 was \$407,279. The total amount recommended for the five chosen projects was \$358,397. The remaining funds were added to the grant money for 2007-08.

For 2007-08, a review panel selected funding for one project in math, one in science, one math-science combination, one project in literacy and two in Spanish. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2007-08 was \$410,276. The total amount recommended for the seven chosen projects was \$395,010. The remaining funds were added to the grant money received for 2008-09. Funding for the 2008-09 ITQ competition will be determined late 2008.

The ITQ program continues to focus on professional development activities for in-service teachers, especially those teaching in shortage areas and those who don't hold an endorsement in the subject area in which they are teaching. In some instances, ITQ funds are awarded for activities that address one or both challenges. Projects that address the needs of low-performing schools or model the use of technology are given priority.

**[www.ccpe.state.ne.us/ITQ](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/ITQ)**

## **New Employees**

In addition to achieving several goals over the last two years, the Coordinating Commission has also replaced outgoing staff with the following new employees:

- **Angela Dibbert** started in January 2007 as the CCPE's executive assistant.
- **Randy Vlasin** began his duties as FutureForce Nebraska coordinator and state director of the Nebraska Scholars Program in February 2007. Mr. Vlasin left the CCPE in October 2008 to be the executive director of the Chase County Community Hospital Foundation in Imperial, Nebraska.
- **Kermit Spade** joined the CCPE as its data analyst in August 2007.
- **Sarah Willnerd** started in October 2007 as the CCPE's public information and special projects coordinator.
- **Miste Adamson-DaMoude** joined the CCPE as its administrative assistant in July 2008.