July 23, 2021

NSHE Board of Regents approves Plan for Sierra Nevada University to Join University of Nevada, Reno

Agreement paves way for next steps in process

RENO, Nevada – The Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents today approved a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between Sierra Nevada University (SNU) and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) that would add SNU to the UNR family. In an earlier action last month, Sierra Nevada University’s Board of Trustees approved the agreement as well.

“I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Board of Regents for today’s approval,” University of Nevada, Reno President Brian Sandoval said. “This is another important step in a very methodical process that will also include key regulatory bodies. The Regents have recognized that this is a great opportunity for higher education in Nevada that promises to benefit the citizens of our state for years to come. I truly believe that the potential for partnership brings with it academic synergies, untold opportunities to expand and enrich our student experience and the breadth of the teaching, research and outreach of our faculty and will forge even stronger connections between the two communities that the two institutions serve.

“We are grateful to the Nevada Board of Regents for their approval,” Atam Lalchandani, chairman of the SNU Board of Trustees, said. “They listened carefully to my heartfelt conviction that the Incline Village Campus could better reach its educational potential, and better serve the State of Nevada as part of the UNR family. With UNR, we share a common mission and vision to maintain a thriving campus on the shore of Lake Tahoe for students, employees and the northern Nevada community.”

Regent approval marks a critical milestone in a longer process that also requires approval of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and the Department of Education (DOE). Meanwhile, contingent transition planning will begin, with an ultimate goal of gradually and strategically combining programs and operations in a way that minimizes the impact on students, faculty/staff, donors and community stakeholders at SNU while also maximizing synergies and new opportunities for these groups.

Today, SNU also announced that President Rob Valli will finish his appointment as SNU president on July 30, 2021.

“I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Valli for leading SNU through a very challenging pandemic year,” Lalchandani said. “Under Dr. Valli, SNU safely implemented in-person classes in both fall and spring semesters, and increased Fall 2021 admissions numbers back close to pre-pandemic levels. Dr. Valli also led difficult steps to begin the process of right sizing SNU personnel in proportion to lower overall student enrollment levels following the pandemic. We wish him continuing success in his future endeavors.”

From July 31, 2021, until approval of the proposed change by the NWCCU and DOE approval, the current SNU Board of Trustees will retain its governance role. SNU operations will be managed by an Executive Transition Office jointly led by Sue Johnson, SNU Vice President of Finance and Administration, with an additional executive to be named shortly. The Executive Transition Office will also lead efforts for remaining approvals and begin transition planning.

Under the agreement, SNU students will continue their studies on the SNU campus for the 2021-22 academic year and will experience very little change. SNU faculty will deliver 2021-22 academic year courses as scheduled, and athletic and extracurricular programs will continue unchanged. All SNU students would be offered paths to either SNU or UNR degrees.

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The University of Nevada, Reno, is a public research university that is committed to the promise of a future powered by knowledge. Nevada’s land-grant university founded in 1874, the University serves 21,000 students. The University is a comprehensive, doctoral university, classified as an R1 institution with very high research activity by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Additionally, it has attained the prestigious “Carnegie Engaged” classification. Visit www.unr.edu.

Sierra Nevada University is Nevada’s only accredited private non-profit four-year university. Sierra Nevada University, and the College of Entrepreneurial Leadership in Incline Village, offer a new paradigm of higher education focused on engaged real-world learning through application and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset across all disciplines – in short, a uniquely valuable hands-on education leading directly to success upon graduation. Visit www.sierranevada.edu

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