

FALL UPDATE
Undergraduate Education
2022



Fall 2022 first-year student orientation with peer mentors.



First Husker program graduation pin.

ANNUAL UPDATE ON N2025 AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: DEGREE COMPLETION, EQUITY, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor

Welcome to the second annual update on the **N2025 and the Student Experience** from the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor. This report profiles our university's progress on the N2025 targets related to undergraduate degree completion, equity outcomes, and experiential learning. It showcases the many efforts of faculty and staff across our campus working to innovate and transform the student experience.

At UNL, we are committed to engaging undergraduates from matriculation through graduation with programs, experiences, and resources that support their diverse needs, backgrounds, and educational goals. We want all students to earn their degrees in a timely manner, and we continue to benchmark our efforts in creating a university where scholars' ethnicity, income, and parental

education history are no longer predictive of degree completion. The N2025 plan outlines a path toward accomplishing these goals—by engaging students in deep and meaningful learning experiences that cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusion in collaboration with faculty, staff, and community stakeholders.

Towards these ends, this report provides academic leaders and instructors a variety of data to better understand equity issues related to our students' experiences. Data can spotlight and illuminate awareness about inequities and empower faculty and staff to engage in local and context-specific conversations and actions to address them. You can find additional Tableau reports at nuinsight.nebraska.edu. I hope you are inspired by the successes we have collectively achieved in AY 21-22 as well as motivated to continue our important work in achieving the N2025 targets.

Sincerely,

Amy Goodburn
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Education

OVERVIEW

Given the national conversations about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education, with national headlines such as “My College Students Are Not OK” and “How COVID-19 Damaged Student Success,” one might expect that UNL undergraduates’ academic performance would have significantly declined in AY 21-22. Fortunately, that is not the case.

While the pandemic certainly posed significant challenges for our university community, our undergraduates’ academic performance continued its positive momentum. Unlike at other institutions, our undergraduates’ academic probation and dismissal levels remained relatively constant. In spring 2022, 6.54% of undergraduates were on academic probation compared to 8.04% in spring 2019 and our spring 2022 dismissal rate of 1.81% was only slightly higher than the spring 2019 rate of 1.67%.

Further evidence of undergraduates’ successful academic performance includes improved first-year retention rates, increased attempted and earned credit hour completion and college percentages of first-year students who earned 30 credits by the beginning of year two, higher four-year graduation rates, and overall record-setting graduation classes. With the support of UNL’s dedicated faculty and staff, our undergraduates persisted in their academic journeys with determination and grit.

UNL’s fall 2022 first-year students are also optimistic about their academic futures. Each year, the New Student Enrollment Inventory asks incoming first-year students about their academic preparation, attitudes, and goals for their future university experience. Our fall 2022 first-year students strongly agreed or agreed to the following statements:

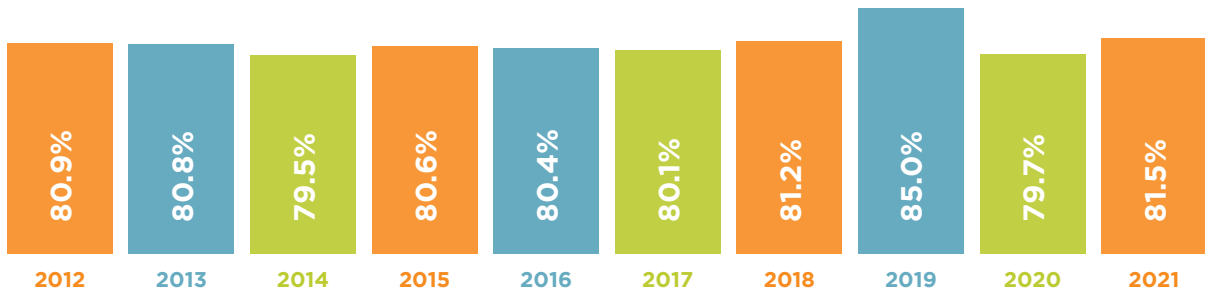
- I plan to graduate in four years 90.92%
- I can succeed in my college courses 95.28%
- I can develop a strong plan for academic success 87.31%

One area for improvement remains closing equity gaps. The pandemic disproportionately impacted our at-promise scholars,¹ impacting their retention and academic performance. This report shows these impacts in lagging indicators such as retention and graduation rates as well as leading indicators such as the Husker Student POWER survey data.

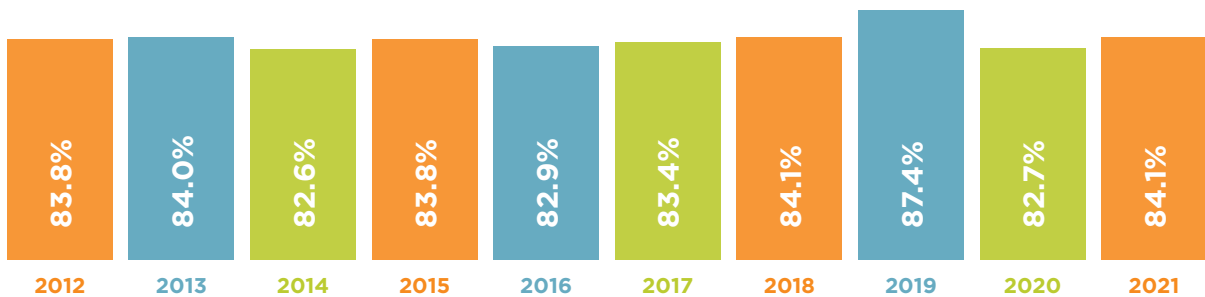
¹ UNL uses the term “at-promise” to collectively identify undergraduates who come from first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented minoritized ethnic/racial groups. Ethnic/racial groups included in this category include Hispanic, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and two or more races. As an alternative to the commonly used phrase “at-risk,” “at-promise” focuses on the strengths that students from these historically underserved communities bring to our campus as well as our university’s promise to achieve equity in their degree completion.

FIRST-YEAR RETENTION

UNL's first-year 2021 cohort retention rate increased by 1.8% from 79.7% to 81.5%. With each 1.0% percentage representing approximately 47 students, a 1.8% increase represents about 85 more students who returned for their second year in 2022 than in 2021. This rate is .3% higher than 2018 cohort rates and the highest first-year retention rate in the past decade excluding the 2019 cohort.² Of the 4,709 first-year students who started at UNL in fall 2021, 3,838 returned for their second year and 121 transferred to another NU campus, resulting in an overall system retention rate of 84.1%.³ The N2025 target for first year retention is 88% for the overall system rate.



UNL-only first-year retention for cohorts 2012-2021



NU system first-year retention for cohorts 2012-2021

² The 2019 cohort first-year retention rate was artificially inflated because students were not dismissed or placed on academic probation during the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

³ The N2025 strategic plan used the NU system rates to set the targets for retention and graduation rates. The NU **system** rates include first-year students who start at UNL, transfer to another NU campus, and are retained and graduate in the same period of time that is tracked for the UNL students (one year for retention and four, five, or six years for graduation).

College retention rates

First-year retention rates for the fall 2021 cohort returning in fall 2022 by college are listed in the below table with the percentage change in comparison to the fall 2020 cohort retention.

