

Assurance Argument
University of Nebraska-Lincoln - NE

9/12/2016

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), a public, research-intensive, land-grant university, is the flagship campus of the four-campus University of Nebraska (NU) system (UNL, University of Nebraska at Kearney, University of Nebraska Medical Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha). The [university president oversees the NU system](#), which is governed by an elected Board of Regents, whose powers are defined in Nebraska state statutes. The [regents are charged with developing and approving](#) the mission statements for each campus, including UNL, and ensuring that the mission aligns with UNL's legacy as a public land-grant university.

1.A.1. [UNL's mission statement](#) was developed in consultation with university faculty, staff, students and stakeholders and approved by the Board of Regents in May 1991. The mission statement was most recently updated in 2015.

As Nebraska's only public, research intensive, land-grant research university, UNL's mission is to teach, do research and serve Nebraskans. UNL has enacted this mission with a consistent focus on two priorities – excellence in undergraduate education and excellence in research – always pursued within the context of engagement derived from its land-grant tradition.

Classified as a Carnegie research university (very high research activity), UNL fulfills its mission within its commitment to provide comprehensive, quality academic programs and service to the state. Through its undergraduate programs, UNL provides students a foundational understanding of a broad range of disciplines followed by the opportunity for in-depth study in a chosen discipline at the graduate level. Learning occurs not only in the classroom, but also through engagement in campus life and in communities and organizations beyond the university, preparing students for a lifetime of success and leadership.

In the last decade, UNL has expanded both the breadth and depth of its research, scholarship and creative activity; strengthened strategic partnerships with industry; and established NUtech Ventures, a nonprofit university affiliate to commercialize research discoveries to benefit society and fuel Nebraska's economy. Since 2006, the amount of federally funded research expenditures at UNL

increased 23%, and the amount of [total research expenditures increased 30%](#). In FY 2014, federally funded research expenditures were \$94,264,592 out of \$278,298,807 in total research expenditures. The university is on track to meet its institutional growth goal of \$300 million in total research expenditures by 2020.

UNL Extension delivers research-based knowledge that Nebraskans can immediately use in their lives, businesses, families and communities. Educational program areas include beef systems, the learning child, community environment, community vitality, cropping and water systems, food, nutrition and health, and 4-H development. Of the 93 counties in Nebraska, 83 host extension offices. This network allows for quick dissemination of discoveries and research findings.

1.A.2. UNL's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are guided by its stated mission.

Academic programs

Mission and role are emphasized throughout the core academic matters of the university. UNL's Academic Planning Committee, the Nebraska Board of Regents and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education in Nebraska require UNL to justify all programs on the basis of centrality to the university's role and mission, and to keep them consistent with the [Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education](#).

UNL's mission reflects a tripartite responsibility as Nebraska's only public, research intensive, land-grant university and the state's largest provider of undergraduate education in a state in which agriculture is an essential economic driver. UNL offers 137 undergraduate majors, 70 master's majors, 43 doctoral majors, 7 professional degrees, 32 certificates and 8 supplemental endorsements in over 165 fields. UNL's nine colleges — Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Architecture, Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education and Human Sciences, Engineering, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, Journalism and Mass Communications, and Law — carry out the institution's responsibility for combining the breadth of a research-intensive university with the professional and outreach orientation of a land-grant campus.

Student support services

UNL provides [student support services](#) consistent with its mission. Beginning in 2011, [significant initiatives were implemented](#) in the areas of advising, admissions and transfer credit, faculty engagement, curricula, high impact practices (e.g., learning communities, education abroad, etc.), and academic support and career services, exemplifying UNL's commitment to undergraduate success. Students have in-person access to academic support and student affairs resources, and, in many cases, online delivery for remote locations. See Core Component 3.D.1. for more detail.

Renovations to key facilities also have improved student support services (see Core Component 5.C.2.). For example, the first floor of Love Library South was transformed into a one-stop hub for student success services, and renovations to Love Library North have reestablished the library as the central core of academic life in a digital environment.

Enrollment profile

UNL supports students from Nebraska and beyond and has experienced significant growth in the past 10 years. Total student enrollment grew by 17%, from 21,675 in fall 2005 to 25,260 in fall 2015. *NOTE: This section reflects enrollment through fall 2015, because enrollment variables for fall 2016*

had not been analyzed at the time of the submission of this Assurance Argument.

The [fall 2015 student population](#) reflects UNL's mission as the public, research-intensive, land-grant university for the state of Nebraska, as well as its role in attracting young people from elsewhere who can contribute to the economy of the state. UNL welcomes non-Nebraskans, including international students and those who opt to complete their programs through distance education.

Nebraska residents continue to comprise the largest enrollment group for the university, with 17,643 Nebraska residents enrolled in fall 2015, making up 70% of the total student population. Fall 2015 enrollment included students from 92 of Nebraska's 93 counties, every U.S. state, and 130 foreign countries. Although the resident population increased by 4% from 16,941 in fall 2005, more significant growth came from outside Nebraska. Between fall 2005 and fall 2015, domestic non-resident enrollment grew 46% (from 3,416 to 5,093), and international enrollment grew 92% (from 1,318 to 2,524), for a combined growth of 2,883 students. In the same period, domestic minority student enrollment increased by 87%, from 1,712 to 3,205 students. As of fall 2015, 30% of students are non-residents and 10% are from abroad; 12.7% of domestic enrollees are students of color.

The majority of the student population (80%) is at the undergraduate level, with graduate students accounting for 18% of the total and professional students for 2%. The proportion of undergraduate students remained stable since the last review, changing only from 79% to 80%.

UNL is primarily a residential campus community; 27% of the total student population lives in university housing and 8% in fraternities or sororities. UNL is also a traditional-aged campus, with 81% of students under age 25. Ninety-three percent of undergraduates are enrolled as full-time students (12 or more credits), and 48% of graduate students are enrolled full-time (9 or more credits). For the 2015-2016 academic year, 21% of undergraduates qualified for Pell Grants, and 74% received some level of financial aid.

UNL has set challenging enrollment goals, and current growth suggests the campus is on track to meet them. Setting historic records for the size of incoming classes from 2011 to 2015, the university has maintained an average ACT score of 25.3 in the freshman entering class and increased the number of entering underrepresented minority students by 62% (from 534 to 857).

1.A.3. UNL's mission is consistent with planning across the institution.

The two overriding priorities of UNL's mission – excellence in undergraduate education and excellence in research – provide the most significant return on investment for Nebraskans. These priorities serve Nebraska's workforce, talent and research development needs while allowing the campus to take on grand challenges with global relevance. The intellectual origin of these priorities can be traced to two faculty task force reports produced around the turn of the new millennium – [Everyone a Learner, Everyone a Teacher](#) (a road map for enhancing undergraduate education) and [A 2020 Vision](#) (a road map for enhancing research and graduate education). The focus on undergraduate education and research has been consistently communicated to internal and external audiences and has served as the [organizing framework for strategic decisions](#) at the campus and unit levels. In 2006, the campus adopted [A Strategic Plan for UNL: Setting Our Compass](#), which reaffirms these two priorities and further clarifies the strategic planning approaches that might help to achieve them.

In 2011, UNL became a member of the Big Ten athletic conference and, perhaps more importantly, joined the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (now the Big Ten Academic Alliance), the prestigious academic consortium comprised of Big Ten institutions plus the University of Chicago. At that time, UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman emphasized the importance of UNL's mission, stating,

“From both an academics standpoint and an athletics perspective, this makes sense for the future of our university. The academic, research and engagement activities carried out by UNL are an excellent fit with those achieved by Big Ten institutions.”

To take strategic advantage of the new opportunities provided by closer collaboration with 14 major research universities, the campus was challenged to achieve [five specific goals](#) for undergraduate education and research by 2020: Increase total enrollment to 30,000 students; improve the 6-year graduation rate by 10%; add 160 new tenure-track faculty lines; increase total research expenditures to \$300M; and double the number of prestigious awards faculty earn. Progress on these goals is described in Criterion 3.

Several efforts have been directed at managing enrollment growth. In 2012, members of the campus community in a larger conversation related to enrollment growth on campus developed the [Campus Blueprint](#), a broad strategic enrollment management plan. In 2014, with wide-ranging campus and community input, a new [campus master plan](#) was approved in anticipation of infrastructure needs to meet enrollment goals. The [2016-2020 Enrollment Management Plan](#) articulates enrollment growth goals for the next four years at the undergraduate and graduate levels for each college and describes new and enhanced academic and student support services to support such growth.

[Academic planning is aligned with UNL’s mission](#) through institutional policies and procedures. UNL adds new programs and modifies existing ones to respond to the needs of the state and to achieve ambitious goals while adhering to its stated mission. In the last 5 years, 5 new majors, 22 minors and 21 certificates have been approved, and 7 others are in the review process. New programs reflect the intersection of UNL’s research strengths and the workforce needs of Nebraska and the world, including applied climate science and complex biosystems; music entrepreneurship; quilt studies; graphic design; childhood obesity prevention; civic engagement; space, telecommunications and cyber security law; engineering management; and water resources engineering.

