Higher education institutions seeing increases in 2011

by Mattriss Leggett

Area colleges and universities are experiencing growth in enrollment in a variety of programs as well as online classes.

Enrollment for the University of Nebraska reached nearly 50,000, marking the highest total in 17 years and the sixth straight increase, according to Peter Kotasopoulos, senior adviser to the president on economic development.

Creighton University has been experiencing historic enrollment milestones, including its largest and most academically talented freshmen class in the fall of 2010, said the Rev. John P. Schlegel, president. Creighton University will also transition to its 24th president, the Rev. Timothy R. Lannon, in July.

During the past two years, Metropolitan Community College has had a 23 percent increase in enrollment, hitting a record high number in the fall with more than 18,000 students, according to Randy Schmitz, president.

Bellevue University anticipates continued 8 to 10 percent growth for 2011, with new initiatives strengthening graduation rates, said Dr. Mary Hawkins, president.

“Women entrepreneurs growing in numbers across the nation

by Elizabeth Fuller

Ruth Marvia Webster and her tennis partner, Kathy Dobert, spent years making pins at their racquet club. “Love all,” “Get a grip,” “Tightly strung.” “You’re a weak!” They’re even joked about turning their protective coating into a T-shirt business. So after Mrs. Webster was laid off in 2008 from her job as a feature writer for a San Diego daily, the pair took the plunge and started Net Win, a business so new that its website only went up in mid-November.

“The economy is the reason we started

New programs in 2011 for Creighton include an interdisciplinary BLD, in leadership to develop leaders in the fields of education, health care and business. Also new in 2011 is a bachelor’s degree in energy technology. On campus, Creighton is planning additions in facilities that support academics and residence life as well as enhancing its solar energy capacity and current sustainability efforts.

According to Schlegel, programs are growing across all academic areas for MCC, but most notably in health and information technology. He said online class enrollment has grown immensely and many courses and some degrees are currently accessible at any time online.

“Because you have the technology and the need is there, you are seeing a lot of different fields being offered online,” Schmitz said. “The college is committed to the efficient use of public resources.”

MCC also has a new initiative to assist more students in earning degrees by encouraging them to finish an associate degree even if they are planning to receive a bachelor’s degree. MCC will also reach out to students who may have left the college before to obtain their degrees to finish the process, Schmitz said.

MCC will also implement its updated facilities master plan to create centers of specialization among its campuses using sustainable practices, Schmitz noted.

Hawkins said there is increasing demand for online programs and courses at Bellevue University because they provide flexibility for adult learners. She added that the Ph.D. program in human capital management is growing as well as programs in clinical counseling, child development, and business administration.

The university is also developing new programs in health care, finance and value creation, cybersecurity and exploring programs in science, technology, engineering and math, Hawkins said.

Additionally, Bellevue University will launch new entrepreneurship and financial well being management certificates, and is further developing the Center for American Vision and Values with its Speaker Series and the High School Academy.

Hawkins also noted the university’s voice of the customer initiative will continue improving customer service and processes based on direct input from students.