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# 2010 Biennial Report

Covering the period from December 2008 to December 2010

Approved by the Commission  
December 9, 2010

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## 2010 Biennial Report

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

### **Welcome!**

The 2010 Biennial Report provides an “insider’s view” of Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education’s accomplishments during 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 during 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].

Nationwide, 28 states have coordinating commissions very much like Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission, providing an objective point of view of higher education statewide. An additional 26 states have statewide governing boards that 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 12 state-funded employees and one federally-funded employee 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 maintains regular contact 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 contacts 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;
- Considers and approves or disapproves proposals from new or out-of-state institutions to operate in Nebraska.
- 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  
for Postsecondary Education***

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 “let’s-work-together” 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 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 *Plan* is available on the Commission’s website, [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us), under the “Data Collection, Reports, and Presentations” link.

## **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.

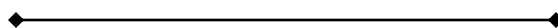
### **Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs**

**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 Opportunity Grant 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 for financial aid.

### **Nebraska Opportunity Grant**

The Nebraska Opportunity Grant, formerly known as the Nebraska State Grant, is awarded to students in consultation with financial aid administrators at Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. These grants are awarded to students who are residents of Nebraska, attend a Nebraska postsecondary institution, and have a minimum Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as determined by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

### **Nebraska Opportunity Grant Biennium History:**

#### **2008-09:**

**Total awarded: \$12,611,384**

- 14,106 students received a grant (48% of Nebraska Pell Grant-eligible students)
  - Public institutions: 9,392 students  
- \$890 average award
  - Private, non-profit: 2,534 students  
- \$1,018 average award
  - Proprietary/for-profit: 2,180 students  
- \$966 average award

**Average grant awarded: \$894**

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#### **2009-10:**

**Total awarded: \$14,093,053**

- 15,704 students received a grant (41% of Nebraska Pell Grant-eligible students)
  - Public institutions: 10,322 students  
- \$850 average award
  - Private, non-profit: 2,884 students  
- \$947.79 average award
  - Proprietary/for-profit: 2,498 students  
- \$1,034 average award

**Average grant awarded: \$897**

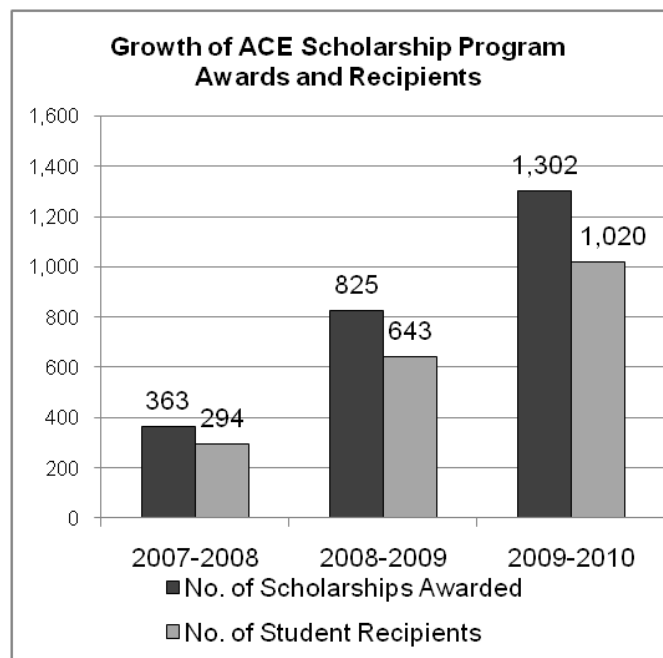
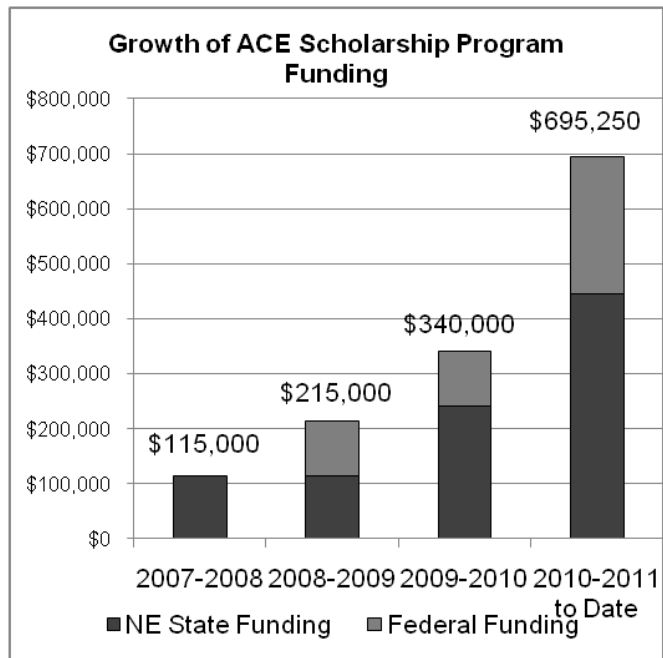
## Access College Early Scholarship Program

The Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program awards scholarships to low-income high school students who 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 college sophomore years at higher rates.

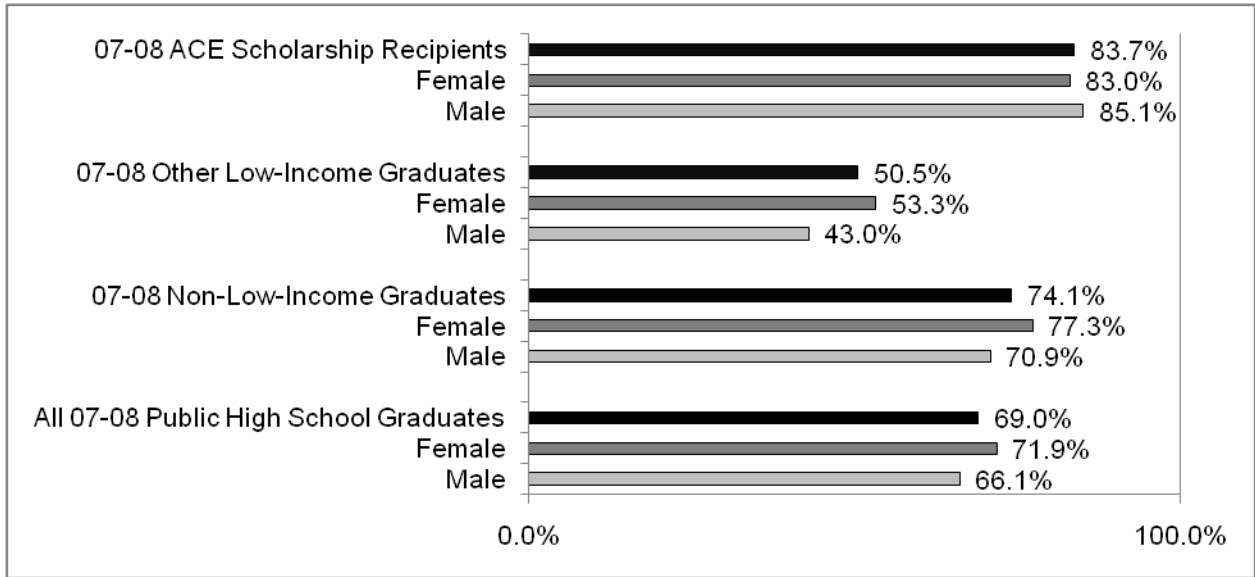
The Commission believes the opportunity to take college courses while in high school should be available to all qualified students regardless of family income.