Significant expansion of new technology and analytics degree programs serve Nebraska’s fast-growing tech industries, including a new undergraduate major in software engineering. The state serves as headquarters to some of the largest railroad and trucking companies, as well as food and agricultural manufacturing companies in America; in response, the College of Business Administration created an undergraduate major in supply chain management. UNL’s prominence in digital research in the humanities has led to an interdisciplinary graduate certificate and undergraduate minor. In addition, new graduate specializations were approved in business analytics, systems analysis, computational organismal biology, ecology and evolution, integrated plant biology and microbial interactions.

The university’s strategic planning also is grounded in its mission. The Nebraska Board of Regents produces systemwide strategic goals outlined in the [University of Nebraska Strategic Framework](#). UNL’s goals are incorporated into this document, and colleges and units are reminded to align priorities not only with UNL’s mission and goals, but also with this strategic framework. Most colleges have [publicly available strategic plans](#) and hold annual faculty and staff meetings to update progress toward meeting stated goals. In addition, [most units and departments have adopted statements](#) that interpret and articulate their specific roles in fulfilling the institution’s overall mission. See Core Component 5.C. for more detail about budgeting and planning.

UNL’s chancellor Ronnie Green began his role in May 2016. UNL is now beginning a series of transitions at the senior administrative level. The positions of senior vice chancellor of academic affairs (chief academic officer, or SVCAA) and vice chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (VCIANR) are held by interim administrators, and several other campus-level

administrators are near retirement. The University of Nebraska system president Dr. Hank Bounds started his position in April 2015. During this time of administrative transition, UNL's commitment to undergraduate education and research, as well as its ambitious goals for advancing those priorities, will serve as a valuable source of continuity as the campus continues to advance its mission.

Sources

- A 2020 Vision-Task Force Report-2000
- Campus and Landscape Master Plans-B&F-2013
- Campus Blueprint-Academic Affairs-2012
- Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education-CCPE-2006
- Current Student Services-2016
- Enrollment Management Plan-ASEM-2016
- Everyone a Learner, Everyone a Teacher-Task Force Report-2003
- Fall Enrollment Profile-UNL Fact Book-2015
- Mission Statements-2016
- Mission Statement-UNL Fact Book-2015
- NU Organizational Chart-Central Administration-2016
- Program Proposals-Academic Affairs-2016
- State of the University Address-Chancellor-2011
- State Statutes-Nebraska Legislature-2016
- Strategic Compass-2015
- Strategic Decision Making-Academic Affairs-2012
- Strategic Planning Framework-BoR-2015
- Strategic Plans-Academic Affairs-2016
- Student Success Strategic Plan-Academic Affairs-2015
- Total Research Expenditures-ORED-2015

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.B.1. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln publicly articulates its mission statement, which clearly identifies the scope of UNL's academic programs, research and service activities, as well as the intended constituents of its programs.

Each year in the [state of the university address](#), the chancellor reports to the university community, Board of Regents, faculty, staff, students, alumni and all Nebraskans on the progress made in carrying out the university's mission, the areas for improvement and actions that will be taken to make changes. These addresses, broadcast live and available in video and print on the UNL website, constitute a 15-year documentation of how UNL has transformed to meet the changing needs of its students, faculty and staff, and the needs of the state, while remaining true to its vision, mission and core values.

Constituents can access UNL's mission statement from UNL's home page under "[About UNL](#)," on the central administration website at Nebraska.edu, and in the annual [UNL Fact Book](#). *Just the Facts* is an annual publication summarizing key information such as enrollment, degrees conferred, international engagement, facilities, personnel, budget, research, and many other interesting and useful facts about UNL. Copies are distributed to all campus units to share with constituents and campus visitors. The booklet also is available online.

The university's mission also is articulated in wide-ranging communications to many diverse constituencies. [UNL Today](#) showcases UNL news from across the campus. University Communications expresses the mission through the [Toolbox & Brand Book](#) and promotes our mission through [news releases](#). Some units also [publish yearly reports](#), demonstrating how they are meeting goals and accomplishing UNL's mission.

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) has outlined its vision in [IANR to 2025](#), a framework describing the institute's "local impact with a global reach." The IANR vice chancellor holds twice-yearly "[all-hands meetings](#)" of faculty and staff, which are broadcast live and available as video on the IANR website, to provide updates and report progress on campus initiatives as well as work at its research and extension centers and 4-H programs consistent with IANR's vision, goals and objectives.

UNL's statewide land-grant extension mission is to help "Nebraskans enhance their lives through

research-based education” and is delivered through its county extension offices and four research and extension centers at Scottsbluff, North Platte, Norfolk and Mead.

1.B.2. Annual reports, publications, websites and other documents emphasize UNL’s tripartite mission of teaching, research and service.

The Strategic Compass clarifies UNL’s vision, values and priorities in relation to the mission statement. Most units and departments have adopted statements that interpret and articulate their specific roles in fulfilling UNL’s overall mission. The [Office of Research and Economic Development’s \(ORED\) annual report](#) identifies the ways in which faculty contribute to the research mission. *The Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluations, Promotion and Tenure* speak to the importance of teaching, scholarship and creative activity, and service. The themes of teaching, research and service are woven throughout the story that Undergraduate Admissions and Graduate Studies share with prospective students through information on their websites and in [recruitment materials](#). Opportunities for students to engage with faculty, be a part of important research, and make meaningful contributions to the world are featured in [UNL magazines](#) and on websites. Additionally, programs designed for the university’s newest faculty, staff and students, such as New Faculty Orientation, New Employee Orientation, New Graduate Student Welcome, and New Student Enrollment, publicly communicate the mission of the university.

1.B.3. As a land-grant institution, UNL embraces a tripartite role of providing quality undergraduate and graduate education, discovery and translational research, and service to the state, the region and the world.

UNL's mission statement clearly identifies the scope of UNL’s academic programs, research and service activities as well as the nature, scope, and intended constituents of its programs. The commitment to the university's constituency also is articulated in the *Strategic Compass* and in the strategic and operational plans of divisions, colleges, departments and other units.

Sources

- About UNL-Website-2016
- Admissions Recruitment-2016
- All Hands Meetings-IANR-2016
- Annual Reports-2015
- Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty-Academic Senate-2001
- Innovating Agriculture and Natural Resources to 2025-IANR-2011
- Just the Facts-IRADS-2015
- Nebraska Today-UCOMM-2016
- News Releases-UCOMM-2016
- Research at Nebraska Annual Report-ORED-2015
- State of the University Address-Chancellor
- Toolbox and Brand Book-UCOMM-2016
- UNL Fact Book-2015
- UNL Fact Book-2015 (page number 8)
- UNL Magazines-2016

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.C.1. UNL's commitment to the diversity of society in its domestic and global dimensions is expressed in its mission statement:

"The University of Nebraska–Lincoln promotes respect for and understanding of cultural diversity in all aspects of society. It strives for a culturally diverse student body, faculty, and staff reflecting the multicultural nature of Nebraska and the nation."

"UNL brings international and multicultural dimensions to its programs through the involvement of its faculty in international activities, a student body that includes students from throughout the world, exchange agreements with other universities abroad involving both students and faculty, and the incorporation of international components in a variety of courses and curricula."

UNL includes an explicit [non-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action policy statement](#) on all published university-approved materials. The statement was revised in 2010 and 2015.

In 2008, Nebraskans passed Initiative 424, an amendment to the state constitution prohibiting the state from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to any person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity or gender. Although several changes were made to admissions programs and scholarships to comply with the change to the constitution, [UNL remains committed to aggressively advancing its diversity goals](#).

UNL [students overwhelmingly supported a fee](#) to fund the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center, which opened in March 2010 as the nation's largest multicultural center attached to a student union. The center houses the Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services (OASIS), which focuses on the needs of ethnic minority students and provides academic excellence, diversity awareness and social engagement services and programs.

1.C.2. UNL's commitment to diversity is reflected in a variety of activities and programs.

In November 2015, more than 1,400 high school students from across Nebraska attended UNL's Black Leadership and Latino Leadership Symposiums, which gave students opportunities to address community issues, discuss the challenges facing African American and Latino cultures, and prepare for success in college. As a follow-up to the diversity symposia, a new scholarship and retention program, [Emerging Leaders](#), was implemented in 2016 to support underrepresented minority and first-generation students.

Additional programs, activities and resources help UNL realize its goal of creating a diverse, inclusive

environment and of increasing knowledge and awareness of diversity among its students, faculty and staff.

- The [Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color](#) includes faculty, administrators and students who advise the chancellor on issues pertaining to the specific concerns of people of color at UNL.
- The [Dine, Dialogue, and Pass It On](#) program encourages open discussions around race, diversity and inclusion, and trains faculty and staff to facilitate these discussions, and has been expanded to include incoming students through Husker Dialogues.
- [MLK Week](#) pays tribute to Martin Luther King through a series of events, including a service learning project, the MLK Award Reception and a panel discussion with UNL faculty and students.
- A commitment to diversity and inclusion also is reflected in the more than [500 student organizations](#) on campus.
- The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities works to fulfill UNL's commitment to ensuring equal access to curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students with disabilities.
- The LGBTQA+ Resource Center provides an inclusive space for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, along with resources, programming and advocacy, assistance and allies. The Resource Center recently helped University Housing implement gender-inclusive housing, restrooms and nursing stations.
- Education Abroad facilitates study, research, internships and service learning beyond the United States.

