

KU's priorities for the 2022 Legislative Session

The university will focus on affordability, efficiency and economic growth

The University of Kansas is calling on Kansas legislators to support the following initiatives in Governor Kelly's budget proposal:

- Restore higher education funding to FY 2021 levels so universities to freeze tuition (\$45.7M)
- Create a University Economic Development Challenge Grant (\$195M)
- Address deferred maintenance, information technology and student assistance (\$70M)
- Provide a pay raise for State employees (\$56.8M)

Additionally, KU is asking lawmakers to create legislation that would:

- Enable universities to sell donor-funded university property with Regents approval.

More information about these priorities is below.

Restore higher education funding and freeze tuition

Governor Kelly proposes \$45.7 million to restore higher education funding to FY 2021 levels and address inflationary costs in exchange for universities agreeing to freeze tuition. We agree with Governor Kelly that this proposal would benefit universities and the Kansas students and families we serve. You will recall that KU has held tuition flat for the past three years, and we welcome the opportunity to do it again if the Governor's proposal is approved.

For context, it is important to note that State funding for higher education remains below 2008 levels – and that's without adjusting for inflation. KU continues to make cuts to become more efficient, but the university cannot continue to function as a top research institution *and* remain affordable for Kansas families without stable State funding.

Create a University Economic Development Challenge Grant

The Governor has proposed \$195 million in State funds to create a University Economic Development Challenge Grant. This grant would enable universities to match donor dollars with State funds to develop projects that have significant economic benefit to the state.

The reality is, universities are uniquely positioned to drive economic growth. KU does this by recruiting scholars to the region, meeting workforce needs, creating startup companies, and partnering with industry to develop products and services. The University Economic Development Challenge Grant would enhance KU's ability to do all of this.

Address deferred maintenance, information technology and student assistance

The Governor proposes \$25 million for university deferred maintenance, \$20 million for information technology enhancements, and \$25 million for student financial assistance.

Provide a state employee pay raise

The Governor recommends a 5 percent pay increase for State employees. In the past, due to universities' unique funding streams, this type of proposal has amounted to a lower percentage increase distributed through a merit pool. We will get clarification on this proposal in the weeks ahead.

Enable KU to sell university property

Currently, universities may sell university property that was originally gifted or purchased with gifted dollars – but each project requires a lengthy bureaucratic process and legislative approval. This makes it hard for KU to be nimble and get the best price when negotiating a property sale. Thus, KU and the Board of Regents are asking lawmakers to allow state universities to sell gifted or donor-funded university property with KBOR approval, rather than legislative approval.

KU would commit to use the proceeds of these sales to address deferred maintenance, which benefits the university, the Legislature and taxpayers.

// The University of Kansas //