College/Unit	Number of Students	Current Rate	Percentage Change
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	369/432	85.2%	+6.7%
Architecture	122/147	83.0%	-0.8%
Arts and Sciences	564/700	80.6%	+1.9%
Business	602/724	83.1%	-0.2%
Education and Human Sciences	369/442	83.5%	+2.1%
Engineering	670/837	80.0%	+2.7%
Fine and Performing Arts	137/170	80.6%	-1.7%
Journalism and Mass Communications	128/146	87.7%	+2.6%
Explore Center ⁴	878/1111	79.0%	+1.2%

Fall 2021 first-year retention by college with percentage change from fall 2020 cohort

First-year retention rates for UNL’s at-promise scholars generally improved for the fall 2021 cohort. Both nationally and locally, these populations were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The below table shows retention rates disaggregated by students’ first-generation⁵ status, income,⁶ and race/ethnicity with the percentage change between the fall 2020 and fall 2021 cohorts.

Population	Number of Students	Current Rate	Percentage Change
First Generation	871/1168	74.6%	+2.9%
Pell-eligible	898/1192	75.3%	+3.0%
Hispanic	319/416	76.7%	+5.0%
Two or more races	149/198	75.3%	+4.5%
Black/African American	89/132	67.4%	-1.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native	13/22	59.1%	+9.1%

Fall 2021 first-year retention of at-promise students with percentage change from fall 2020 cohort⁷

⁴ The Explore Center is the advising home for undeclared, pre-professional, and pre-engineering majors. While the Explore Center is not an academic college, it is included in these tables because undergraduate retention and degree completion rates are tracked by cohort for either the college or the Explore Center in which students initially enroll.

⁵ UNL’s first-generation students are identified as those whose parents or guardians have not earned a four-year college degree.

⁶ Pell-eligible students receive non-repayable federal subsidy awards for post-secondary education based on “exceptional financial need” and thus represent low-income levels.

⁷ Students who are members of more than one of these groups are represented in each retention percentage. For instance, a first-generation Hispanic student would be represented in both the first-generation and the Hispanic retention rate categories.

Collectively retention rates from these student groups remain lower than the university average of 81.5% and comprise the "equity gap" target that the university is working to cut in half by 2025.

30 EARNED CREDITS BY YEAR TWO

Another metric for measuring first-year students' academic progress is the percentage who earn thirty credit hours by the beginning of their second year. Because most bachelor degree programs require students to earn 120 credit hours over eight semesters for a four-year degree, second-year students who have not earned at least 30 credits are considered "off track" for timely degree completion.⁸ We track the percentage of students at each level (first year, second year, etc.) who earn 30 credits of any form (including dual and transfer credit) as well as the percentage of students who earn at least 30 credits solely from UNL courses.

Since the fall 2017 cohort, increasing numbers of first-year students are earning 30 credit hours by their second year. Below are the percentages of first year students by college in the fall cohorts from 2017 through 2021 who earned 30 credits of any form by the beginning of year two.

College/Unit	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	67.26%	71.32%	85.20%	85.29%	82.37%
Architecture	87.50%	92.0%	88.12%	94.68%	93.14%
Arts and Sciences	76.30%	80.65%	80.63%	82.04%	82.68%
Business	73.39%	73.19%	78.95%	81.20%	77.00%
Education and Human Sciences	75.81%	78.08%	77.52%	80.25%	81.88%
Engineering	82.51%	87.21%	85.74%	87.23%	82.32%
Fine and Performing Arts	74.82%	74.48%	78.18%	77.55%	74.27%
Journalism and Mass Communications	68.24%	72.88%	69.06%	72.84%	75.66%
Explore Center	29.76%	59.45%	62.01%	59.72%	62.10%

First-year students from fall 2017-2021 cohorts earning any 30 credits by beginning of year 2 by college

⁸ This metric is not applicable to all degree programs. Some degree plans recommend 28 hours for students in their first year and then require students take 16 hours each semester in year two. Also, this metric includes *all* credits earned and does not distinguish between credits that count for degree programs and those which do not.

In keeping with the disparity in first-year retention rates, percentages for UNL’s at-promise students who complete any 30 credit hours by year two are lower than the overall average.

Population	Number of Students	Percentage
First Generation	618/859	71.94%
Pell-eligible	614/888	69.14%
Hispanic	216/315	68.57%
Two or more races	105/147	71.43%
Black/African American	39/87	44.83%
American Indian/Alaska Native	7/13	53.85%

Fall 2021 first-year at-promise students earning any 30 credits by beginning of year 2

Further disaggregation of student groups on the any 30-credit hour metric can be viewed by college. The below table shows the percentage of first-generation students in the fall 2021 first-year cohort by college who earned any 30 credits by the beginning of year two compared to those in the cohort whose parents/guardians hold a bachelor’s degree. The gap in the column on the right reflects the percentage difference between the two groups of students.

College/Unit	Non-First Gen	Percentage	First-Gen	Percentage	Gap
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	252	84.56%	75	74.76%	-9.8%
Architecture	70	97.22%	25	83.33%	-13.89%
Arts and Sciences	446	83.83%	146	79.35%	-4.48%
Business	468	78.92%	91	68.42%	-10.5%
Education and Human Sciences	282	83.19%	75	77.32%	-5.87%
Engineering	443	84.06%	83	74.11%	-9.95%
Fine and Performing Arts	96	74.42%	31	73.81%	-0.61%
Journalism and Mass Communications	114	76.51%	29	72.50%	-4.01%
Explore Center	209	66.14%	63	51.64%	-14.5%

Percentage gap between non first-generation and first generation students by college in fall 2021 cohort who earned 30 credits by year 2

The percentage of fall 2021 first-year students from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups who earned any 30 credits by year two is also lower. This table shows the percentage of Hispanic students in the fall 2021 first-year cohort by college who earned any 30 credits by the beginning of year two compared to students in the first-year cohort who are not Hispanic.⁹

College/Unit	Non-Hispanic	Percentage	Hispanic	Percentage	Gap
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	312	82.98%	15	71.43%	-11.55%
Architecture	81	93.10%	14	93.33%	+23%
Arts and Sciences	532	83.26%	60	77.92%	-5.34%
Business	532	78.35%	27	57.45%	-20.9%
Education and Human Sciences	333	82.84%	24	70.59%	-12.25%
Engineering	492	83.25%	34	70.83%	-12.42%
Fine and Performing Arts	121	76.10%	6	50.00%	-26.1%
Journalism and Mass Communications	133	76.44%	10	66.67%	-9.77%
Explore Center	246	62.76%	26	56.52%	-6.24%

Percentage of 2021 Hispanic first-year students who earned 30 credits by the beginning of year 2 compared to non-Hispanic students



⁹ Because the number of students within the demographic groups of Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native are so small by college and percentages could be identifiable by student, they are not included in this report.



Peer mentors for First Husker and Emerging Leader programs.

NEW COLLEGE METRICS ON BEHAVIORS TO SUPPORT DEGREE COMPLETION

In addition to retention and 30-credit hour reports, the university has been working to identify and analyze leading metrics for student engagement that have been nationally demonstrated to improve undergraduate degree completion. In AY 21-22, members of UNL's Academic Solution Council and Advising Leaders Council identified three metrics to track by college:

- The percentage of first-year students who engage in academic advising each term.
- The percentage of first-year students who use UNL's degree planner tool each term.
- The percentage of instructors who publish a Canvas site and provide academic performance feedback to students in their classes by week four.