Curricular offerings address issues related to a multicultural society. UNL's commitment to diversity is integrated into the ACE curriculum for undergraduates. Details are described in Core Component 3.B.4.

UNL has prioritized recruitment of international students by facilitating partnerships with institutions in countries such as China and Brazil. As of August 2014, UNL had hosted over 300 Brazilian students in undergraduate academic programs, the Intensive English Program and master's degree programs. Through international education and exchanges, both international and domestic students have an opportunity to learn from each other and develop broader understandings. See Core Component 3.B.4 for more detail.

UNL is proactively pursuing gender diversity in its recruitment of faculty in underrepresented disciplinary fields. UNL received an [NSF Institutional Transformation Advance Grant](#) to promote the successful recruitment of women and underrepresented minority faculty in STEM fields from 2008-2013. Its success led to specific programs institutionalized through Academic Affairs for continued support of recruitment initiatives and dual-career hiring.

UNL's commitment to supporting human diversity also is reflected in its efforts to close the graduation gap between white and minority students. In 2015, UNL ranked first on a list of 26 universities that [significantly narrowed the degree completion gap](#) between white and minority students. Between 2003 and 2013, UNL narrowed its gap by 15.2 percentage points.

Nationally recognized initiatives allow UNL to capitalize on research excellence in diversity issues and provide outreach to the community. For example, the [Minority Health Disparities Initiative \(MHDI\)](#) links science, practice, policy and training to eliminate minority health disparities and offers research opportunities, conferences and events and an NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program. The [Rural Futures Initiative](#) mobilizes the resources of UNL and its

partners to support rural communities and regions in building upon their unique strengths, including ethnic diversity, to achieve their desired futures. [Nebraska Mosaic](#), a project of UNL's College of Journalism and Mass Communications, seeks to give voice to Lincoln's growing refugee and immigrant communities by covering refugees' issues and helping them communicate with each other.

Despite these efforts, in 2013 the campus was reminded that it was not immune from racial tensions in the larger society. Following two incidents of racial intolerance, the chancellor issued a message to the UNL community denouncing the actions of a few and urging others to confront and speak out against such outrages and embrace those against whom actions were directed. The campus responded with a campaign, [Not Here, Not Now](#), and a plan to [restructure the administrative offices and initiatives](#) that address diversity issues.

- The Office of Equity, Access and Diversity was restructured as the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance to handle matters related to compliance and investigation.
- Academic Affairs and Student Affairs were charged with creating strategic plans for advancing diversity issues among faculty and students. The work of these units is in progress. Individual colleges were charged to incorporate diversity goals within their strategic plans as well.
- Human Resources assumed employment-related diversity efforts and was charged with improving diversity among university staff. A director of staff diversity was hired in 2016 to lead such efforts.
- UNL launched [TIPS Prevent](#), a web-based system allowing individuals to report incidents and concerns related to discrimination, sexual harassment and other inappropriate conduct. As of May 1, 2016, 168 actions had been submitted and addressed.
- The [Diversity Administrative Council](#), which includes members from across the campus and advises the chancellor, was created to assure the work of all units is coordinated, accountable, sustainable and effective.

In the wake of national concerns about racism, particularly on university campuses, UNL students worked together to organize a [Black Lives Matter event](#), supported by administrators, in November 2015. Following this campus rally, the [chancellor reiterated the university's commitment](#) to build a campus that fully embraces the value of all its members. Student Affairs was charged with cataloguing units and programs that conduct multicultural programming and connecting them with students of color. Academic deans were encouraged to integrate diversity into their strategic plans. Faculty were asked to continually assess achievement-centered education courses that fulfill diversity requirements. New Student Enrollment was advised to explore diversity workshops for incoming students. The entire campus was directed to confront racism and racist acts whenever necessary.

Sources

- ADVANCE Nebraska-Academic Affairs-2016
- Black Lives Matter Rally-2015
- Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color-2016
- Close the Graduation Gap-2016
- Dine, Dialogue and Pass It On-Student Affairs-2016
- Diversity Commitment-Chancellor-2016
- Diversity Council-Chancellor-2016
- Diversity Initiative-Chancellor-2016
- Diversity Restructuring-Chancellor-2014
- Emerging Leaders-Academic Affairs-2016

- Gaughan Multicultural Center-2006
- Minority Health Disparities Initiative-2015
- MLK Week-2016
- Nebraska Mosaic-JMC-2016
- Non-Discrimination Statement-IEC-2015
- Not Here, Not Now, Not Ever-2013
- Rural Futures Institute-2016
- Student Organizations-Student Affairs-2016
- TIPS Incident Reporting System-2016

1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.D.1. As the only public, research-intensive, land-grant university for Nebraska, UNL is committed to research, teaching and outreach that serve the public good.

A [2016 study by NU found that UNL has an overall economic impact](#) of \$2 billion across Nebraska. This impact includes direct or indirect support of almost 17,000 jobs and generation of \$74 million in state and local revenues.

UNL demonstrates its commitment to the public good by addressing the state's specific workforce and research and development needs; contributing expertise to Nebraska's P-12 schools (with a special emphasis on early childhood); serving the public through Nebraska Extension programs in all 93 counties; and providing educational and cultural enrichment through programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, agriculture, business and other areas that are available to all citizens.

1.D.2. UNL recognizes its statewide educational responsibilities at all levels.

UNL is a public academic and research institution. It balances core programmatic responsibilities for extension, outreach and economic development. As a non-profit public state institution, UNL has no fiduciary responsibility to generate financial returns for investors. It does have financial responsibilities to the Board of Regents, which ensures accountability for use of state and other financial resources, and to the citizens of Nebraska (see Core Component 5.A.1.).

1.D.3. The university advances its public engagement mission through wide-ranging activities.

UNL not only educates, trains and grants degrees to the largest percentage of teachers throughout the state, the university also develops and provides specialized resources and programs for teachers from early childhood education through high school. As an example, the [Nebraska Writing Project \(NeWP\)](#), a network of professional educators and affiliated writers aims to improve, enhance and celebrate writing in classrooms and communities across Nebraska. The NeWP is the second oldest National Writing Project site in the country and has provided professional development for thousands of teachers through summer institutes, year-long continuity and school in-service programs. [NebraskaMATH](#), a statewide partnership funded by the National Science Foundation since 2004, is improving achievement in mathematics for all students and narrowing achievement gaps of at-risk students by working through Nebraska's Educational Service Units and the public school systems in the major cities.

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute, including UNL and the other three NU campuses, is a new model for how public higher education can engage with children and families in the first years of life. UNL provides the research and educational centerpiece of this effort, including the [Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools](#), which has received more than \$20 million in educational research funding targeted toward early childhood and works with schools across the state; the Barkley Memorial Center, which provides child speech and hearing services and assessments of learning disabilities for the public; and the College of Education and Human Sciences, which offers students more than 100 courses related to early childhood.

UNL's commitment to the public good is further demonstrated by programs that support military and veteran students and their families. UNL was named a [2016 Military Friendly School](#) and Military Times Best for Vets School. *U.S. News and World Report* recently recognized UNL in its "best online programs for veterans." The [Childcare and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project](#) provides research-based technical assistance to professionals who care for young children in communities with a high concentration of off-installation military families, and the program has expanded to 21 other states. With certificates, undergraduate and graduate programs on campus and online, UNL offers flexibility, convenience and affordability for members of the military and their dependents.

UNL Athletics is another example of how the university advances its public engagement mission. UNL Athletics is not only self-funded, but financially supports core missions of the institution in its unique partnerships with UNL research and its funding of University Libraries journals. When an expansion of Memorial Stadium was being planned, university leaders recognized an opportunity to bring top researchers under one roof to study the biological underpinnings of behavior and performance by locating two new research centers in the stadium. The Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior and the Nebraska Athletic Performance Laboratory share data gathered from the brain center's fMRI brain-imaging equipment and the performance lab's sophisticated motion-tracking sensors; both have unprecedented access to UNL student athletes to participate in research studies. The partnership is [forging a new model for health research](#) – bridging not only academics and athletics but also the broader healthcare community to improve athletes' performance and safety well beyond their collegiate years.

[UNL Extension](#) delivers research-informed knowledge that Nebraskans can immediately use in their lives, businesses, families and communities. Extension's key areas are animal agriculture; crops for the future; children, youth and families; entrepreneurship; food, nutrition and health; water and environment. This research-based service to the state is a feature that distinguishes UNL as a land-grant university. Agricultural Research Division scientists, who currently are working on approximately 300 research projects throughout Nebraska, also hold teaching or extension appointments. This structure allows for new discoveries to move quickly from the field or laboratory into the classroom and across Nebraska.

