

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY TALKING POINTS

Where do we stand now?

- Higher education has always been underfunded in Nevada. By most metrics available, Nevada is ranked among the lowest in the nation for state contributions to higher education. However, even with this low level of funding, we have been very efficient in using limited resources to educate our students and conduct valuable research for our community.
- UNLV has already taken an 8% cut in our base budget (\$25.1 M over the biennium), resulting in a:
 - 10% cut in full-time faculty lines (nearly 100 faculty positions have been cut) and a 25% cut in part-time faculty resulting in 1,000 less class sections.
 - loss of over 260 professional and clerical staff positions – held vacant or eliminated.

How can you help?

- Priority: **Preserve the higher education budget.** Further cuts would eliminate educational opportunities for thousands of students, result in the flight of talented faculty and staff from Nevada, and hurt the economy.
- Priority: **We need to obtain legislative support to allow higher education to keep increases in fees charged to students.** Currently, the majority of student fees collected are sent directly to the state general fund and not retained by the campuses.
- Priority: **Protect the state matching funds for the Harrah's gift in the capital budget.** Harrah's Foundation gave the Hotel College a \$25 million gift contingent upon that amount being matched by state funds. This is not in the state budget, yet there is no better opportunity to leverage state funds.
- Priority: **Encourage the legislature to work with the Board of Regents to develop an interim study committee to define changes in the funding formula for higher education prior to the 2011 session.** The current funding formula in Nevada does not work well. We are the only state with the same funding formula to cover everything from the smallest community college to the largest research university.

Why is UNLV's position as a quality research university worth protecting?

- **Positive economic impact to the region and state**—\$800 million based on FY06 data. For every dollar the state currently invests in UNLV, we generate an additional \$4.50 in economic impact. This positive impact would continue to increase as UNLV matures as a research university, based on actual data from other regional research institutions.
- **Provides a highly educated workforce.** Our graduates enter the workforce with real-world experience. UNLV affords educational opportunities to 21,400 undergraduates and 6,600 graduate students annually.
- **Technology transfer and the development of new knowledge** that can be translated directly into new products/services and therefore job/economic growth.
- **Improvements to quality of life** in the state through advancements and direct services in healthcare, social services, technology and engineering, education, and the arts. There is no successful large, urban area in the country that does not have a healthy and productive research university supporting it.
- **Loss of students to other states equates to a loss of talent for Nevada.** In the next decade, it is projected that high school graduates in Nevada will increase by 66%. Without proper funding, many of these students will be denied access to higher education in Nevada.