First-Year Academic Advising

Requiring first-year students to engage in documented¹⁰ academic advising each term prioritizes the importance of advisor interactions and the transparent recording of those interactions for the benefit of the broader university community. Undergraduates' engagement with academic advisors facilitates judgements and attitudes important for degree completion. Academic advisors support undergraduates' academic and career planning, helping them understand college and program curricular requirements and policies, and connecting them to institutional resources and opportunities.

When academic advisors record notes about their student interactions, it enables faculty and staff across the campus to gain a holistic and comprehensive picture of each student's history. Such notes can be seen by student success professionals in units such as Husker Hub, Career Services, the Center for Academic Success and Transition, the Military and Veteran Success Center, and others who are critical to providing wrap-around support for our students.

Fall 2021 first-year students' recorded engagement with academic advising by academic college was very high, with all but two colleges exceeding 90%. While first-year students' engagement with academic advising during the spring 2022 semester was lower, five colleges still exceeded 90% in documented interactions.



UNL undergraduate commencement in Memorial Stadium – May 2022.

¹⁰ This percentage is calculated by first-year students in the college who have an advising meeting note or an advising walk-in note recorded in UNL's MyPLAN system. The advisor entering the note is not required to be the advisor assigned to the student.

Degree Planner Tool

UNL's degree planner tool was developed based on studies that demonstrate the importance of engaging students in systematic and ongoing long-term planning for degree completion. With this tool, students identify specific courses they plan to take for two terms and load them into a planner. Since UNL implemented these planning tools in 2019, data show that students who use the degree planner consistently attempt and earn more credits than peers who do not use this tool. For instance, in the College of Arts and Sciences, first-year students with no advising or degree planning in the first semester averaged 13.375 attempted hours and earned an average 11.344 hours while those who engaged in both advising and degree planning in the fall of 2021 averaged 14.614 attempted hours and earned an average of 14.231 hours.

First-year students' term grade point averages were also higher when they engaged in advising and degree planning. For the fall 2021 first-year cohort, students who did not engage in advising or degree planning averaged a 2.86 grade point average in the fall term while students who engaged in either advising or degree planning averaged a 3.15 grade point average and those who engaged in both advising and degree planning averaged a 3.33 grade point average. Detailed college-specific analysis on both the advising and degree planning tools are available in Tableau at go.unl.edu/adptools.

Instructor Canvas Use and 4th Week Feedback

The last metric entails the percentage by college of instructors who publish lecture courses¹¹ in Canvas and provide performance feedback to undergraduates by the end of week four of the semester. This metric was chosen because studies show that undergraduates across demographic groups achieve better academic outcomes when they receive early and specific feedback that communicates high expectations for their academic performance coupled with positive instructor messaging that they can meet such expectations. Canvas use was prioritized because broad and consistent use of learning management features makes it easier for students to find important course materials, automate scheduling, receive reminders about assignment deadlines, and gauge their progress for timely improvements.



Explore Center helps students at the UNL Majors Fair.

¹¹ Courses tagged as "lecture" in UNL's Course Leaf system which have an enrollment of more than five students. Feedback requires the grade of at least one student to be posted for at least one assignment before the end of the fourth week of the semester.

The below chart shows that in AY 21-22, nearly 100% of instructors used Canvas for lecture courses and in three colleges more than 90% of their instructors provided feedback to their students by the end of the fourth week of the semester.

College	Canvas Use	4th Week Feedback
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	99.6%	87.1%
Architecture	97.5%	65.0%
Arts and Sciences	99.9%	88.6%
Business	100%	92.5%
Education and Human Sciences	99.5%	92.2%
Engineering	100%	79.9%
Fine and Performing Arts	99.1%	83.9%
Journalism and Mass Communications	100%	99.2%

Percentage of AY 2021-22 instructors by college who published lecture courses in Canvas and provided feedback by 4th week

Over AY 22-23, results of these metrics will continue to be analyzed and refined by members of the Academic Solutions Council and the Advising Leaders Council in a continuing effort to identify and promote valuable behaviors for increasing undergraduate degree completion.

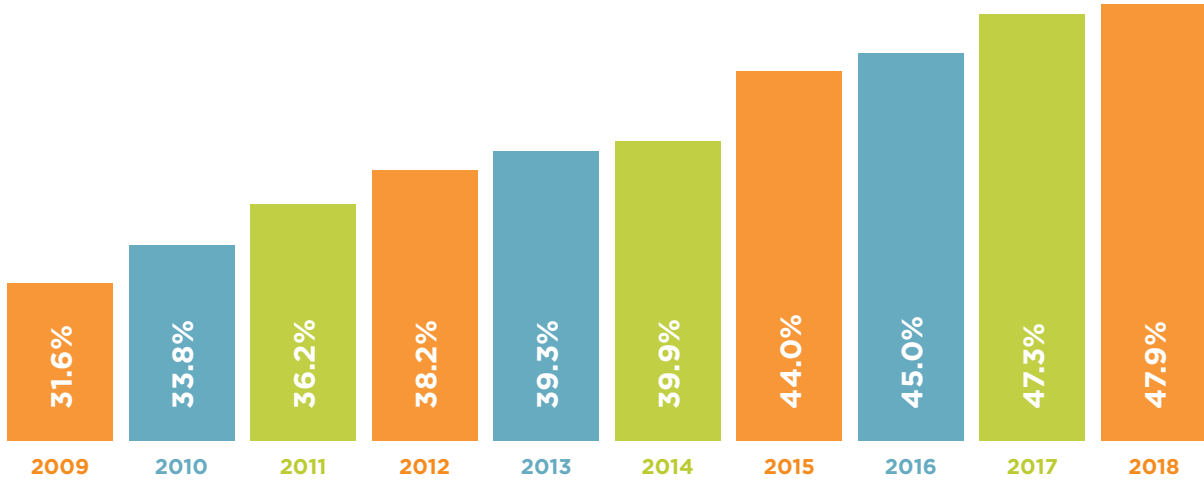


First-year students participating in fall 2021 orientation.

FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

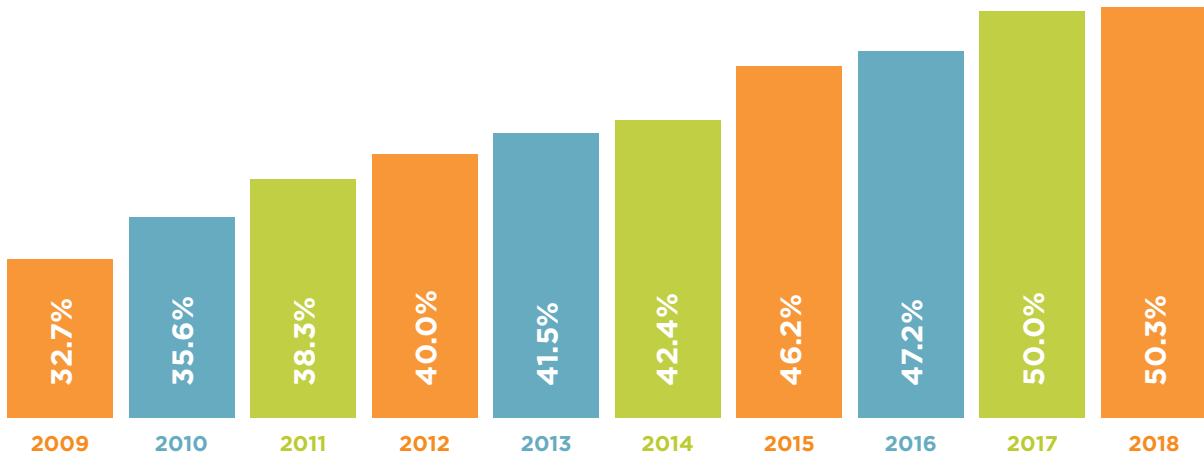
The N2025 target for the four-year graduation rate is 55%.¹² Four-year degree completion saves students money and enables them to enter the workforce earlier. While UNL students continue to graduate with relatively low levels of debt,¹³ our four-year graduation rate lags behind all other Big Ten peer institutions, impacting our students financially and our national rankings.