The Buros Center for Testing, the world's premier test review center, operates as an independent, non-profit organization, housed in UNL's Department of Educational Psychology in the College of Education and Human Sciences. It shares its expertise in assessment-related endeavors beyond the university by providing critical appraisals of tests and descriptive information, offering psychometric consultation services, and developing deeper understanding of testing and assessment practices. The Oscar K. Buros Library of Mental Measurements houses the largest collection of commercially available tests in the world.

UNL serves all Nebraskans through programs providing cultural enrichment. Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, the state's Public Broadcasting System affiliate, provides noncommercial

educational telecommunications throughout Nebraska through television and radio broadcast, satellite, fiber optic, computer and other technologies. NET is a UNL affiliate governed by the Board of Regents and the NET Commission.

The University of Nebraska State Museum reaches far beyond its nationally recognized exhibits with extensive educational programs that feature the work of UNL faculty, such as *Sundays with a Scientist* and Investigate, as well as Museum Kits, mini-collections that bring the museum to teachers' classrooms.

UNL's mission is furthered by outreach programs in the fine and performing arts, film and theatre. The Sheldon Museum of Art is recognized as one of the finest museums of contemporary American art in the U.S. and provides active outreach for the entire state. The Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center offers a comprehensive exhibition program committed to screening a wide diversity of high quality cinema. The Thespian Festival, hosted by UNL and the Educational Theatre Association, attracts more than 3,700 attendees to campus each year. Core Component 3.D describes additional cultural and arts facilities.

A key element of UNL's mission is innovation that expands the local horizons and economy. UNL has pursued the development of [Nebraska Innovation Campus \(NIC\)](#), a 233-acre private-public research and technology center designed to facilitate in-depth partnerships between the University of Nebraska and private sector businesses.

NIC leverages UNL's research capacity by [attracting private sector companies](#) to work closely with faculty and students, generating jobs and economic activity. For example, UNL's Food Science and Technology Department relocated to Innovation Campus in fall 2015 to enhance collaboration with ConAgra Foods and other major food companies at NIC. NIC also houses NMotion, a full service start-up consultation service intended to connect investors and local entrepreneurs.

[NUtech Ventures](#), housed at NIC, is a nonprofit affiliate of UNL that commercializes technologies by forming innovative research and development partnerships between university researchers and the private sector.

Sources

- CB3 and Athletics Partnership-2016
- Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools-CEHS-2016
- Economic Impact on State Report-Central Administration-2016
- Innovation Campus Partnerships-2016
- Innovation Campus-2016
- Military Families Extension Project-IANR-2016
- Military Friendly School-UCOMM-2015
- Nebraska Extension-IANR-2016
- Nebraska Writing Project-2016
- NebraskaMATH-CAS-2016
- NUtech Ventures-ORED-2016

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

UNL fulfills Criterion One through a clearly defined mission and a strategic plan that focuses on two priorities — excellence in undergraduate education and excellence in research.

- The university's mission statement is publicly shared through the UNL website. Individual mission statements, values statements, and/or statements of purpose reflecting the university's mission are contained in the bylaws, websites and documents of the colleges and support offices.
- A key product of our mission is innovation that expands our horizons and our economy, which UNL has pursued in the development of Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC).
- UNL publicly acknowledges its role in a multicultural society through its mission statement. Over the past decade, UNL has made significant progress in attracting underrepresented minority students and in closing the achievement gap in graduation rates between white and ethnic minority students.
- UNL features a diversity-related general education program that engages global awareness and human diversity and is one of the few among its peer group to highlight sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and intersectional diversity. Reviewing academic curricula and co-curricular programs will ensure UNL prepares students to succeed in a diverse world.

Next Steps:

- UNL remains a predominantly white institution and continues to wrestle with the challenges of creating an inclusive community for students of color. A strategic plan for increasing the diversity and inclusion of its faculty and students is being crafted and plans are in place to map current diversity efforts, programs and courses for the purpose of identifying gaps and opportunities for growth.
- Although UNL's mission statement provides the campus and constituents a clear sense of identity, the university is experiencing a significant transition with new senior leadership. This historic moment offers UNL powerful opportunities to engage the campus in synergistic reflection about and implementation of processes, resources, initiatives and strategies needed to achieve university goals for increasing student enrollment, graduation rates, faculty hires, research funding and national awards by 2020.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

All members of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are expected to exemplify the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. As a public university, UNL is subject to all state and federal laws, as well as the University of Nebraska Board of Regents Bylaws, which provide the framework and direction for the administration of the university and establish high standards of integrity, responsible stewardship and accountability. Foundational policies address:

- [Regents Bylaw 1.2 Governance of the Board](#)
- [Regents Bylaw 1.10 Code of Ethics](#)
- [Regents Bylaw 3.8 Conflicts of Interest](#)
- [Regents Bylaw 3.10 Intellectual Property](#)
- [Regents Bylaw 6.4 Contracts](#)

UNL operates with integrity in its financial and fiduciary activities by following the guidelines outlined in the regents' bylaws and policies. UNL's vice chancellor for business and finance ensures the institution's fiscal and financial integrity. UNL maintains an Office of Internal Audit to identify and address fiscal and other issues before they can become problems. Internally, UNL requires that the audit function meet or exceed guidelines set by the International Standards for Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Internal Auditors. When applicable, the Office of Internal Audit applies government auditing standards. In addition, the regents' audit committee performs internal assessment of UNL's fiscal stability. Guidelines are rigorously followed to ensure exemplary fiscal stewardship. An [audit plan](#) is developed annually and submitted for review to the institution's audit committee.

Ethical conduct of the UNL faculty is governed by a set of policies and procedures codified in NU and UNL bylaws. [UNL has policies related to sexual misconduct, conflict of interest, outside employment and activities, nepotism and intellectual property.](#) [University policies and procedures](#), including the chancellor's policy memoranda, are published online. UNL students are governed by the [Student Code of Conduct](#), which was revised in 2014 with student and faculty input and is administered by the dean of students.

UNL maintains its institutional integrity by ensuring that key services follow appropriate standards of service, and policies are transparent to those the university serves. For example, the [Academic Services Handbook](#), a compilation of academic policies, is available to the public via the UNL website. Students' right to privacy (outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act),

among many other issues, is addressed therein.

The Offices of Scholarships and Financial Aid, Student Affairs and Student Accounts accept and adhere to statements promulgated by their professional organizations. For example, the Office of the Registrar follows standards regarding academic transcripts established by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

A comprehensive set of policies ensures that faculty members, staff and students are treated fairly and ethically in their employment relationships with the university and with respect to academic activities. UNL's Office of Human Resources collaborates with Institutional Equity and Compliance to investigate and resolve violations of policy or law. Human Resources provides training programs to assure understanding of best management practices. The university communicates its policies and conduct standards widely to students, faculty and staff. New employee and new faculty orientation programs highlight university codes of conduct as core values of the institution and define expectations for ethical behavior and responsible stewardship.

A number of units provide general support and guidance on actions related to ethics and integrity.

- NU's Office of General Counsel serves as the university's legal advisor in matters concerning internal and external constituencies.
- The Office of Research Responsibility fosters responsible conduct of research in compliance with federal, state and university regulations and guidelines. Research Compliance Services provides educational resources to help faculty, students and staff understand the nature and ramifications of research misconduct. RCS also manages research misconduct investigations.
- The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance serves as the civil rights office of the campus. Its director reports to the chancellor and is a member of the senior administrative team, actively participating in the governance of the institution. IEC investigates unlawful discrimination and harassment, Title IX violations and sexual misconduct, and provides policy expertise and training across a full range of conduct issues. IEC also houses the ADA/504 compliance office, the office of the director of faculty/staff services and the Accommodation Resource Center.
- The Athletics Compliance Office provides compliance education and monitoring and continues to build upon the positive reputation of Nebraska Athletics by creating greater public awareness of compliance.
- In 2016, UNL's Department of Athletics signed on to be one of three inaugural member institutions of the [LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program](#).
- [TIPS](#), an incident reporting system, provides an option for submitting concerns and is intended to ensure a responsive and welcoming environment.
- The internationally accredited UNL Police Department partners with UNL units and the surrounding community to provide students and visitors a secure and safe experience while on campus.
- Designated [responsible employees](#) help students who have experienced sexual or gender-based violence get the information, assistance and support they need.
- As part of UNL's campaign to maintain a safe and aware campus community, all new undergraduate and graduate students are required to complete the online program. "[Speak Up: Understanding and Preventing Sexual Misconduct](#)." Since July 2015, over 9,500 students have completed the training.

UNL is committed to the [humane care and use of animals in research and teaching](#). Oversight responsibility at UNL involves cooperative integrated activities of the Institutional Official (IO), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Institutional Animal Care Program

(IACP). In 2015, animal welfare at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC), a USDA center with a longstanding collaborative partnership with UNL, came under scrutiny after an investigation was published by the *New York Times*. An independent review and a report on the facility's practices noted no instances of animal abuse, misuse or mistreatment. However, the review identified areas in which communications between the USDA's IACUC and UNL personnel could be clarified and strengthened. Since March 2015, UNL's IACP has conducted training on-site for all UNL and MARC animal care and research staff at the center. All attendees at the training sessions receive a certificate of completion.

