



CARIE QUINNEY

Broncos' new boss takes reins

When Bob Kustra (sporting a blue and orange tie for the occasion) stepped up to the podium May 8 to formally accept his appointment as Boise State's next president, it marked the start of a new era for the university. As the institution's sixth chief executive, Kustra inherits from Charles Ruch a legacy of excellence and unparalleled growth in both the number of programs offered and the size of the student population. But Kustra also inherits a budget deficit that threatens academic programs and a Legislature numbed by overwhelming demands on the state's shrinking bottom line. With an extensive background in both the political arena and higher education, the former Illinois lieutenant governor's skills will be especially valuable when it comes to legislative and government issues. To learn more about Ruch's legacy and Kustra's vision, turn to pages 12 and 13.

Budget, enrollment challenges continue

First it was a 10 percent cut in the operating budget, then a record jump in enrollment for both fall and spring. Finally, just when the budget looked like it couldn't be stretched any thinner, Boise State was asked to cut another 3 percent, or almost \$2 million, from the budget of the fiscal year that ended June 30.

And things look much the same for FY '04, with a state appropriation of \$67 million — only 1.1 percent above last year's total, and still \$3 million below where it was two years ago.

"We know that times will improve, but there will probably be some lag between the improved economy and the state's ability to respond by allocating additional funding," says Daryl Jones, provost and vice president for academic affairs. That means at least another couple of years of belt-tightening.

But things aren't as grim as they look. The university anticipated the possibility of the recent 3 percent cut and met that with funds in a holdback reserve. It had hoped to use those funds for fixed cost increases and to replace aging equipment.

"You have to worry about deferring equipment replacement. Deferred projects sometimes end up costing more," says Jones. He points to the Legislature's approval to restart construction of a classroom building on the Boise State-West campus as a good example. "We're delighted that it has been approved, but the delay caused the costs to escalate." (See Page 5.)

Jones says savings are also being realized in several areas across campus, including lower energy bills that can be

attributed to a variety of measures such as the four-day academic week instituted throughout the summer. The shortened summer hours alone translated to a savings last year of \$67,000.

The university's largest budget item is salaries, accounting for 80 percent of all expenditures. After being forced to eliminate about 40 positions last year, Boise State is looking for new ways to trim the budget without eliminating more faculty or support staff positions.

Keeping faculty positions intact is vital



to serving the hundreds of new students expected to enroll this fall. Last year's fall enrollment of 17,714 was about 3 percent, or 553 students, above that of the previous year; a similar jump is expected this fall.

"Demand [for enrollment] is up 10 percent among continuing students and 7 percent among new applicants," says Mark Wheeler, dean of enrollment services.

This is in spite of the tougher admission standards that go into effect this fall. Wheeler says

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Enrollment is expected to grow again this fall.

his office expects to deny degree-seeking status to 500 applicants. ("Spring enrollment tops fall '02 numbers," *FOCUS*, Spring 2003).

Many more of these new students are taking classes full time, increasing the demand for core classes. To meet the increased demand, the university hopes to add up to 41 new sections of core and major service classes where demand has created a bottleneck.

"We're doing our best to try and serve the community, but we're growing at a pace faster than we had planned," Wheeler says.

— Kathleen Craven