

REGENTS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO TAKE NEW POST AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

URBANDALE – Gregory S. Nichols, executive director of the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, since February 2002, will resign his post effective Aug. 5 to become special assistant to Iowa State University President Gregory Geoffroy and a lecturer in the university's Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies.

The Board of Regents will meet in Davenport Aug. 3-4.

At Iowa State, Nichols will be involved during the 2005-06 academic year in work on state education policy issues as they relate to the university, including preparedness of students for college, tuition and financial aid, student retention, and successful transitions of graduates to the workforce. He will begin his new role at Iowa State on Aug. 22.

"I understand how critical higher education is for the economic future of our state, our nation, and each of us individually," said Nichols. "In my grandparents' generation, the country prospered, as did their family, based on their high school-level education. Those days are gone, and the global economic competition today and for our children's generation will demand much, much more.

"That's why I am so pleased to have the opportunity to use some of my skills and knowledge to assist Iowa State University – an institution very important to my family – while continuing to work on key state and national education policy challenges, reconnecting to teaching and research, and finishing my own Ph.D.," Nichols added. "This is a fabulous opportunity. I look forward to undertaking it with enthusiasm."

In reflecting on his years as the Regents' executive director, Nichols noted many Board accomplishments. Most importantly, he said, endorsement this year by the Governor and Iowa Legislature of the Board's "Partnership Plan for Transformation and Excellence" indicates that public support of the Board and its mission is increasing. The Transformation Plan includes an increase in state funding for fiscal year 2006, after four years of reductions in state appropriations; stabilization of tuition increases for Iowa students and their families; and a focus on academic priorities and operational efficiencies of the five institutions governed by the Board.

Nichols also pointed to the Board's emphasis on closer alignment of its efforts with key state priorities of enhanced educational outcomes, economic development, and health care, along with revisions in tuition policy, academic governance, and governmental relations. These and other achievements occurred during Nichols' tenure under three Board of Regents presidents – Owen Newlin, John Forsyth, and now Michael Gartner – and two interim presidents – Deborah Turner and Robert Downer, as well as amid transitions in Board membership.

Gartner and Robert Downer, Board of Regents president pro tem, thanked Nichols for his role in those accomplishments.

“Greg Nichols has served well the Board of Regents, the Regent institutions, and the people of Iowa for the past three and a half years. With care and intelligence, he helped guide the Board and its institutions through much change,” Gartner and Downer said. “Now, with his Ph.D. in sight, he has an opportunity to broaden his administrative experience and to do teaching and research on educational policy at a major university.

“The Regents thank Greg for his service and are especially pleased that he will continue to work with the Board on policy issues that are of special importance to Iowa’s universities and their students,” Gartner and Downer continued.

Gary Steinke, deputy executive director of the Board of Regents and chief public affairs officer, will serve as acting executive director of the Board staff until the Regents appoint a permanent executive director.

In addition to his role as the Regents’ executive director, Nichols is a member of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, the Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corporation board and the Iowa Dollars for Scholars board. He serves on the executive committee of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, a non-profit, nationwide association of the chief executive officers serving statewide coordinating and governing boards of postsecondary education; Nichols also served as vice chair of SHEEO’s workforce and economic development committee. Prior to joining the Regent staff, he served as a policy advisor to Iowa Gov. Thomas Vilsack from 1999 to 2002 and as a staff member of the Iowa Senate from 1981 to 1999.

Nichols earned his B.A. in distributed studies from Iowa State University and his M.A. in public policy from Rutgers University, and he is completing his Ph.D. work in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi academic honorary society.

The Board of Regents is a group of nine citizen volunteers who govern the state’s three public universities – the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Northern Iowa – and two special K-12 schools – the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School and the Iowa School for the Deaf – through policymaking, coordination, and oversight.