The MARC and UNL IACUCs provide joint oversight of the small number of animals at the facility owned by UNL, as well as any collaborative research at the center involving UNL faculty. This joint oversight is currently operational and was formalized under a specific cooperating agreement.

Sources

- Academic Services Handbook-ASEM-2014
- Annual Audit Report-2016
- LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program-2016
- Policies, Procedures and Information-B&F-2016
- Responsible Employee-IEC-2016
- Speak Up Training-OGS-2016
- Student Code of Conduct-Student Affairs-2014
- TIPS Incident Reporting System-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 1.10-BoR-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 1.2-BoR-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 3.10-BoR-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 3.8-BoR-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 6.4-BoR-2016
- University Policy-2016
- Use of Animals-ORED-2016

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

UNL presents itself clearly and completely to students and the public with accessible tools for navigating entrance to the institution, life inside the institution, successful completion of a degree and life after commencement. Extensive and easily accessible information on program, academic requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students and accreditation relationships is available on UNL's website.

The University Communications news team is the chief public relations arm of UNL, curating the university's central communications hub, [UNL Today](#), distributing news releases and maintaining social media accounts on such sites as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Media Hub to communicate with UNL's various stakeholders. Colleges, departments, student organizations, centers and other UNL units also have established social media accounts. Together, these resources elaborate on UNL's commitment to being fully transparent.

The [Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support \(IRADS\)](#) team provides an online data index. The [UNL Fact Book](#), available online, provides detailed statistical and demographic information about UNL, including enrollment, degrees, organizational structure and accreditation relationships.

Academic requirements are described in the [online Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins](#) and are outlined on department or college websites. Academic information is provided to all new undergraduate students and their parents at New Student Enrollment. Students (current and prospective) interested in online offerings can obtain information through Undergraduate Admissions, Graduate Studies, and the Online and Distance Education websites.

[Admissions and residency requirements for undergraduate students](#)—freshmen, transfer, international, home schooled, GED—are available on the Undergraduate Office of Admissions website. [Steps to admission for prospective graduate students](#) are outlined on the Graduate Studies website.

Undergraduate Admissions, Graduate Studies, Scholarships and Financial Aid and Student Accounts websites [publish details about costs of attendance](#). Students can estimate their cost of attendance on the Student Accounts and Graduate Studies websites by finding the term, delivery type and level for which they'll be enrolled, or view an example table of costs for a full-time student. The [International Financial Resource](#) form is available online, listing estimated university costs and living expenses.

Career Services regularly gathers and reports on data about student internships and after-graduation plans. The [Annual Report on UNL Graduates](#) is available online.

[MyRED, UNL's official student information system portal](#), provides a centralized location for current students to view the online schedule of courses, enroll in courses, access transcripts, order textbooks, view schedules, accept financial awards and pay tuition bills. Through [MyDegreeAudit](#), students can view and measure their academic progress. [Transferology](#) enables prospective transfer students to run

a “what if” audit related to individual UNL degree programs. UNL also pioneered a [new loan information page](#) in MyRED available to students beginning in 2016. The additional information provided about their loans helps students make more informed decisions regarding continued borrowing.

UNL offered financial aid expertise in crafting Legislative Bill 726, a state bill requiring all public colleges and universities in Nebraska to provide detailed reports to students on their projected loan debt. UNL testified in support of the bill, which was signed into law on April 6, 2016, effective for the 2017-2018 academic year.

The Board of Regents, Faculty Senate and the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN) publish their control and governing procedures on their websites so faculty, staff and students can fully [participate in the governance of the institution](#).

UNL sets the standards for excellence for curriculum, student performance and quality of instruction, including standards for instructors and instructional support. UNL bylaws, Faculty Senate bylaws, the ASUN constitution and the Student Code of Conduct outline the expectations for excellence and ethical conduct of faculty, staff and students. The [professional ethics statement](#), approved by the Faculty Senate in January 2016, elaborates on the ethical principles associated with faculty obligations. These documents are publicized and available on UNL’s website.

The *UNL Directory* provides contact information for faculty, staff and students. Department information also is available, including a complete list of faculty and staff employees. *Faculty/staff* directory data is maintained in SAP, UNL’s administrative and finance system. These data include name, employment designation, job title(s), department(s), campus address, campus phone number and campus email address. *Student* directory data is maintained in PeopleSoft, the UNL student information system. However, distribution of individual contact information to the general public is [not allowed due to UNL and Board of Regents’ data restrictions](#). Graduate faculty for every graduate program are listed on the graduate program summaries.

[UNL’s accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission](#) is posted on the website, and all unit [academic accreditation relationships](#) are posted online.

Sources

- Admission and Residency Requirements-ASEM-2016
- Annual Report of Graduates-Career Services-2015
- Cost of Attendance-ASEM-2016
- Ethics Statement-Faculty Senate-2016
- Financial Resource Certification-OGS-2016
- HLC Accreditation-2006
- Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support-2016
- Loan Information Page-ASEM-2016
- MyDegree Audit-ASEM-2016
- MyRED-ASEM-2016
- Nebraska Today-UCOMM-2016
- Program Accreditations-Academic Affairs-2016
- Regents Policy 5.10-BoR-2016
- Steps to Graduate Admission-OGS-2016
- Transferology-ASEM-2016

- University Governance-2016
- UNL Fact Book-2015

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1. The Board of Regents provides leadership and is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interests of the institution and ensure its integrity.

The provision of the Nebraska constitution assigning to the [Board of Regents the authority to govern the university](#) has been interpreted by the Nebraska Supreme Court to insulate the university from interference by the legislature or governor, allowing the regents to operate the university free from political influence to the greatest extent possible. The eight board members are elected by the voters of geographic districts, and four student regents represent each of the NU campuses as nonvoting members.

The board keeps current on issues involving the governor and the legislature as well as the University of Nebraska system, including the NU president and chancellors of UNL, UNK, UNO and UNMC. The board considers the best interests of UNL in all of its decisions. For example, although the legislature and the governor must approve tuition increases, the board's decisions in this regard reflect what is best for the university.

2.C.2. The board's meeting structure provides opportunities both for collaboration with internal and external constituents.

Board meeting schedules are established, and announcements of publicly convened sessions appear in state newspapers. For the most part, meetings are held in Central Administration's Varner Hall; every two years the board meets on system campuses. The [board has a committee structure](#) including Academic Affairs, Audit, and Business Affairs Committees. The Executive Committee serves as the consultant group for the president during times when the full board is not in session. It makes recommendations to the full board when appropriate.

The [Board of Regents selects the NU president](#) and must approve the appointment of University of Nebraska-Lincoln administrators at the level of college deans and higher. The board monitors progress on the University of Nebraska *Strategic Planning Framework* goals, emphasizing access and affordability, quality programs, workforce and economic development, research growth, engagement with the state and accountability. Board approval is required for the creation, consolidation or elimination of any academic credential or unit.

Communication between UNL and the Board of Regents reflects clear understanding of UNL's mission and appreciation of UNL's accomplishments. This communication is continuous and effective.

2.C.3. The Board of Regents preserves its independence. It is mindful of policy generated by the governor and legislature and works within established policy framework.

The board is mindful of its ethical responsibility and has a [conflict of interest policy](#). For example, in the 2014 search for a new NU system president, the board was able to effectively handle the politically sensitive announcement by Nebraska's exiting governor that he would be a candidate for system president. The board chairman, following the regents' rules and guidelines, steered the university through an awkward situation that could have affected the quality of the candidate pool. The search process was conducted fairly, without giving undue advantage to any one candidate and the result was to hire the most qualified person from a very experienced, talented and robust pool.

External fundraising is coordinated by the Nebraska Foundation, which is a separate entity from the UNL. Board bylaws and policies provide clear delineation of the activities of the foundation.

2.C.4. While the Board of Regents has statutory and policy oversight of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the board's bylaws give UNL the independence necessary to meet its teaching, research and service missions.

[Regents Bylaw 2.8.1, Powers and Duties of the Chancellors](#), states "Subject to the guidelines and policies of the board and the president, the chancellors shall do all things necessary for the development of the major administrative unit for which they are responsible, and shall be members of the president's staff for purposes of inter-unit cooperation and planning." [State law specifically vests in the faculty the responsibility for the immediate governance of each college.](#)

Sources

- Regents Policy 1.1.1-BoR-2016
- Regents Policy 1.6-BoR-2016
- Regents Policy 3.2.8-BoR-2016
- State Statute 85-108-Nebraska Legislature-2016
- State Statutes-Nebraska Legislature-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 2.8.1-BoR-2016

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

Academic freedom is a core belief at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. All professional staff (including administrators and faculty members) are entitled to all the rights of academic freedom as specified in [Regents Bylaw 4.2](#). The [UNL mission statement](#) asserts, “The faculty is responsible for the curricular content of the various programs and pursues new knowledge and truths within a structure that assures academic freedom in its intellectual endeavors.”