Over the past decade, UNL has increased its four-year graduation rate each and every year. In 2022, UNL’s overall four-year graduation rate increased by 0.6% from 2021 to 47.9%.



UNL-only four-year graduation rate for fall 2009-2018 cohorts

First-year students who start at UNL and transfer to another NU campus and graduate in four years are counted in the NU system four-year graduation rate. UNL’s NU system four-year graduation rate for 2022 is 50.3%, the highest ever recorded four-year rate. Collectively, 2,416 students who started in UNL’s fall 2018 cohort graduated in four years in 2022 either at UNL or another NU campus. Achieving the N2025 goal of a 55% four-year graduation rate will require an additional 4.7% increase on this metric.



NU system four-year graduation rate for fall 2009-2018 cohorts

¹² This is the NU system rate rather than the UNL-only rate.

¹³ Based on AY 21-22 data from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, 39% of UNL students borrowed federal student loans. The overall student loan debt after graduation is \$21,250 — \$15,000 for Pell recipients and \$13,625 for first-generation students.

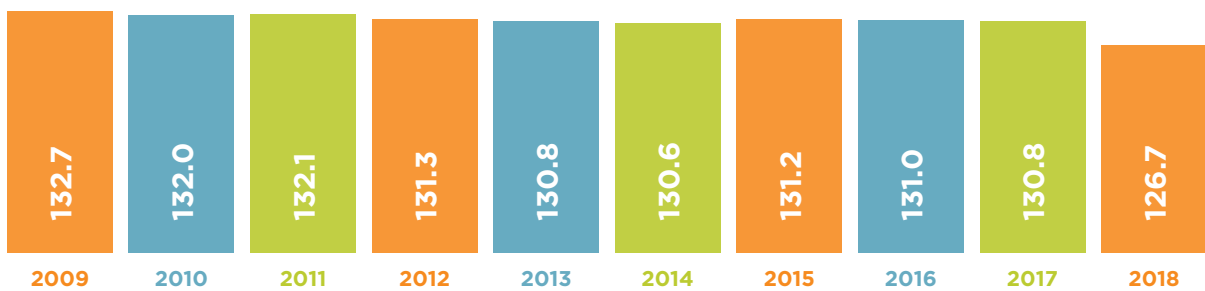
College Four-Year Graduation Rates

In 2022, two UNL colleges achieved record highs in four-year graduation rates. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications exceeded 60% for four-year graduation for the first time at 61.6% and the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts exceeded 50% for the first time at 50.8%. The below table shows all 2022 UNL four-year graduation rates by college and the number of students who completed their degrees in that time frame.

College/Unit	Number of Students	Percentage
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	270	60.9%
Architecture	58	57.4%
Arts and Sciences	394	49.7%
Business	465	56.5%
Education and Human Sciences	225	51.8%
Engineering	306	44.8%
Fine and Performing Arts	91	50.8%
Journalism and Mass Communications	106	61.6%
Explore Center ¹⁴	387	32.8%

2022 UNL-only four-year graduation rates by college for fall 2018 cohort

One factor impacting overall increases in four-year graduation rates is that students are utilizing four-year degree plans¹⁵ and scheduling tools¹⁶ that help them be more intentional in taking courses that count toward their degrees. This planning has resulted in students taking fewer credit hours above the 120 credits typically required for their degrees. As the below chart shows, the average cumulative earned credit hours for graduating seniors continues to decline. The 2009 cohort recorded 132.7 cumulative earned hours upon graduation while the 2018 cohort graduated with 126.7 cumulative earned hours, a reduction of six hours.



Average cumulative earned credit hours upon four-year graduation for fall 2009-2018 cohorts

¹⁴ Students do not graduate from the Explore Center. This percentage reflects students who started their UNL careers in the Explore Center and then graduated from one of the undergraduate colleges within four years.

¹⁵ All undergraduate programs were required to create and publish four-year degree plans in the undergraduate catalog starting in 2012.

¹⁶ The degree planner and scheduling tool were implemented in fall 2019.

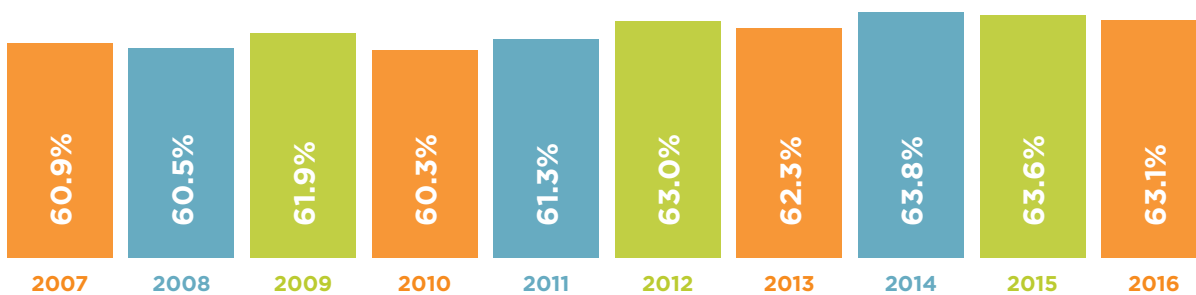
With an overall 2022 four-year graduation rate of 49.7%, the equity gaps for at-promise students' degree completion remain significant. The below table shows the 2022 four-year graduation rates for UNL disaggregated by race/ethnicity, first generation, and Pell-eligibility status.

Group	Number	Percentage
First Generation	383	35.2%
Pell-eligible	393	33.1%
Hispanic	99	28.1%
White	1,924	51.5%
Two or more races	51	32.7%
Black/African American	26	22.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	10.0%

2022 UNL four-year graduation rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity, first generation, and Pell-eligible status¹⁷

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

UNL has made slower progress in increasing its six-year graduation rate over the past decade. While increasing numbers of students are graduating in four years, the overall percentage of students who are graduating within six years has increased by only 2.2%. The majority of UNL students graduate within four and a half to five years with an additional 2-3% of students graduating in year six compared to year five. The below chart shows UNL-only six-year graduation rates over the past decade.



UNL-only six-year graduation rates from 2007-2016 cohorts

¹⁷ Students who are members of more than one of these groups are represented in each graduation percentage. For instance, a first-generation Hispanic student would be represented in both the first-generation and the Hispanic graduation rates.

The NU *system* six-year graduation rate consistently entails an additional 4-5% of students who start at UNL and transfer to another NU campus and graduate within six years. The 2022 NU system six-year graduation rate is 67.3% for 3,254 students. This means from an initial fall 2016 cohort of 4,837 UNL first-year students, 3,051 graduated in six years from UNL and an additional 203 transferred to another NU campus and graduated in six years. Below are the 2022 UNL-only and NU system six-year graduation rates with the overall number of graduates by college.

