

College of Arts and Sciences Priorities
Revised for Academic Year 2005-2006
March 29, 2006

The College of Arts and Sciences' core values rest upon the principle that our teaching and outreach programs are informed by our research. Our priorities are thus overlapping in the sense that we are the core college in a research university. We promote quality research for its own sake. That research informs our collective work in classrooms, and it provides the basis upon which the college's service to the larger society is built.

Based on these values, the College of Arts and Sciences has three strategic priorities aimed at enhancing the quality and reputation of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The College and the campus are modest in size and in financial resources; achieving our priorities will require marshalling human resources in ways that are not confined by our current structure. The College of Arts and Sciences will continue to promote low walls and porous boundaries by encouraging collaboration across programs, departments and colleges.

Making progress largely means deploying faculty positions in ways that reflect our priorities. Although the following priorities seem general, they are built upon the plans of the departments and programs in the college. This plan flows out of the underlying individual plans, and they should be considered along with it. They were submitted in January.

In aggregate, the latest program plans make requests for faculty hiring in an amount totaling about three times the resources to be expected from faculty turnover. However, the college historically has been able to authorize only about \$1 million in salaries for new faculty per year from its own existing resources. It is not clear whether we can really expect almost twice as much the turnover as is typical, but it seems unlikely. Therefore, the College of Arts and Sciences as a whole will see slower progress than the programs that report to it would like.

It is also unclear whether the fact that a approximately 30% of the funds released by faculty departures now finds its way to Academic Affairs will further diminish the college's ability to move forward. We succeeded in recovering dollars from this pool to make senior hires, but we have not garnered new faculty lines from the reverted dollars. In the past the differences between senior departures and junior replacements could be used to gradually increase faculty size or be redeployed for other college needs, such as an absolute need to expand support staff as the size of the research enterprise grows or for expansions of graduate assistantship budgets to add new positions or to address low stipend levels.

Based on these factors, The College of Arts and Sciences' priorities are to:

1. Invest in signature programs of research and graduate education that promise to propel UNL towards realizing Vision 2020. Such programs include projects that are already ongoing, but they are not limited to them. Examples include:

- Signature programs in the physical sciences, including Atomic, Molecular, Optical, and Plasma Physics; Nanoscience and Technology; the new MERSEC; the Keck Center; Structural Biology and Proteomics
- Software Engineering

- Digital Research in the Humanities, the Cather Project, the Nebraska Creative Writing Summer Workshop
- Nebraska Center for Virology, Bioinformatics and Biological Modeling
- Law and Psychology, the Center for Children, Youth, Families and Schools, Behavioral Health

The College will promote programs of this kind by:

- a. Continuing to promote collaborations and interdisciplinary work, especially across department and college boundaries.
- b. Placing new and replacement faculty positions in programs that have good prospects for bringing national prominence to UNL.
- c. Working to enhance graduate stipends through private donations for enhancements of state-funded stipends and by redeployment of state resources where possible, thereby promoting the recruitment of a high quality, diverse pool of graduate students.
- d. Seeking university commitments to increase staff support, particularly in grant impacted departments and programs.
- e. Urging the pursuit of research facility enlargement and improvement as a major part of the university agenda.

2. Invest in an enhanced undergraduate experience that increases the value of a UNL degree and encourages students to reach their full potential. Programs which support undergraduate learning include (but are not limited to):

- The Writing Assistance Center, the Chemistry Resource Center
- The College of Arts and Sciences Advising Center
- The Alpha Learning Community and course support for many other university learning communities
- The Global Classroom
- The University Honors Program and the J.D. Edwards Program

The College will promote undergraduate experiences of this kind by:

- a. Enhancing the quality of instruction in lower division large lecture courses by encouraging development of more high quality discussion sections led by graduate teaching assistants, adding new GTA lines, and promoting consistent training of GTAs at the department level.
- b. Encouraging the deployment of our best teachers, particularly talented senior faculty, in lower division courses to stimulate academic interest and promote better retention.
- c. Providing continued academic support for student centered learning that occurs in learning communities across the university.
- d. Supporting faculty and GTA professional development around teaching and the assessment of student learning.
- e. Promoting research by undergraduates wherever possible, for example by supporting UCARE and the McNair Program.
- f. Improving college advising through the College Advising Center and its coordination with academic program advising, by placing additional professional advisors in heavily impacted programs, by providing opportunities for professional development for advisors, and by rewarding faculty who have advising responsibilities.
- g. Supporting department/program recruitment and retention efforts, for example by working with the Office of Admissions to personalize student recruiting.

- h. Promoting as university priorities the improvement of classroom spaces and the construction of additional quality classrooms.

3. Encourage effective collaborative partnerships and outreach where the college's research and teaching programs result in social and educational improvement of our communities within the state and region. Examples include:

- The Math in the Middle Project, Project Fulcrum
- The Center for Children, Families, and the Law
- The Nebraska Writing Project
- LAMP (Latino Achievement Mentoring Program)
- All Girls All Math, Language Days, Chemistry Day, Computer Science programming contest.

The College will promote further outreach of this kind by

- a. Supporting outreach to public schools, particularly K-12 teachers' professional development and curriculum and instructional strategies, and assessment.
- b. Supporting current initiatives on research and outreach to ethnic, minority, and immigrant communities.
- c. Encouraging the development of service learning courses in which students receive academic credit for
- d. Supporting initiatives designed to introduce Nebraska students to academic disciplines and careers, particularly those which target underrepresented groups