To ensure that faculty members are able to perform their administrative, teaching, research, service and extension duties in a manner consistent with the values of academic freedom and that any complaints of abridgement are fully investigated, the Board of Regents has authorized the [UNL Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee](#) of the Faculty Senate to oversee the work of committees that [address issues of grievance, academic freedom, tenure and professional conduct](#).

To demonstrate UNL’s commitment to academic freedom, the UNL Faculty Senate annually confers the James A. Lake Academic Freedom award to recognize “an individual whose efforts have helped to preserve the most basic freedom of all, the freedom to seek and communicate the truth.”

Freedom of expression is guaranteed to students as well as faculty and staff. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) fully addresses students’ rights to establish student organizations, the right to orderly demonstration, and editorial freedom for student-run media outlets. For example, students learn about and exercise freedom of speech and expression in print or electronic media by working on the *Daily Nebraskan*, DailyER Nebraskan or KRNU 90.3.

Sources

- Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee Procedures-Faculty Senate-2016
- Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee-Faculty Senate-2016
- Mission Statement-UNL Fact Book-2015
- Student Code of Conduct-Student Affairs-2014
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 4.2-BoR-2016

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1. UNL provides oversight of research and scholarly practices.

The Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) is the major administrative point of contact for overall research compliance. The UNL chancellor designates an institutional official with responsibility for the following areas of research compliance: the protection of human research participants; care and ethical treatment of animals used in teaching and research; responsible conduct of research; and conflict of interest. The Office of Research Responsibility provides support, education and outreach services for individual students or faculty members as well as units and research groups. Responsible conduct of research resources, including educational videos, are available on the Research Responsibility web page.

An autonomous [Institutional Review Board](#) ensures research on human subjects is conducted ethically, responsibly and in compliance with federal, state and university regulations and guidelines. UNL researchers are subject to oversight in allegations of research misconduct and conflict of interest. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and Institutional Animal Care Program staff work together to support and supervise the use of animals in research and teaching to ensure compliance with federal laws and regulations.

[UNL's conflict of interest policy](#) requires faculty and students to disclose any conflicts of interest for each IRB-approved research project and for any funded research projects. [Potential conflicts are reviewed by the Conflicts of Interest in Research Committee](#), which can approve, disapprove or recommend changes to research projects to correct any conflicts.

Environmental Health and Safety provides [safety and compliance training](#) and monitors campus activities to assure that federal, state, local and university environmental, health and safety laws, regulations, ordinances and policies are followed.

2.E.2. UNL ensures that students understand their ethical responsibilities in using information resources.

UNL faculty, students and staff receive training in the responsible conduct of research, intellectual honesty and the application of ethics to professional and personal situations. Undergraduates are required to take an Achievement Centered Education (ACE 8) course for which the main student learning outcome is the ability to "explain ethical principles, civics and stewardship, and their importance in society." (See Core Component 3.A for a more detailed description of the ACE program.) Each discipline educates students on the ethical principles of the profession (i.e.,

professional codes in engineering, business, education, psychology, journalism, etc.).

UNL faculty members instruct their students on how to complete assignments and assessments with academic integrity. [SafeAssign](#) provides instructors with a web-based plagiarism detection service to identify suspected acts of plagiarism. As an available tool within Blackboard Learn, the application detects exact and inexact matching between submitted student papers and source materials.

The University Libraries educates students on the [ethical use of information](#). The Office of Graduate Studies also offers [workshops and online resources](#) on academic integrity, understanding plagiarism and the responsible conduct of research. The [Guidelines for Good Practice in Graduate Education](#) outline the complementary responsibilities of faculty members and students in maintaining academic standards.

The annual [Academic Integrity Week](#) provides interdisciplinary discussions and workshops that provide faculty and students with tools for promoting responsible conduct. The Ethics Center offers a [brown bag series](#) (one for graduate students, one for the general campus audience) to discuss ethical issues, and maintains a website and physical library that includes discipline-specific resources about the ethical use of information.

The Office of Research and Economic Development offers a [required training module on Responsible Conduct of Research](#) for all undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral researchers, and the Office of Research Responsibility requires a self-paced, web-based tutorial and in-person training for faculty and students engaged in research involving humans. Similar training programs are required for students engaged in research with animal subjects.

2.E.3. UNL has procedures for enforcing academic honesty and integrity policies.

UNL's has [established procedures for responding to allegations of academic and research misconduct](#). The Student Code of Conduct applies to all students, is enforced by faculty and the dean of students. Complaints of alleged academic misconduct are resolved in accordance with established collegiate and Student Code of Conduct policies and procedures.

Sources

- Academic and Research Misconduct-2016
- Academic Integrity Week-2015
- Academic Integrity-OGS-2016
- Brown Bag Series-Ethics Center-2016
- Conflict of Interest Policy-ORED-2016
- Conflict of Interest Procedures-ORED-2016
- Environmental Health and Safety-2016
- Guidelines for Good Practice-OGS-2016
- IRB Guidebook-ORED-2016
- Research Responsibility Training-ORED-2016
- Safe Assign-ITS-2016
- Workshops-Libraries-2016

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

UNL's commitment to integrity and ethical conduct meets Criterion Two.

- UNL bylaws and policies establish high standards of integrity for the governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students.
- Publicly available documents detail UNL admission/degree requirements and processes, educational costs, faculty and staff qualifications, and accreditation status.
- An autonomous, elected governing board (defined by statute) holds public meetings and publishes agendas and minutes.
- Policies and procedures demonstrate UNL's commitment to freedom of expression and intellectual pursuits.
- Policies and processes are in place to ensure that faculty, staff and students use and apply knowledge responsibly and ethically.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

UNL offers 137 undergraduate majors, 70 master's majors, 48 doctoral majors, 7 professional degrees, 32 certificates and 8 supplemental endorsements in over 165 fields. A detailed list of these offerings is available in the [undergraduate and graduate bulletins available online](#). The university hires highly qualified faculty who design, approve and monitor curriculum. Faculty committees govern the approval of new courses, minors, certificates and degree programs.

3.A.1. Courses and program requirements reflect appropriate levels of student performance.

UNL is required by Board of Regents' policy to review academic programs every seven years to ensure they are relevant, high quality and consistent with the mission. As discussed in Core Component 4.A.1., these reviews include assessment of courses and programs and their appropriateness. The review processes for specialized accreditations maintained by the university also ensure programs are current and at the appropriate level of rigor.

Between reviews, faculty, through departmental, college and [university level curriculum committees](#), review and implement changes to ensure offerings are current and appropriate for the degree and/or certificate. New undergraduate courses are approved by undergraduate curriculum committees at department, college and campus levels. Courses for UNL's Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) program (see Core Component 3.B.1) are approved by the university-level ACE subcommittee and reviewed every five years for recertification. Graduate curriculum actions are approved by the graduate program committee and the [Graduate Council](#).

New undergraduate or graduate credential [programs are approved](#) by faculty-led department committees, college committees, the senior vice chancellor for academic affairs and the vice chancellor of IANR, the Academic Planning Committee, the NU Council of Academic Officers, and the Board of Regents. Interdisciplinary programs are approved by all hosting departments and colleges. New undergraduate and graduate degree programs and certificates require the approval of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission on Postsecondary Education (CCPE). These program

approval steps ensure that faculty are integrally and systematically responsible for the relevance and academic rigor of UNL's degree programs.

Once approved, degree programs are reviewed regularly as part of the [academic program review or unit/college accreditation process](#), each of which includes review by external peers. In addition to these internal processes for ensuring the quality of our programs and offerings, 46 UNL degree programs [undergo specialized accreditation](#) by appropriate governing bodies.

3.A.2. Academic programs are differentiated by goals and outcomes.

UNL's course numbering system distinguishes curriculum levels. Undergraduate courses are numbered 100-400, with 100-200 level courses considered lower division and 300-400 level considered upper division. Courses in professional programs, such as law and veterinary medicine, are numbered 500-700. Graduate courses are numbered 800 and 900. Cross-level 400/800 courses, which include both undergraduate and graduate students, require approval from both the undergraduate curriculum committee and the UNL Graduate Council. Graduate students taking 400/800-level courses must complete additional requirements, such as comprehensive research papers, oral presentations related to advanced course material, and/or the demonstration of more sophisticated laboratory or studio skills.

[Policy expectations about credit and grade point requirements](#) are defined in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins and tracked for all students through the MyRED student information system. [Articulated learning outcomes and maps for all undergraduate degree programs](#) are published in the Undergraduate Bulletin and demonstrate how students can complete degree requirements within four years.

The [ACE general education program](#), required of all undergraduate students, articulates four institutional objectives and ten student learning outcomes. The ACE 10 course requirement ensures that all undergraduates produce a scholarly or creative product that synthesizes and interprets information with technical proficiency and incorporates presentation and reflection. (See also Core Component 3.B.3.)

UNL graduate programs are differentiated from undergraduate programs in program goals and learning objectives, with a focus on knowledge and competencies appropriate to graduate level work. Each department offering graduate courses has a graduate committee comprised of the department's faculty responsible for the supervision and assessment of graduate work in its department. Many programs articulate graduate outcomes and expectations in [graduate handbooks](#). The Graduate Council and the dean of graduate studies oversee the graduate curriculum.