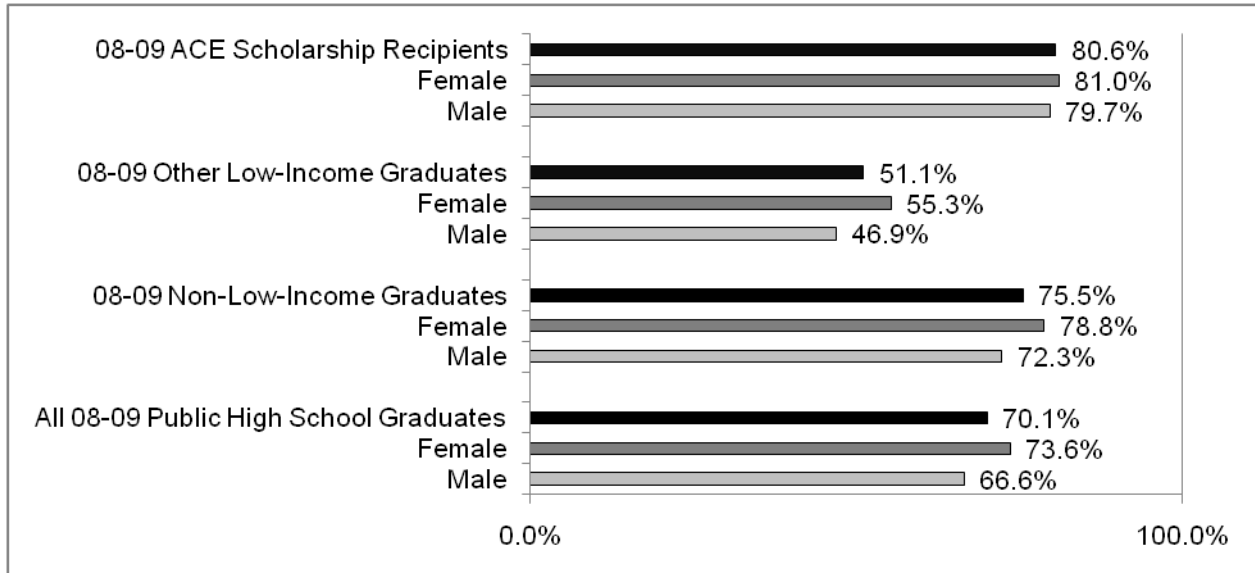
*(ACE charts continued on next page)*

(ACE charts continued)

**Nebraska public high school college continuation rates - 2007-2008**



**Nebraska public high school college continuation rates - 2008-2009**





*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 data 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 during the last two years.

**All of these reports are available on the Commission’s website, [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us), under the “Data Collection, Reports, and Presentations” link.**

### **Budget and Financial Analyses**

#### **Postsecondary Education Operating Budget Recommendations for 2011-13**

*(October 2010)*

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 21 of this document for more information.

#### **Capital Construction Budget Recommendations and Prioritization for 2011-13** *(October 2010)*

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 19 for more information.

## **2010 Tuition, Fees, Financial Aid Report** *(August 2010)*

This statutorily required report covers public policy issues relating to tuition, fees and financial aid for students in Nebraska. It 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. This was increasingly true during the economic challenges of the past two years;
- Financial aid is a necessity and increasingly important for many students;
- 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.

### **Did you know?**

In 2008-09, Nebraska ranked 38th among states in need-based student aid grant dollars per full-time undergraduate enrollment. In 2007-08, the state ranked 41st.

*From the "2010 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report."*

## **Academic Analyses**

### **Delivering Courses Beyond Campus Walls** *(September 2010)*

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. Future reports will have major revisions.

### **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.

### **Survey of Programs and Courses Offered in Nebraska By Out-of-State Institutions** *(January 2010)*

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.

## Other Analyses, Publications

### **Estimated College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Counties for the High School Class of 2007-2008** *(April 2009)*

This report provides the CCPE's estimate of college going rate by county for the high school graduating class of 2007-2008.

### **LB 340 Community College Study**

*(December 2009)*

LB 340 directed the Coordinating Commission to study Nebraska's community college system and offer recommendations for a variety of issues, including the roles and missions of the community colleges and appropriate weighting of courses for state funding. This report provides the results of that study.

### **Nebraska P-16 Initiative: Proposed Increase in Nebraska's College-Going Rate to Reach the Top 10 Nationally**

*(February 2010)*

This report outlines a proposed strategy to achieve the Nebraska P-16 Initiative's goal to improve Nebraska's college-going rate to the Top 10 tier nationally.

### **2010 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report** *(March 2010)*

This statutorily required 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; and
- Reduce, eliminate and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment.

### **2010 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska** *(August 2010)*

This statutorily required report provides comparative data from 1998 to 2008 for Nebraska's public higher education institutions in three areas: enrollment, degrees awarded, and faculty and salaries.

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

In terms of enrollment, women in Nebraska continue to outnumber men at the undergraduate and graduate levels across all racial/ethnic groups, except foreign students.

*From the "2009-10 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska" report.*







*What does the Commission do?*

◆—————◆  
**Considers and approves or disapproves proposals from  
new or out-of-state institutions to operate in Nebraska**

◆—————◆  
**New or out-of-state institutions**

### **Out-of-State Authorizations**

Out-of-state institutions that want 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. In 2008 the Commission reviewed and revised the rules that govern out-of-state institutions. The Commission approved the new rules in December 2008, with final approval coming from the Secretary of State in 2009.

In 2010 the Commission examined the statutes that govern out-of-state institutions as well as new private institutions. The Commission is recommending a new act to replace the existing statutes. The reasons for updating the statutes are numerous, but the primary reasons are that the current statutes are outdated and challenging to apply in many situations. Most of these statutes date back to the 1960s and '70s. Higher education has changed significantly

since then, and the Commission believes an update is necessary in order to carry out the original purposes of the statutes.