College/Unit	Number of Students	UNL Only	NU System
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	357	72.7%	74.5%
Architecture	75	70.1%	70.1%
Arts and Sciences	510	63.8%	66.4%
Business	505	67.4%	69.4%
Education and Human Sciences	364	67.1%	73.1%
Engineering	443	65.5%	68.3%
Fine and Performing Arts	106	62.4%	64.2%
Journalism and Mass Communications	109	68.7%	72.7%
Explore Center ¹⁸	785	52.7%	60.7%

2022 UNL-only and NU system six-year graduation rates by college

Similar to the four-year graduation rates, the six-year graduation rates for UNL's at-promise students lag behind overall rates. Below are the 2022 UNL-only and NU system six-year graduation rates and number of graduating students within each group.

Group	Number of Students	UNL Only	NU System
First Generation	816	52.3%	56.9%
Pell-eligible	700	51.3%	56.0%
Hispanic	202	52.7%	57.5%
Two or more races	118	56.5%	61.1%
Black/African American	71	44.5%	48.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	9	60.0%	60.0%

2022 UNL-only and NU system six-year graduation rates for at-promise students

¹⁸ Students do not graduate from the Explore Center. This percentage reflects students who started their UNL careers in the Explore Center and then graduated from one of the undergraduate colleges within six years.

UNDERSTANDING UNDERGRADUATES' EXPERIENCES

Improving retention and completion rates and closing equity gaps requires a holistic focus on students' curricular and co-curricular engagement from matriculation through graduation. Key factors impacting undergraduate degree completion include academic, financial, social, and emotional wellbeing. UNL distributes several different surveys to understand wellbeing issues that students are facing and to gauge overall satisfaction with their university experience.

Husker Student POWER Survey

Since 2019, the Husker Student POWER survey has been administered during the fourth week of fall and spring semesters to all new first-year and transfer students. When a student's response suggests a concern, campus teams reach out by email, phone, and text to offer support and resources.¹⁹ The Husker Student POWER survey is considered a leading indicator for first-year students' academic performance because it enables campus units to identify students early in the fall semester who may be struggling with their transition to college.

In fall 2022, 3,033 students took the Husker Student POWER survey for an overall response rate of 57.6%. The below table shows response rates by college.

College/Unit	Number	Percentage
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	379	59.7%
Architecture	114	90.5%
Arts and Sciences	435	60.7%
Business	495	53.6%
Education and Human Sciences	290	53.8%
Engineering	455	56.5%
Fine and Performing Arts	124	59.6%
Journalism and Mass Communications	165	82.1%
Explore Center	521	52.7%

Fall 2022 Husker Student POWER survey response rates by college

¹⁹ These units include the Center for Academic Success and Transition, the Academic Navigators Team, University Housing and Residence Life, Husker Hub, OASIS, Student Involvement, the Women's Center, the LGBTQA+ Center, and Big Red Resilience and Well-being.

The below table shows the number of students who raised a concern²⁰ in relation to each statement and the accompanying percentages they represent from the overall group of 3,033 students who responded to the survey.

Statement	Number	Percentage
I am struggling in one or more classes.	800	26.4%
I am experiencing financial distress.	699	23.0%
I want assistance in becoming involved in campus life.	592	19.5%
I would like some support for my emotional wellbeing.	591	19.5%
I have questions but I do not know who to ask for answers.	439	14.5%
I have found a friend or a group of friends at UNL.	314	10.4%
I have the course materials I need for all my classes.	243	8.0%
Someone at the university cares about me.	216	7.1%
I sometimes feel alone or isolated because of my racial, ethnic, or cultural identity.	162	5.3%
I am having technological difficulties completing my coursework.	162	5.3%
I am considering not returning to UNL next semester.	162	5.3%
I sometimes feel alone or isolated because of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	130	4.3%
I am attending all of my classes (in-person and/or remotely) regularly.	99	3.3%

Fall 2022 overall concerns raised in Husker Student POWER Survey



²⁰ For positive statements, the score is reverse-coded to represent concerns.

The Husker Student POWER survey is especially valuable in understanding the wellbeing issues that may be adversely impacting UNL’s new at-promise students. For instance, the below table shows that first-generation students have higher levels of concern for every survey statement compared to new students who are not first-generation. The largest gap was represented in the statement regarding financial distress, with a 14.6% gap between first-generation and non-first-generation peers.

Statement	Non-First-Gen	First-Gen	Gap
Number of students	2170	863	
I am struggling in one or more classes.	25.1%	29.7%	+4.6%
I am experiencing financial distress.	18.9%	33.5%	+14.6%
I want assistance in becoming involved in campus life.	18.1%	23.1%	+5.0%
I would like some support for my emotional wellbeing.	17.9%	23.5%	+5.6%
I have questions but I do not know who to ask for answers.	13.1%	17.8%	+4.7%
I have found a friend or a group of friends at UNL.	9.1%	13.4%	+4.3%
I have the course materials I need for all my classes.	7.1%	10.2%	+3.1%
Someone at the university cares about me.	6.9%	7.6%	+0.7%
I sometimes feel alone or isolated because of my racial, ethnic, or cultural identity.	3.9%	9.0%	+5.1%
I am having technological difficulties completing my coursework.	4.7%	7.1%	+2.4%
I am considering not returning to UNL next semester.	6.4%	4.9%	-1.5%
I sometimes feel alone or isolated because of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	4.5%	4.2%	-0.3%
I am attending all of my classes (in-person and/or remotely) regularly.	3.9%	3.0%	-0.9%

Fall 2022 concerns raised in Husker Student POWER Survey by first-gen and non-first-gen students



May 2022 commencement mortar board.

When the Husker Student POWER survey results are disaggregated by the respondents' race/ethnicity, similar equity gaps appear in relation to concerns raised for each statement.

Statement	American Indian	Black/African American	Hispanic	Two or More Races	White
Number of students	10	100	314	95	2292
I am struggling in one or more classes.	40%	37.0%	34.7%	36.8%	23.7%
I am experiencing financial distress.	30%	34%	33.4%	33.7%	20.3%
I want assistance in becoming involved in campus life.	30%	35%	27.1%	22.1%	16.6%
I would like some support for my emotional wellbeing.	20%	25%	27.1%	32.6%	17.4%
I have questions but I do not know who to ask for answers.	40%	18%	19.4%	16.8%	13.1%
I have found a friend or a group of friends at UNL.	30%	14.0%	13.7%	14.7%	9.2%
I have the course materials I need for all my classes.	0%	11.0%	10.5%	11.6%	7.2%
Someone at the university cares about me.	30%	10.0%	10.2%	8.4%	5.7%
I sometimes feel alone or isolated because of my racial, ethnic, or cultural identity.	30%	35.0%	16.2%	14.7%	1.0%
I am having technological difficulties completing my coursework.	20%	12.0%	7.6%	8.4%	4.5%
I am considering not returning to UNL next semester.	10%	6.0%	5.7%	9.5%	5.3%
I sometimes feel alone or isolated because of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	20%	5.0%	2.9%	7.4%	4.4%
I am attending all of my classes (in-person and/or remotely) regularly.	10%	6.0%	4.8%	5.3%	2.6%

Fall 2022 concerns raised in Husker Student POWER Survey disaggregated by race/ethnicity

The Husker Student POWER survey results point to social factors that may be contributing to equity gaps for UNL's at-promise scholars, including difficulty in finding friend groups, feeling that no one cares about them, wanting support for emotional wellbeing, and feeling alone or isolated because of racial, ethnic, or cultural identity.

