The Regents are expected to vote on the plan at Thursday’s monthly meeting.

By Matt Graham

The Board of Regents will hold its monthly meeting Thursday with several topics on the table, including the fate of the plan for the University’s future.

Regents are expected to vote Friday on whether the University will pursue its plan to become one of the world’s top three public research universities within the next decade.

The plan, which would create several new colleges and programs, has been the source of controversy because it would also dissolve General College into a department of the proposed College of Education and Human Development, a move the plan’s opponents say would limit access to the University for the state’s working-class population.

Regent Clyde Allen said he still has some questions about the plan, but he expects the board will probably pass the measure, with potentially only a few minor alterations.

“I don’t think (the plan) will fail; it’s very well thought-out,” Allen said.

Regent Dave Metzen said he knows how he will vote but won’t reveal his decision until Friday.

Metzen said he came to his decision...
by looking at the long-term future of the University.

“Good boards don’t worry about this year and the next year. Good boards try to visualize what’s going to happen five or ten years down the road,” he said.

Regent Peter Bell said he likes the plan’s emphasis on becoming a top institution, but he said the criteria for judging are subjective.

Nathan Whittaker, a teaching assistant at the General College and a founder of the General College Truth Movement, said closing General College would fit with a nationwide backslide in social justice issues.

Despite his concerns, Whittaker said, the regents have been responsive to points members of his group have brought up.

“They felt that the regents were really receptive and kind, and it made a lot of them feel better about who is on the Board of Regents at the ‘U,’ ” he said.

Whittaker said he is not necessarily opposed to changes at the University, “but what kind of changes?”

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3800 has come out strongly against the plan, fearing it could cost workers their jobs.

“In the past, if the University is trying to save money or going through a reorganization, they lay off the frontline staff, they don’t lay off the administration,” said Phyllis Walker, union president.

Walker said the Board of Regents hasn’t listened to what the union has to say, which she said fits with past trends of not listening to union members.

**Preliminary budgets**

The Board of Regents will also examine the 2006 annual capital improvement budget, a list of proposed building projects to be
undertaken with money from the state.

The board will also look at the preliminary budget request for 2006 to be sent to the State Legislature and the preliminary University operating budget for 2006.

“The good news about the budget this time around is that we actually have money to spend on new initiatives,” said Richard Pfutzenreuter, the University’s chief financial officer.

Pfurtzenreuter said the budget plans were made to align with the University’s strategic positioning plans. Students can expect to see some relief from tuition increases, which will be approximately 7.5 percent during each of the next two years.