

University of Nebraska-Lincoln to join Big Ten Conference

Lincoln, Neb., June 11, 2010 -- Big Ten Conference Commissioner James E. Delany today confirmed that the Big Ten Conference Council of Presidents/Chancellors voted to approve the application from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for Big Ten membership.

Earlier today the University of Nebraska Board of Regents voted to allow UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman to apply for membership in the Big Ten.

"We are pleased that the presidents and chancellors of the Big Ten schools agree that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is a proper partner," Perlman said. "From both an academics standpoint and an athletics perspective, this makes sense for the future of our university." Perlman said the academic, research and engagement activities carried by UNL are an excellent fit with those achieved by Big Ten institutions.

"Our academic and research aspirations have held up to the high standards of the Big Ten," Perlman said.

"The Big Ten Conference has much to offer," said Nebraska Athletic Director Tom Osborne. "This is a tribute to our athletic programs, our academic programs and our fans. This is the right move at the right time. This is a rare opportunity that may not have been an option for us in the future. It's the right thing to do for Nebraska."

Perlman said uncertainties about the continued stability of the Big 12 Conference were a factor in seeking admittance to the Big Ten.

"Other schools in the Big 12 some time ago began to indicate interest in moving to other conferences," Perlman said "With the presidents of the other Big 12 schools unwilling to make a long-term commitment to the Big 12, we realized that our first priority had to be acting in the best interest of Nebraska. Waiting to see what other Big 12 schools decided to do would have placed Nebraska in a vulnerable position.

"We are honored to be included in the Big Ten." Head Football Coach Bo Pelini said Osborne and Perlman have made a decision that will be in the best long-term interest of the University of Nebraska.

"Obviously, I have a connection with the Big Ten having played in the conference (for Ohio State), and also getting my start in coaching in that conference," Pelini said. "The Big Ten is a great conference, and it will be an exciting opportunity for our football program and all of our teams at Nebraska. That being said, my focus right now is preparing our team for the upcoming season and competing for a championship in the Big 12 Conference. This has been a great league for Nebraska and we look forward to competing on the field this fall."

Nebraska's transition to the Big Ten is scheduled to take effect by fall 2011. Perlman briefly outlined other academic benefits to joining the Big Ten: Big Ten universities attract 12 percent of all federal research funding annually. They grant 14.5 percent of all doctoral degrees conferred in the U.S. each year and 25 percent of all agricultural doctorates each year.

UNL would be considered for membership in the prestigious Committee on Institutional Cooperation, a consortium of the Big Ten universities plus the University of Chicago. The CIC leverages faculty, funding, facilities, investments and ideas to help the collective whole compete and succeed. Among its core projects are library collections and access; technology

collaborations to build capacity at reduced costs; leveraging purchasing and licensing through economies of scale; leadership and development programs for faculty and staff; course-sharing mechanisms by which students may take courses at other consortium institutions; and study-abroad collaborations.

- The Big Ten is the only NCAA Division I conference whose members all belong to the Association of American Universities, as does Nebraska.
- Of UNL's 10 peer institutions (by which it compares itself), five are Big Ten members (University of Illinois, University of Iowa, University of Minnesota, Ohio State University and Purdue University).
- The ability to recruit faculty would be enhanced. UNL already competes with Big Ten and other institutions to attract high-quality faculty; UNL would be able to offer access to CIC and other opportunities afforded by Big Ten affiliation. Similarly, new Ph.D.s and other graduates from Nebraska would find their opportunities widened through Big Ten collaborations.
- Research collaborations with faculty at other institutions, already important and under way, would increase.
- UNL's alignment with the Big Ten will open doors to new investors, entrepreneurs and others interested in expanding regional and national markets through opportunities presented by Nebraska Innovation Campus, Perlman said.
- "The Big Ten is a historically prestigious and stable academic community of scholars and students," Perlman said. "The Big Ten, known for its athletic prowess, is highly regarded in academe for its academic and research enterprises. There is nothing but upside for UNL to join the Big Ten."