Graduating Senior Survey

A second survey used to gauge UNL student satisfaction with their educational experiences is the graduating senior survey. Students receive this survey the semester in which they file their intent to graduate.²¹ Administered since 2016, the graduating senior survey asks questions about students' academic experiences with academic program guidance, advising, academic support, career preparation, and skills gained in writing, communication, writing, research, human diversity, and connecting learning to societal issues. Results can be disaggregated by semester of graduation and by college.²²

Of the 2,403 students who responded to the Spring 2022 survey question on "Your overall UNL experience," 41% of students rated their experience excellent, 47% good, 10% fair, and 2% poor. Below are the graduating seniors' responses on their overall UNL experiences by college.

College	Number	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	333	42.0%	46.0%	10.0%	2.0%
Architecture	59	39.0%	54.0%	7.0%	0%
Arts and Sciences	540	41.0%	46.0%	10.0%	2.0%
Business	483	49.0%	42.0%	8.0%	1.0%
Education and Human Sciences	367	44.0%	47.0%	7.0%	2.0%
Engineering	314	31.0%	54.0%	12.0%	3.0%
Fine and Performing Arts	86	37.0%	50.0%	12.0%	1.0%
Journalism and Mass Communications	146	38.0%	49.0%	12.0%	0%

Spring 2022 graduating senior survey results on "Overall UNL Experience" by college

Below are the 2022 results on the question regarding overall UNL experience disaggregated by race/ethnicity.

Population	Number	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Black/African American	63	32.0%	52.0%	13.0%	3.0%
Hispanic	158	42.0%	43.0%	13.0%	1.0%
Two or More Races	29	45.0%	47.0%	8.0%	0.0%
White	1,896	41.0%	47.0%	10.0%	2.0%

Spring 2022 graduating senior survey results on "Overall UNL Experience" disaggregated by race/ethnicity

²¹ The survey is distributed to December, May, or August graduating classes through the Office of the University Registrar.

²² Results for the graduating senior survey can be found at go.unl.edu/sr_survey.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In fall 2022 UNL implemented an experiential learning requirement for all new undergraduates. This requirement is a target of the N2025 vision for AIM 1: Innovate Student Experiences which states “all graduates will have a documented experiential learning portfolio, including internships or apprenticeships, research or creative activity, community-engaged problem solving and/or international engagement.” The N2025 plan envisions students engaging in multiple experiential learning opportunities throughout their university careers, preparing them to be life-long learners and contributors to the workforce for Nebraska and the world.

Nationally, research shows multiple benefits for students who engage in experiential learning including improved retention and persistence in degree completion, increased sense of belonging (both peer to peer and within academic disciplines), the acquisition of skills that employers value, and increased post-graduation outcomes such as higher admissions to graduate and professional schools. While experiential learning is good for all students, it has been proven to be an especially powerful strategy for reducing at-risk scholars' equity gaps in retention and degree completion.

Since fall 2020 members of the Academic Solutions Council (ASC) and college curriculum committees have worked on proposals and processes to implement the new experiential learning requirement. The ASC identified the following elements necessary to receive experiential learning requirement approval:

- Significant creative work, skill-development, design, decision making, or stakeholder-based problem solving in a real-world context.
- Enhancement of transferable skills.
- Active engagement in formulating questions, solving problems, and connecting with previous coursework and future career goals.
- Communication, reflection, and self-assessment.

ASC members then worked in consultation with faculty in the academic colleges to identify nine categories of experiential learning that would be included in the new requirement:

- Case/Project Based
- Community Engagement
- Fieldwork
- Leadership
- Student Teaching/Practicum
- Creative Activity
- Education Abroad
- Internship/Co-op
- Research



Honors student interns lead 4-H/Extension Galactic Quest activities – January 2022.

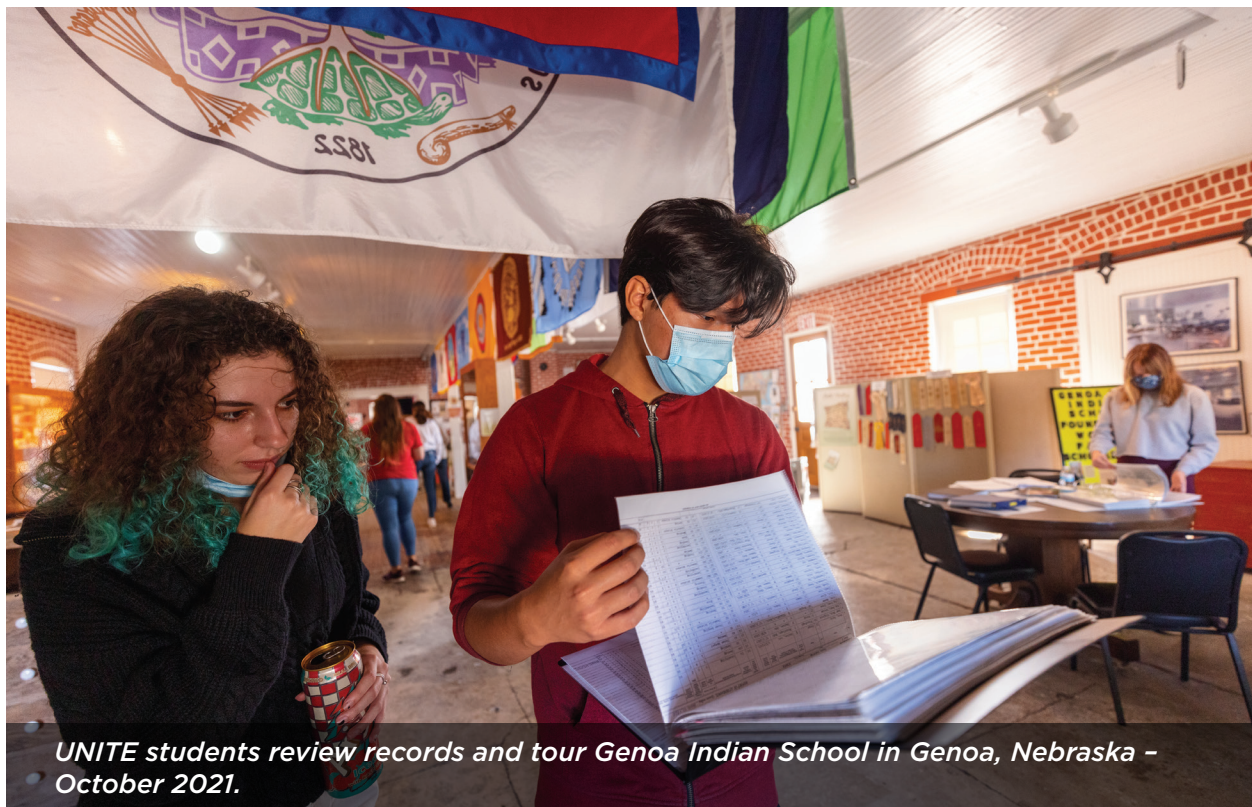
FALL UPDATE

In AY 21-22, all undergraduate college curriculum committees approved language for their academic catalog sections that their undergraduates “must complete an Experiential Learning (EL) designated course. This may include O-credit courses designed to document co-curricular activities recognized as Experiential Learning.” Approved experiential learning courses will be notated on students’ transcripts under the course title as seen in the below example.

