



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

1000 SW JACKSON • SUITE 520 • TOPEKA, KS 66612-1368

TELEPHONE – 785-296-3421
FAX – 785-296-0983
www.kansasregents.org

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BOARD OF REGENTS TO ADDRESS MEDICAL CENTER AFFILIATION QUESTIONS

(TOPEKA) – Today Kansas Board of Regents Chairman Nelson Galle issued the following statement regarding the Board’s on-going consideration of issues related to the University of Kansas Medical Center’s (KUMC) current affiliation discussions with various Kansas City-area health care providers:

“First and foremost, it is important to note that the University of Kansas (KU) has kept the Board apprised as it has engaged in these discussions. The comprehensive briefing we received last month from KUMC Executive Vice Chancellor Barbara Atkinson regarding the status of the process was particularly helpful and informative. We appreciate the communication we have received throughout the development of this initiative, and we certainly expect that to continue.

At the same time, we recognize that the questions House Speaker Melvin Neufeld raised recently are clearly important ones, and the Board agrees that questions like those must be answered. We have been impressed with what we have heard from KU leaders about this affiliations effort. But, as we move forward, we will ensure that KU provides us with information sufficient for us to satisfy ourselves that these proposed affiliations are truly in the best interests of the state’s higher education system.

In that regard, I have, as the Board’s Chairman, expressly directed the Board’s President and CEO, Reginald L. Robinson, to work with KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway, KUMC Executive Vice Chancellor Atkinson, and other key KU leaders to produce responses both to the questions the Speaker has raised, and to any other questions individual Regents may have about this initiative. Those responses will be provided to me and Board Vice Chair Christine Downey-Schmidt by March 2. Upon the receipt and review of that report from President Robinson, Vice Chair Downey-Schmidt and I will subsequently present to the full Board our recommendations regarding whether the questions presented have been satisfactorily answered.

The Board recognizes that much effort has been exerted in this process thus far, and we note that valuable progress has certainly been achieved. We believe this important work should continue as the Board gathers responses to the questions that have been raised. However, if satisfactory responses are not produced in a timely manner, or if those responses raise additional concerns about this effort, the Board will at that time consider whether it should act to interrupt the process that is currently underway.

In conclusion, I appreciate the Speaker's recognition that the issues presented by this initiative fall squarely within the range of matters best left for the Board of Regents to address. We will work with the University to resolve them together. We approach these issues seriously because we recognize that the life sciences hold the key to better health and quality of life for all citizens, and we believe that the development of a nationally recognized medical center is critical to the state's future. I look forward to continued work with state policymakers, including the Speaker, on this, and other, important higher education initiatives."

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*For more information contact
Kip Peterson, Director for Government Relations & Communications, at (785) 296-3421.*

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