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TOPEKA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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January 25, 2007

Representative Sharon Schwartz
Chairman, Appropriations Committee

Dear Representative Schwartz:

As you requested, the Governmental and Efficiency Committee has reviewed an academic program proposal from Fort Hays State University that would contribute to fulfillment of the University's mission of "integration of computer and telecommunications with the environment and the work place." The proposal is for initiation of a new Network and Information Security emphasis at the Bachelors level and expansion of the Information Assurance concentration in the Masters of Liberal Studies. As described to the Committee, the University will provide both face-to-face and distance education as part of this initiative.

The implementation of the new degree programs requires an additional \$532,536.40 for the University's base budget. Federal funds totaling \$840,000.00 have been received and dedicated to the effort. The additional state appropriation is needed to complete the project. Most of this money would be used to hire additional faculty. Approximately \$105,000 would be expended for non-personnel costs.

After receiving a presentation by President Hammond and Dr. Bannister and having an opportunity to discuss the proposal with them, the Committee agreed to recommend that the project be favorably considered by the Appropriations Committee. During our discussion with the Fort Hays officials we voiced a concern regarding the University's ability to hire the necessary qualified personnel by the fall of 2007. Dr. Bannister agreed to look at the implementation time-line to evaluate whether it would be possible to implement the University's plan in phases. The Committee suggests that the appropriate Budget Committee pursue that avenue of discussion further with the University.

The Committee also discussed the possibility that the program at Fort Hays might benefit from sharing of teaching resources with other universities. The University officials indicated that, through their distance learning initiatives, the curriculum would be made available to other universities, technical colleges, community colleges, and secondary schools.

Sincerely,

Jim Morrison
Chair

Stephanie Sharp
Vice-Chair

Judy Loganbill
Ranking Democrat