

Contact: Joan Racki

UNI – GILCHRIST HALL FIRE

Actions Requested: Consider authorizing the University of Northern Iowa to:

1. Proceed with project planning to correct damage to Gilchrist Hall resulting from the fire on October 16, 2005, with additional necessary Board approvals required prior to the February 2006 Board meeting to be delegated to the Board Office, and
2. Request a \$2 million appropriation to partially finance needed restoration improvements.

Executive Summary: Between midnight and 1:15 am on Sunday, October 16, 2005, three fires broke out in University of Northern Iowa buildings. As reported to the Board at its November 2005 meeting, the most extensive damage occurred in Gilchrist Hall; the facility has been closed since the fire and occupants have been temporarily relocated to other campus facilities.

The University has been working with an insurance adjuster to determine the amount of damage to Gilchrist Hall. The insurance adjuster has now notified the University that the damage will exceed \$2 million, which is the amount of the deductible on the University's insurance policy for academic facilities.

Board policy requires that the Board authorize permission to proceed with project planning, including the architectural selection process, for projects estimated to exceed \$2 million in cost. The University is thus requesting approval to proceed with project planning for correction of the fire-related damage to Gilchrist Hall. It is requested that further approvals that may be needed prior to the February 2006 Board meeting, including the selection of the architectural/engineering firm for the project, be delegated to the Board Office. A report would be provided to the Board at its February 2006 meeting.

Chapter 29C.20 of the Iowa Code establishes a contingent fund in the state treasury for the use of the Executive Council in paying, among other items, for the repairing, rebuilding or restoring of state property destroyed or lost by fire. Under Executive Council guidelines, if the amount needed for restoration is greater than \$500,000, a legislative appropriation is required. Since the University's insurance deductible of \$2 million exceeds the minimum required for a legislative appropriation, the University seeks Board authorization for a \$2 million appropriation request. Costs of restoration exceeding \$2 million would be paid by the University's insurance carrier.