### **New Private College Authorizations**

The Commission has statutory responsibility to approve or disapprove any proposal to create a new private institution in Nebraska. During the 2010 biennium, the Commission approved the creation of one new private institution: Gallup University. The Commission 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 Nebraska Administrative Code Chapter 2, "Rules and Regulations Concerning Establishment of a Two-Year or a Four-Year Private College."

Because of a national movement of two-year, private postsecondary career schools seeking to offer four-year degrees—and

changes in statute, as a result—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 clearer the procedures required of institutions.

Following procedures established in Chapter 2, the Commission also reviewed 13 annual reports from previously approved institutions and authorized one institution to offer two additional baccalaureate degrees.

**Out-of-state institutions  
authorized in the 2010 biennium:**

**Herzing College** (*now Herzing University*)  
(Milwaukee, Wisc.)

First approved in January 2009 to offer an associate of science degree in Nebraska. Has since been approved multiple times to offer additional programs.

**Strayer University** (Washington, D.C.)

In April 2009, approved to offer the following programs in Nebraska: associate of arts in business; bachelor of business administration; and master of business administration.

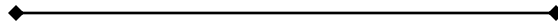
**Baker University** (Baldwin City, Kan.)

In August 2010, approved to offer an associate of arts, bachelor of business administration, master of business administration, and master of arts degree programs.

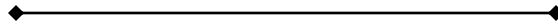


priorities for the 2011-13 biennium. To read the full recommendations report, go to the Commission's website, [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us), and click the "Data Collection, Reports, and Presentations" link.

*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 2010, the Commission reviewed 28 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 28 requests, the Commission:

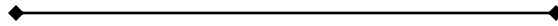
- Strongly recommended new general funds for none of the requests.
- Recommended new general funds for three requests.
- Recommended funding be appropriated to an already established program for one request.

In addition, there were 15 requests that were part of the continuation budget recommendation, and nine requests for new building openings. The total dollars for institutional new and expanded requests for the biennium was \$36,763,270.

The 2011-2013 report and recommendations are located on the Commission's website, [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us), under the "Data Collection, Reports, and Presentations" link.



*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 during the last two years.

### **Ongoing Initiatives**

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

In August 2010, the CCPE received \$1.5 million in grant funds from the federal College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP). This was a significant increase in funding compared to this program's 2008 allocation, which was \$330,000. The CACGP is a five-year formula grant program designed to increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education. The CCPE will use CACGP funds to support the following Nebraska groups and initiatives: the Access College Early grant program; ACE Plus; Central Plains Center for

Services, in western Nebraska; Omaha Public Schools; EducationQuest Foundation, based in Lincoln; Ho-Chunk Community Development Corp., which is affiliated with the Winnebago Tribe; Mid-Plains Community College; Nebraska Methodist College; Grace University; and the Bright Futures Foundation, in Omaha.

#### **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 2008-09, a review panel awarded funding for one project in literacy, one in science, one math-science combination, and two in Spanish. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2008-09 was \$344,398. The total amount recommended for the five chosen projects was \$346,877. The additional money came from funds not awarded in 2007-08.

For 2009-10, a review panel selected funding for one project in literacy, one in geography, one in foreign languages, one in writing, and one in art and language arts. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2009-10 was \$373,508. The total amount recommended for the seven chosen projects was \$290,955. The remaining funds were available for projects that had more participant applications than slots funded or other unexpected costs. Any additional remaining funds will be carried forward for use in the 2010-11 competition. Funding for the 2010-11 ITQ competition will be determined in late 2010.

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. For more information about the ITQ program, visit [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us) and click on the "Improving Teacher Quality Grants" link.

## **Legislative Breakfast**

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

## **New Initiatives**

### **Website Redesign**

Commission staff redesigned the CCPE website in 2010. The new site features the same information and navigation, but with an updated design. Also, visitors to the site can click to the *Issues in Education* blog, home to news and information about the Coordinating Commission, as well as general education news.

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### **Education News Digest**

Commission staff redesigned the Education News Digest, which is a weekly collection of higher education news from across the country, distributed internally to staff and commissioners. The News Digest switched from a PDF format to a blog.

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### **New Employee**

Jason Keese started in July 2009 as the CCPE's new public information and special projects coordinator.

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

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