3.A.3. Consistency and quality are maintained across delivery modes and locations.

University policies regarding instructional time per course credit, instructor responsibilities for teaching and learning, and student responsibilities for teaching and learning apply to all courses, regardless of length of the academic term, location where the course is delivered, or method(s) of course delivery.

UNL's curricular standards and learning outcomes also are consistent across courses regardless of the mode or location of delivery. All courses and programs are developed, governed and evaluated by the same departmental, college and campus curriculum approval processes described above, and articulate the same learning outcomes. For instance, students can achieve the [same learning outcomes](#) in biological science courses on campus, online or off campus at the Cedar Point Biological Station.

UNL has been involved in “distance” education for over 100 years. UNL currently offers 287 undergraduate, 405 graduate and 18 professional courses online. UNL offers two online undergraduate degree completion majors, two undergraduate minors and one undergraduate certificate program. In addition, UNL offers 16 master's programs, 2 doctoral programs, 1 professional degree, 10 graduate-level teaching endorsements and 13 graduate certificates online. UNL’s online offerings have received the following [recognitions for quality in 2015](#):

- The MBA, engineering and education graduate programs are all ranked in the top 15 nationally in *U.S. News and World Report’s Best Online Graduate Education Programs*.
- These three programs also are ranked in the top 15 nationally in *U.S. News and World Report’s Best Online Graduate Education Programs for Vets*.
- The online undergraduate degree completion program in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) is ranked in the top 100 nationally and in the top 78 programs in *U.S. News and World Report’s Best Online Undergraduate Programs for Vets*.

UNL’s consortial programs entail ongoing quality review. UNL participates in the [Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance \(GPIDEA\)](#), a partnership of 20 public universities that collaboratively develops and delivers high-quality, online graduate and undergraduate coursework and programs in high-demand professional fields, including personal financial planning (MS degree and graduate certificate), financial and housing counseling (graduate certificate), food safety and defense (graduate certificate), youth development (MA and two graduate certificates), agricultural education (MS) and family and community services (MA). Through the [AG*IDEA consortium](#), an affiliate of GPIDEA that offers programs in agriculture disciplines, UNL graduate students can now complement their degree programs with additional online courses in horticulture and grassland management.

Sources

- ACE-Undergraduate Education-2016
- AGIDEA-ODE-2016
- APR Schedule-Academic Affairs-2016
- BIOS 207 Syllabi-CAS-2016
- Credit and Grade Point Requirements-2016
- GPIDEA-ODE-2016
- Graduate Council-OGS-2016
- Graduate Program Handbooks-OGS-2016
- Learning Outcomes and Four Year Maps-Undergraduate Education-2016
- Online Program Recognition-ODE-2016
- Program Accreditations-Academic Affairs-2016
- Program Approval Process-Academic Affairs-2016
- University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee-Faculty Senate- 2016

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1. UNL has a comprehensive educational framework with common requirements for every undergraduate degree program appropriate to its mission.

Every UNL baccalaureate program is designed to engage students in the acquisition of broad integrative knowledge and intellectual skills, including proficiency in written, oral and visual communication; inquiry techniques; critical and creative thinking; quantitative applications; information assessment; teamwork; and problem-solving. The Office of Undergraduate Education Programs and the ACE subcommittee of the university curriculum committee are responsible for oversight of UNL's general education program requirements. UNL's [2013 National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\) results provide evidence that students find UNL curricula to be challenging and supportive](#) in developing desirable skills and competencies.

[UNL's Achievement-Centered Education \(ACE\) program](#) operationalizes the university's commitment to a liberal education in the context of a research-intensive university and sets a context for assessment as described in Core Component 4.B.1. Approved in 2008 by faculty in all colleges serving undergraduate students, ACE is a 30-hour outcomes-based program that is standardized across all undergraduate majors.

ACE was developed within the framework of the American Association of Colleges and Universities' principles for general education, particularly the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. Two campuswide committees worked from 2003-2006 to develop the ACE institutional objectives and learning outcomes informed by LEAP's essential outcomes and honed through participation at two AAC&U general education institutes. UNL's ACE program has [been nationally publicized](#) via book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, presentations and webinars. UNL also has received external grant funding to support faculty development of ACE assessment (See Core Component 4.B.1.)

ACE responds to the fundamental question, What should all UNL undergraduate students – irrespective of their majors and career aspirations – know or be able to do upon graduation? ACE consists of 10 student learning outcomes that encompass the knowledge, skills and attitudes that UNL faculty believe all undergraduates should possess. Appropriate to the diversity of UNL students' needs and consistent with UNL's mission, ACE components provide 1) flexibility – students choose ACE courses that complement and build upon major interests; 2) transferability – ACE courses count across all colleges for all majors; and 3) efficiency – ACE courses are integrated within all 120-hour undergraduate degree programs.

ACE courses are designed to supplement students' educational experiences and provide the skills and knowledge that employers value. Outcomes one through nine focus on three institutional objectives: 1) development of intellectual and practical skills; 2) knowledge of diverse peoples and cultures; and 3) exercise of individual and social responsibilities. ACE outcome 10 addresses the fourth institutional objective: integration of these abilities and capabilities into new settings and responsibilities.

The breadth and flexibility of ACE aligns with UNL's mission “to provide for its student body and all Nebraskans the widest array of disciplines, areas of expertise and specialized facilities of any institution within the state.” Because students can tailor ACE courses around their majors and select from a wide variety of offerings, the general education program ensures accessibility to a wide range of disciplines.

3.B.2. The goals, purposes, content and intended learning outcomes for UNL's ACE program are broadly and systematically articulated to students and faculty in several ways.

The ACE website lists the four institutional objectives, the 10 student learning outcomes and all ACE courses by outcome category, and the Undergraduate Bulletin lists all ACE-designated courses. Incoming students and their parents receive ACE information at orientation, and advisers help students understand ACE in relation to academic goals and plans. New faculty are introduced to ACE at New Faculty Orientation.

All [ACE course syllabi](#) are required to describe a) the learning outcome, b) students' opportunities to achieve the outcome and c) assignments used to assess achievement. Instructors routinely collect student work for [ACE assessment](#).

3.B.3. All programs help students develop analytical, inquiry and adaptable skills

Through ACE, all undergraduates in every degree program are involved in and must demonstrate mastery in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and developing skills adaptable to changing environments. Students are required to engage in modes of inquiry, including collecting and analyzing information (ACE 4), and to competently communicate information (ACE 2). Students must demonstrate an understanding of ethics, civics and stewardship in a modern and changing society (ACE 8), as well as global and diverse perspectives relevant to an expanding and changing world (ACE 9). All of these skills culminate in a creative or scholarly product through which students collect, analyze and communicate results of inquiry or creative work relevant to a discipline-specific project (ACE 10).

UNL's [Quality Initiative \(QI\) project](#), *Implementing and Assessing the ACE 10 Outcome: Exploring Learning and Career Preparation within the Undergraduate Major* (see also Core Component 3.D.3), was a two-year project that engaged faculty and staff in analyzing the quality of learning and student

performance within ACE 10 courses and the intersection of this learning with students' career development in undergraduate degree programs. In year one, faculty presented posters sharing their analyses of students' learning in ACE 10 courses. In year two, they developed institutional recommendations for expanding students' career development. The QI results demonstrated the diverse ways that undergraduate degree programs enable students to develop skills and expertise to solve real-world problems and adapt to a changing world.

Each UNL graduate degree requires mastery of critical subject matter. Each master's program engages students in independent research or inquiry into existing research studies, represented by a thesis or an equivalent enrollment in research, independent investigation or seminar. For UNL's terminal and professional master's degrees, faculty ensure research or capstone requirements are commensurate with the accreditation of their programs and disciplinary or professional standards. Data from the [2010-2014 Graduate Exit Survey](#) indicate that graduate students are prepared in collecting, analyzing and communicating information. From 2010 through 2014, the majority of master's and PhD students responding to the exit survey reported receiving exceptional or good preparation in the following:

- 84.5% - speaking, writing and thinking like members of their academic discipline or profession
- 74% - conducting independent, innovative research
- 78.4% - communicating effectively about their discipline with non-specialists
- 81.8% - identifying issues or problems important to society from the perspective of their discipline
- 86.5% - demonstrating personal integrity in their academic and professional life

3.B.4. All programs recognize human and cultural diversity.

Curricular offerings and co-curricular programs

UNL prioritizes education about human and cultural diversity in both curricular and co-curricular offerings. All undergraduates are required to take an ACE 9 course in which they must "exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue."

The list of [over 100 ACE 9 courses illustrates the range of courses](#) that address the diversity of human experience. Undergraduates also can meet the ACE 9 outcome by engaging in approved educational experiences such as education abroad or military service. All faculty are encouraged to connect course readings and activities as appropriate to enhance student learning about human and cultural diversity.