Fall 2022					
ACCT 410	AUDITING			(3.00)	0.00
ACCT 455	RSRCH&COMM:ACCOUNTING			(3.00)	0.00
	<i>Experiential Learning</i>				
BSAD 98	SENIOR ASSESSMENT			0.00	
BSAD 444	PROFESSIONAL&LIFE SKILLS			(1.00)	
INDV 105D	GOLF I			(1.00)	
MNGT 360	MGT BEHAVR ORGANZTNS			(3.00)	0.00
MNGT 414	INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT			(3.00)	0.00
	<u>AHRS</u>	<u>EHRS</u>	<u>QHRS</u>	<u>QPTS</u>	<u>GPA</u>
Term	14.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.000
Cumulative	151.00	137.00	64.00	242.05	3.782

Undergraduate Education Programs has developed a webpage that describes the experiential learning requirement and which in the future will enable students to explore courses offered within each of the nine categories across the undergraduate colleges. This website also show-cases current UNL students’ experiences with experiential learning across a range of disciplines and contexts.

Learn more at go.unl.edu/experiential.



UNITE students review records and tour Genoa Indian School in Genoa, Nebraska - October 2021.

UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT DEGREE COMPLETION & EQUITY

In AY 21-22, faculty, staff, and academic leaders continued to collaborate on university-wide initiatives to improve undergraduate degree completion and equity outcomes. A sample of these efforts include:

STAR Savings

- The Successful Teaching with Affordable Resources (STAR) collaboration between University Libraries, Information Technology Services, the Center for Transformative Teaching, and faculty across the colleges has led to \$7.9 million in textbook savings for students through the use of inclusive access and open educational resource programs. go.unl.edu/textbooksavings

Equity Roundtables

- On August 2, 2022, students, administrators, and alumni from UNL, the Missouri University of Science and Technology, and the University of Cincinnati, participated in equity roundtables on the UNL campus. Sponsored and facilitated by the Association for Public and Land Grant Universities, participants engaged in day-long conversation around equity issues that impact recruitment and retention of at-promise students. The APLU produced a summary brief and recommendations from these conversations that is being shared with campuses across the country to help higher education leaders carry out their institutional responsibility for advancing racial equity. go.unl.edu/APLUroundtable

The Academic Navigators Team

- A new professional student success team was launched in June 2022 as part of a multi-year grant to increase degree completion and close equity gaps. The Academic Navigator team reviews data on undergraduate academic performance to identify and outreach to students who may be off track and serves as case managers for students facing complex issues that involve multiple touchpoints in collaboration with other student support professionals. Ten Academic Navigators have been hired and embedded within the colleges to complement existing student service structures. go.unl.edu/navigators

The PASS Learning Community

- A UNL faculty and staff learning community is meeting monthly with members of the Promoting At-Promise Student Success (PASS) research team housed at the University of Southern California's Pullias Center for Higher Education.²³ This learning community is discussing PASS research with the goal of collectively working to create a more validating UNL campus. In 2023, UNL will host a campus-wide retreat to share PASS findings and examples of the learning community's work to interested faculty and staff. pass.pullias.usc.edu

²³ These 11 faculty and staff are from the following units: Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, Student Advocacy and Support, the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy, Husker Hub, Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, Student Conduct and Community Standards, Big Red Resilience, Residence Life, the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor, and the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Dining Leadership Program

- This program helps students pay for their room and board, making education more affordable. By working 12 hours per week in a dining center, students cover the cost of their room and board. Along the way, students also participate in Husker GROW, engaging in intentional conversations about learning occurring on the job, and Husker Work monthly training modules for skill development.

go.unl.edu/diningleadership

Husker Student POWER orientation

- New Student Enrollment has redesigned its Life of a Husker orientation with interactive sessions framed around the Husker Student POWER framework. This format introduces POWER (purpose, ownership, wellbeing, engagement, and relationships) to help students visualize positive outcomes and success plans and connect with peers and orientation leaders to learn about opportunities and resources to enhance their Husker story. huskerstudentpower.unl.edu

Communications Review

- Staff across the offices of Husker Hub, Student Accounts, the University Registrar, Scholarships and Financial Aid and Academic Advising are collaboratively reviewing key student messages (print and electronic) to ensure that each unit's communications are validating and promote student belonging. Student focus groups in spring 2023 will provide additional feedback for improving messaging.

Instructor Learning Analytics

- A collaboration between Undergraduate Analytics, the Center for Transformative Teaching, and Information Technology Services has led to new instructor tools for supporting student success. These include reports related to the Husker Student POWER survey and Course Insights, which provide instructor dashboards on key performance, engagement, and diversity information about students in their courses. analytics.unl.edu

Career Peers

- University Career Services is collaborating with OASIS, Student Support Services/TRiO, and the William H Thompson Scholars Learning Community on a new student mentoring position called Career Peers. Career Peers support students' career exploration and development by teaching resume and cover letter design, demonstrating use of career resources such as Handshake, presenting workshops on career topics, and promoting career programming such as the First Generation and BIPOC Student Micro-internship initiative.

CashCourse

- As part of a new Student Affairs Financial Well-being initiative, students can explore financial topics and practice money management skills through a free, online financial education resource *CashCourse*. Students also can receive support and assistance from financial well-being ambassadors to learn how to reduce debt and increase savings, establish strategies to address financial concerns, and gain confidence managing their money.

Equity Grants

- The Center for Transformative Teaching awarded three-year \$60,000 grants to the Departments of History and Computer Science and Engineering for projects that prioritize inclusive excellence and student success rates, with a particular focus on closing equity gaps and promoting student belonging.

Housing Interactions

- During fall 2021, Resident Assistants in University Housing logged more than 19,000 intentional conversations that resulted in personal outreach to more than 400 students to increase retention in the subsequent semester.

New Trauma Services

- The Center for Advocacy, Response and Education, in partnership with the Trauma-Recovery Clinic (Psychological Consultation Center), began providing a graduate assistant therapist who offers therapeutic services to students who seek services from CARE for problems related to violence and interpersonal trauma. This partnership increases the availability of evidence-based PTSD treatment, providing increased support for CARE advocates, supporting graduate student training in the provision of trauma-related psychotherapy, and creating a growing connection between the CARE office and the Psychology department.

