



## 2011 KU State Agenda

### Preserving excellence in a challenging economy

**The economic crisis has resulted in a more than \$100 million cut in higher education**, which will have long-lasting effects on the state's universities and their ability to educate the next generation of workers.

**The University of Kansas alone has taken a \$42.9 million cut** when unfunded mandates are factored in, resulting in an overall drop in state support of 12 percent. This has forced difficult decisions to be made in order to preserve KU's core educational mission.

**Additional substantial reductions would have devastating, long-lasting effects** on the students of KU, as well as Kansas businesses that rely on a pipeline of educated workers.

**KU supports the Kansas Board of Regents' request for continued state investment in higher education.** The Board has requested, as part of its Kansas Commitment, a 2.73 percent inflationary increase, based on the Higher Education Price Index, for KU and all other public colleges and universities for FY 2012.

**Also key to preserving excellence is continued funding for the Kansas Bioscience Authority.** The KBA provides vital investments in bioscience opportunities that are key to future economic growth. The partnerships between KU and organizations like the KBA maximize the economic development impact of higher education in Kansas.

### Educating the workforce of tomorrow

**Key to economic recovery is an adequate workforce of trained professionals.** Kansas, like many other states, faces shortages of highly qualified individuals in many areas including pharmacists, physicians, nurses and teachers. Additionally, the shortage of professionals in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas is staggering. The problem is complex and KU is working on many fronts to address this issue.

**Engineering is one key area where KU is working to increase the number of graduates.** Extensive collaboration with K-12 schools to stimulate interest in the field has worked and enrollment is at a 21-year-high. KU's School of Engineering has tripled the number of Ph.D. students, doubled its annual research awards and awarded number undergraduate degrees.

**KU's ability to train the additional engineers sought by Kansas companies is severely limited due to space constraints.** A multi-year plan to expand engineering graduates in Kansas is a top legislative priority for KU.

## **Increasing efficiency in KU operations**

**Making every dollar count remains a key KU mission.** As such, the university has embarked on a multi-year initiative to identify state laws and regulations that handcuff our ability to operate as efficiently as possible. More than \$9 million dollars has been identified as savings as a result of these efforts. Much of that savings came through a highly successful purchasing pilot project that vested purchasing authority in the university instead of a central agency in Topeka.

**We are seeking additional savings this year** by boosting the threshold that requires IT projects to be subject to time consuming and sometimes redundant review processes in Topeka. KU is also seeking legislation to further streamline the management of funds for several university units and projects.

## **Improving health care for Kansans**

**The fight against cancer remains a top priority for KU** and others in our state. The drive to obtain National Cancer Institute designation can give the 13,000 Kansans diagnosed with cancer annually access to cutting-edge treatments and care available only at NCI centers.

**KU researchers are also undertaking a wide range of efforts that benefit Kansans**, including research into diabetes, Alzheimer's, kidney disease, autism and a number of other conditions.

**Delivering new treatments depends on the health professionals educated at KU**, yet budget cuts have resulted in reductions in the number of students able to be enrolled in areas such as nursing. KU supports funding for graduate medical education at the Wichita and Kansas City campuses and urges policies that recognize the value of telemedicine in delivering health care to distant areas in our state.

**Elevating the national ranking of the KU School of Medicine is an important goal for our state.** KU has an outstanding medical school but elevating its national ranking will best position Kansas for the years ahead. Legislative investments to support that initiative are a priority.

**Further support for the Kansas Medical Student Loan program** is also of vital importance as we work with Kansas communities to encourage physicians to serve in the many medically underserved areas of our state.

## **How to Get Involved**

**Jayhawks for Higher Education** is a group of KU alumni and supporters who advocate for KU in the Statehouse. Visit [www.kualumni.org](http://www.kualumni.org) and search for "JHE" to learn more about how you can become an advocate for KU.

For more information about the KU agenda, please contact State Relations Director Kathy Damron at (785) 235-2525 or [mkdtopeka@aol.com](mailto:mkdtopeka@aol.com).