



# KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

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April 29, 2009

Dear House Appropriations Committee Members:

I truly appreciate your work last week as you re-visited the state budget in response to the significant and substantial downward revision of the state's revenue estimates released earlier this month. I know that you confront painfully difficult choices as you seek to balance the state's budget. Among the difficult options that have been under discussion this session is the topic of a statewide "mandatory furlough." Given your discussions last week and Chairman Yoder's intention to gather more information during a hearing today, I thought it might be helpful for me to share with you the Board's position on a "mandatory furlough" approach.

First, as regards the six state universities, you should know that the deteriorating budget situation has already put furloughs on the table. Last summer, state university leaders began to reduce to their FY 2009 budgets through the use of many cost-cutting tools, including, among other steps, hiring delays and freezes, elimination of temporary positions, canceling contracts, limiting purchasing and travel, and employee lay-offs. Since early in the current fiscal year, institutional leaders have been working to develop plans for reduced FY 2010 budgets, and, as a result of that important planning, we know that some of our state university leaders are considering the use of furloughs designed to meet the reality of reduced operating budgets resulting from both SGF reductions and the Board's desire to mitigate as much as possible increases in resident tuition. The key point here is that as prudent managers dealing with a difficult situation, university leaders have already integrated the prospects of furloughs into their budget reduction planning.

Second, the Board is concerned that, depending upon how it is crafted, a Legislatively-imposed "mandatory furlough," could jeopardize the receipt of Federal stimulus dollars by producing a level of state support that falls below what is required for Federal stimulus eligibility. Additional budget reductions, such as those embodied by "mandatory furloughs," would have to be added, for eligibility purposes, to the across-the-board percentage budget cuts already being considered.

Third, and perhaps most important, as state university leaders, and other state agency leaders, for that matter, undertake the difficult and complex work necessary to deal with these traumatic budget realities, it is critically important that they retain the flexibility to use important tools, such as furloughs, in ways that best fit their particular circumstances. Managing the use of furloughs is complex, particularly for a higher education institution with its complicated mix of employee categories. Such an effort certainly does not effectively lend itself to a "one-size-fits-all" approach. The Board would prefer that the Legislature refrain from the imposition of a mandatory furlough policy, and instead adopt an approach that simply reduces budgets, if

necessary, and then allow our institutional leaders and managers, acting under the authority of the Board of Regents, to utilize all of the tools available to them to manage the reductions, including the use of locally-managed furloughs to reduce personnel costs.

We understand that we are all in this together and the Board stands ready to work with you to meet the needs of Kansans in the midst of these unprecedented economic times. Thank you for your continued support of higher education in Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. L. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Reginald L. Robinson  
President and CEO

cc: Members, Kansas Board of Regents  
Members, Senate Ways and Means Committee