COLLEGE INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT DEGREE COMPLETION AND EQUITY

- **The College of Journalism and Mass Communications** launched The Experience Lab in fall 2021, where students across the College's majors work with professionals-in-residence for three semesters in one of the College's media outlets or agencies. The College also introduced a new Social Justice and the Media course requirement for all students. These experiences create more opportunities to learn from industry professionals and have a better understanding of diversity in the context of media, which helps with student recruitment and success efforts on campus.
- **The College of Arts and Sciences** required advising for first-year students for the first time in fall 2021. Over 92% of first-year students met with advisors in their fall and spring terms and data show that students who participated in these meetings retained at higher rates than those who did not.
- **The College of Engineering's** Readiness Academy enrolled 51 students from Lincoln and Omaha in summer 2022. This bridge program aims to prepare incoming engineering, computing, and construction management students for academic, personal, and career success in COE. These students' early start to college includes refreshing math skills, living on campus, and building community with other incoming students.
- **The College of Architecture** delivered the second iteration of its recently developed Smart Start course, DSGN 010, in Fall 2022 to bridge the transition into the College for first-year and transfer students. The course was developed and delivered by the College's Student Success staff and content supplemented by Student Peer Mentors. The course is designed to connect students to college and university resources as well as develop a sense of community.
- **The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources** co-created among first-year instructors, advisors, and student success coaches a Student Success Framework (go.unl.edu/successframework) that provides a road map for increasing degree completion and closing the equity gap through college-wide engagement and prioritizing student retention and graduation outcomes.
- **The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts** has initiated a Husker Pantry giving students throughout the College and beyond much-needed access to food, hygiene, and other personal items. The College also supports students in need with emergency funding for things that would cause a disruption to the student's academic path.
- **The University Libraries** has implemented Libraries Course Materials, a new technology and program to support students' free access to course content that instructors assign within the Libraries' collections. Research shows that the affordability of and access to course materials is correlated with student success in courses and student retention.

- **The College of Journalism and Mass Communications** piloted a mid-term grade reporting project in core required courses. The project alerted its academic advising team of students who were falling behind early in the semester, with advisors proactively outreaching to students with college and campus resources. This year the project will be expanded.
- **The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts** has initiated outreach to unregistered students, students with holds, and students with concerns raised by faculty. The College has also begun a deeper investigation into college-wide courses with high DFW rates that may be causing degree disruption and is working with faculty members who have indicated that they would like to revise curriculum to meet today's scholars in more equitable ways.
- **The College of Education and Human Sciences** has collected college-specific survey data from undergraduate and graduate students regarding their experiences. These data, which can be disaggregated by department, are being analyzed and shared with department and college leadership. Units have also completed program-specific surveys to assist program and curriculum planning.
- **The College of Business** is piloting an accelerated Math 101/100A course for 50 students in collaboration with the Math Department. Students who place into Math 100A take Math 101 and a 1- or 2-credit-hour supplementary course, enabling them to start UNL by taking a mathematics course for college credit. Students who successfully complete the co-requisite course can then take Math 104: Business Calculus in the spring semester, keeping them on-track for taking their "sophomore suite" of business classes in their third semester.
- **The University Libraries** has redeveloped its LIBR 110 course, now offered during the 3-week spring pre-session for student flexibility and opportunity to earn additional course credit. In LIBR 110: Information & Your Life, students explore how to find, access, evaluate, and use information, and they learn how the information systems they use are influenced by a variety of forces. Students develop strategies to harness the power of information to the benefit of their coursework, their lives beyond UNL, and the world.
- **The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources'** advisors and student success coaches leveraged unregistered first-time freshman dashboards for outreach, which resulted in retention of first-time freshman being up 6.7% from the Fall 2020 cohort.
- **The College of Journalism and Mass Communications** revamped its transfer student webpage to provide prospective students with information tailored to this unique population. The College's scholarship and student success committee also held back \$4,000 to award to two incoming transfer students, one in the fall and one in the spring.

- **The University Libraries** has identified student success as a focus in its reorganization of departments and is developing a programmatic approach to supporting student success through Libraries' services, spaces, and expertise.
- **The College of Education and Human Sciences** held a resource fair at a college-wide meeting to educate faculty and staff about college and campus resources using vignettes of student experiences as the learning context. CEHS also regularly delivers communications about resources via social media, a weekly advisor email delivered to all undergraduates, a graduate student listserv, a weekly college bulletin delivered to all faculty and staff, and department faculty and staff meetings.
- **The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources** has expanded affinity groups to grow an inclusive CASNR ecosystem (casnr.unl.edu/diversity-inclusion) where all students are welcomed, valued, respected and have the support to grow, thrive and reach their full potential. These groups include MANRRS, CASNR Emerging Leaders in Diversity, CASNR Connect, and Cultivate Access.
- **The College of Architecture's** Peer Mentor program and Responsible Design Learning Community are designed to provide students individual attention and a sense of community that is integral to the college.
- **The College of Arts and Sciences** is supporting effective and inclusive course experiences for student learning through its Timely Tools for Student Success newsletter that is sent to every instructor at key points in time (prior to the term, start of the term, mid-term, etc.) through a collaboration with the Center for Transformative Teaching.
- **The College of Business** offers free tutoring for 35 business classes to help students be academically successful. In AY 21-22, 29 paid tutors met individually with students via 3,317 scheduled tutoring sessions.
- **The College of Education and Human Sciences** has developed a reflection tool intended to promote equity-minded approaches to classroom interactions and course materials. In addition, the CEHS community has intentionally promoted the importance of acknowledging and respecting cultural and religious holidays and events.
- **The College of Arts and Sciences** is continuing its Challenge for Achieving Success in Undergraduate Programs (CAS UP!). All CAS units are implementing strategies to improve retention and graduation rates and close equity gaps based on data concerning their courses and students. Additionally, each unit is revising learning outcomes for their majors and minors. This important work will improve program assessment, assist in recruiting new students, and aid graduates in talking about the value of their programs with potential employers and/or graduate programs.

SUMMARY

A key measure of an institution's academic quality is the degree to which it supports all undergraduates' successful degree completion, regardless of economic, education, or racial/ethnic background. While UNL has increased its overall four-year graduation rate by 16.3% over the past decade, equity gaps remain for at-promise scholars. Given UNL's land-grant mission of access and opportunity, it is critical that the campus continue to examine how the current culture is not yet meeting its goals for the at-promise scholars it admits. These students are particularly vulnerable because when they do not complete their degrees, they and their families are often doubly burdened with financial debt and lack of job prospects. The state of Nebraska is also impacted because these students cannot contribute to its college educated workforce needs. Increasing degree completion of UNL's at-promise scholars remains a relevant and significant imperative for the university and the state.

Useful Definitions to Know

Understanding data on graduation, retention, and equity entails some basic definitions for how such calculations are made. These definitions are used to enter institutional data into the national Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Cohort: Students who start their degree or certificate programs within a particular year and who are tracked as a group by an institution over time.

Graduation Rate: The number of full-time, first-time, degree or certificate seeking undergraduates in a particular year (cohort) who complete a degree/certificate within a certain number of years (e.g., four, five, six years). Example: If 4,000 full time, first-year students start in fall 2019 and 2,800 of that cohort graduate in 2023, the four-year graduation rate would be 70%. If 3,200 of that same cohort graduate by 2025, the six-year graduation rate would be 80%.

Retention Rate: The number of full-time, first-time, degree or certificate seeking undergraduates in a particular year who re-enroll the following year at the same institution. When used in national reporting, retention always refers to the first-year retention rate. Within an institution, second- and third-year retention rates are also often used.

Equity Gap: Any disparity in a metric — such as a graduation or retention rate — along racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, first-generation, or other major demographic groupings. Example: If 84% of white students and 76% of Black/African American students from the 2014 cohort graduate in 2020, the equity gap in the six-year graduation rate between these students would be 8.0%.



University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor
208 Canfield Administration Building
Lincoln, NE 68588-0420

UNIVERSITY *of* NEBRASKA–LINCOLN