

This message is being sent to you as a member of the Huskers for Higher Education network:

The Legislature has completed the first week of what will likely be a two and a half week special session called by the Governor to plug a \$335 million gap in the budget. Bills have been introduced, hearings have been held and the committees are now considering which bills to advance to the full Legislature for consideration.

On Monday, President Milliken presented the University's case to the committee, indicating that the University had already made reductions of \$8.5 million in order to accommodate a general fund increase of only 1.5% for each year of the biennium. The President told the committee that any additional decreases would necessitate further budget cuts and might impact on the affordability of higher education for our students.

The Appropriations Committee began deliberations yesterday and will hopefully have a bill to the full Legislature by next Monday. Contained in the bill as drafted by the Governor is a cut of 1.8% for the current year of the biennium and 3.4% for the next year. We have pledged to do our part to address the current fiscal situation and we recognize the necessity of shared sacrifice, but we are concerned that the level of funding recommended -- compounded by the additional expenses we anticipate in the next biennium -- will inhibit our ability to serve the citizens of the state. We are proud of the momentum the university currently enjoys in areas such as enrollment, research and academic programs, and believe that the University is key to the state's economic recovery and success.

If you are inclined to share your views with members of the Appropriations Committee, now would be the appropriate time to do so. As indicated, they are finalizing their work and will be getting a budget to the floor next week.

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