



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

February 13, 2019

Honorable Members of the Kansas Legislature,

After several months of deliberation, the Kansas Board of Regents approved a funding request of \$50 million for state universities in the upcoming fiscal year. As you consider our request, I would like to share a few important facts about funding sources and operating budgets for our state universities.

State universities in Kansas have endured dramatic funding cuts since Fiscal Year 2009. That year, the Legislature appropriated \$657 million to our universities, but the effects of the Great Recession required substantial reductions that have remained in place. In Fiscal Year 2019, that number has recovered to only \$588 million, still a \$69 million drop.

While state support has waned during the past decade, inflation has increased costs. Health insurance, utilities, IT and other operating expenses all cost more today than they did in 2009. Yet even in the face of rising costs, I am proud to say our institutions have worked diligently to keep their expenses in check and find efficiencies. **Thanks to their efforts, state university general use budgets have grown less than the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.**

Of course, deep cuts in state funding still resulted in a shift in cost to students. While state support accounted for 58 percent of general use budgets in Fiscal Year 2009, it accounts for only 44 percent today. Student contributions have risen from 42 to 56 percent during the same period.

For our state to remain competitive, we must educate the workforce that Kansas businesses need and make sure that education beyond high school remains affordable for Kansas families. The Board and universities have done their part in the past two years with some of the lowest increases to tuition in decades. Without additional state investment, though, that effort will become increasingly difficult as costs to operate the universities continue to rise.

We appreciate the partnership that we have with the Legislature and the Governor. The partial restorations of funding last session and in the Governor's budget recommendation this year are steps in the right direction. We look forward to working with you to fully restore funding and ensure that Kansas families and businesses, and by extension our state's economy, are positioned to thrive in the years to come.

Respectfully,

Dennis Mullin
Chair, Kansas Board of Regents

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