Students can pursue more specialized study of human and cultural diversity via undergraduate majors in ethnic studies, women's and gender studies and global studies, and undergraduate minors in Asian studies, African American studies, human rights and humanitarian affairs, Jewish studies, Latin American studies, LGBTQ and sexuality studies, and Native American studies. Graduate specializations are offered in ethnic studies and women's and gender studies. Students within the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Journalism and Mass Communications are required to complete a 6-credit hour second-year sequence in a foreign language.

Undergraduates can pursue a [certificate in civic engagement](#) that primarily focuses on civic identity, leadership and diversity of communities and culture. The Center for Civic Engagement offers service-learning trips (e.g., The Civil Rights Story of the Great Plains). The Melvin Jones Scholars Learning Community explores leadership, community service and multicultural perspectives.

The [Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center offers programs](#) designed to enhance understanding of

diversity and celebrate multicultural heritage. Undergraduate admissions sponsors [diversity leadership symposia](#), inviting high school students to learn from featured speakers and meet with UNL faculty, staff and students to discuss issues relevant to Black, Latino, Native and first-generation students. [OASIS sponsors monthly events](#) that connect students to one another and explore issues such as challenges faced by undocumented and multiracial students, how it feels to be a person of color in Nebraska, and training to enhance professional networking skills.

The Women's Center, the LGBTQ Resource Center, and Counseling and Psychological Services offer programs, events and support groups specific to diverse student populations, including Latina women, women of color, international students and LGBTQ students. University Housing supports a multicultural awareness and diversity education committee and recently implemented gender-inclusive housing options; the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska sponsors a diversity and inclusion committee.

Global engagement

[Global engagement is a strategic priority](#) for UNL. Faculty, students, staff and senior leadership collaborate to build research partnerships, recruit talent from outside the U.S. to enrich and diversify the campus, and offer domestic students access to education and service learning opportunities abroad. UNL has entered into [important international partnerships](#), including a major food science initiative that brings students to Lincoln. UNL's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Undergraduate Scholars Program (CUSP) administers a scholarship program in Rwanda that brings 50 undergraduate students to the university each year. The government of Oman has identified UNL as its primary recipient of undergraduate students, and more than 100 study in Lincoln. IANR annually hosts groups of undergraduates from Northwest Agricultural and Forestry University (NWAUFU) in Yangling, Shaanxi Province (China) for summer research experiences and has sent 24 UNL undergraduates to NWAUFU for a three-week education abroad program. A new joint 3+1 degree completion program with NWAUFU in the area of food science and technology will welcome a cohort of 50 students in fall 2016. The German Fulbright Commission selected UNL for its Young Teachers' Diversity Program, and for the last two years UNL has hosted the [Study of the U.S. Institute \(SUSI\) Student Leaders Program](#) for participants from five southern African nations.

UNL advances global engagement across its academic programs. The Intensive English Program serves international and non-native English-speaking students by providing specialized language instruction and other services in preparation for or in conjunction with academic study. The College of Education and Human Sciences' Global eXperience includes a range of experiential opportunities for undergraduates, including education study tours, international internships, service opportunities locally and globally, and study exchange programs. The College of Arts and Sciences' [Global Studies Program](#) offers an undergraduate curriculum designed to create informed, respectful international citizens who are equipped to tackle pressing, global challenges. UNL faculty research, collaboration and leadership, via several NU institutes (Rural Futures, Water for Food, National Strategic Research, etc.), address global challenges such as food security, water management and combatting weapons of mass destruction.

UNL's domestic students are encouraged to participate in educational experiences that provide global perspectives. A record 11 [UNL students earned Fulbright awards](#) for the 2016-17 academic year, while four others were selected as alternates. [Education Abroad](#) provides curricular and co-curricular programs to educate students about cultural and human diversity. In 2014-2015, 814 students participated in Education Abroad, a 20% increase over the previous year. Beginning with the 2016-17 academic year, ASUN will offer competitive travel awards supported by student fees. Enrollment in UNL's global studies major has increased by 20% due in part to a workforce development grant from

the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. [UNL leads a major archaeological excavation in Turkey](#), engaging UNL fine arts and engineering students as well as students and faculty from Canada, Turkey and Australia. An average of 3-4 students are hosted each year through the Nebraska-funded Robitschek Scholars Program, which supports exchanges in the Czech lands of Central Europe. UNL will work with the Harvard Kennedy School to create the life sciences and natural resources components of the new Fulbright University in Vietnam.

3.B.5. All faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge.

Faculty scholarship

As a research-intensive, land-grant institution, UNL supports student and faculty scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge that benefits society, contributes to global advancement and expands human knowledge. UNL faculty are hired to meet high expectations for excellence in teaching, research, scholarship and/or creative activity, build academic programs that create exceptional learning outcomes for students, address noteworthy intellectual and/or professional issues, and earn distinguished national or global recognition. UNL faculty excellence is illustrated by [receipt of awards ranked as prestigious](#) by the National Research Council.

The intellectual work of teaching is advanced through the Peer Review of Teaching Project, which supports faculty in documenting student's learning through course portfolios; the Disciplined-Based Education Research group, which studies college-level STEM education through sciences and education research; and recognition of excellence in academic or professional instruction, through professor of practice academic appointments. Scholarly teaching is celebrated through NU system's Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award and the colleges' distinguished teaching awards.

Institutes, colleges and departments also support faculty research scholarship. IANR provides travel and grant support to strengthen faculty members' pursuit of external funding. The College of Education and Human Sciences offers a three-year [scholarly enhancement program](#) that helps new faculty develop 5-year plans to meet their teaching, extension, research and service goals and make a fast start on finding funding sources for their work. The College of Arts and Sciences' [Enhance Program](#) supports research and creative activities of faculty in the humanities and social sciences. CBA and the College of Law offer competitive summer research grants to faculty. The Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools provides assistance for proposal writing, research design and statistical analysis for all social science fields. The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts endowment funds faculty research projects, creative projects (like artwork, performances, recordings and interdisciplinary efforts) and travel to conferences.

Faculty research contributions are celebrated during the annual UNL Research Fair and are evident through extensive professional and general-audience publications, numerous national and international awards and recognitions, a vast portfolio of patented and patent-pending inventions, the creation of dozens of new start-up companies, and other means described in the [Annual Research Report](#). Faculty involved in creative activity regularly perform at national and international music conferences and performing arts venues or exhibit their art at major national and international galleries. *Digital Commons* provides free, open access to scholarly and creative works, research, publications and reports by UNL's faculty, students, staff and administrative units.

Fostering interdisciplinary research is a key strength at UNL. The campus intentionally attempts to build a low-barrier administrative climate that allows faculty to work across the organizational chart.

In 2016, 165 UNL faculty from diverse disciplines generated ideas for research at the nexus of food, energy and water systems (FEWS). [NU FEWS](#) is a response to this new focus area for federal funding led by NSF, USDA and the Department of Energy. A UNL/UNMC faculty retreat in 2016 launched the Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Initiative to create diverse inter-institutional teams for research on disease prevention, treatment, detection, diagnosis and remote monitoring. The [Center for Digital Research in the Humanities](#), a joint program of the UNL Libraries and the College of Arts & Sciences, includes faculty from four other colleges and attracts external funding from NEH and private foundations.

The [Integrated Computational and Creative Thinking \(IC2Think\) project](#) is a collaboration between faculty from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. IC2Think incorporates both computational and creative thinking into undergraduate STEM courses to prepare students to be flexible and resourceful problem solvers and collaborators. The project has resulted in NSF-supported research on integrating computational and creative thinking. Film and new media faculty are exploring the impact of emerging technology such as virtual reality on storytelling. Faculty in the Department of Art and Art History research the impact of design on other fields through data visualization techniques or events like the [Design + Social Justice Symposium](#). These collaborations cross departmental and disciplinary boundaries at UNL.

In keeping with UNL's land-grant mission, connecting faculty scholarship to partnerships with the private sector is also a priority. Nebraska Innovation Campus (see also Criteria 1 and 5) facilitates in-depth partnerships between UNL faculty and students and private sector businesses. NIC is home to several faculty startups and offers leased space to facilitate other faculty startups, especially those seeking Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer federal grants. By September of 2016, NIC will have the only wet lab space in the region available for these types of startups. [NIC is developing unique facilities that enable faculty and students to do cutting edge work](#) in food science, gut microbiology, plant phenotyping, surgical robotics, creative making and other fields. ConAgra Corporation, the first major private partner at NIC, has teamed with UNL to provide a state-of-the-art food processing pilot plant used for teaching and research. This relationship has led to the donation of \$2 million in equipment for the Food Innovation Center and a major agreement that gave UNL the responsibility for all popcorn breeding for ConAgra. As NIC draws more companies, it will become a bigger asset in providing options for public-private research, internships and student recruitment to UNL.

Listed here are examples of the depth and breadth of research and creative activity produced by UNL faculty.

- A 5-year, \$13.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy is funding multi-institutional research to improve sorghum for sustainable biofuel production.
- The [Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Consortium](#), launched in 2015, facilitates social and behavioral sciences research through coordinated collaborations among UNL researchers, centers and initiatives.
- The Materials Research Science and Engineering Center is one of only 24 National Science Foundation-funded MRSECs nationwide to create a new generation of electronics and computing technologies.
- UNL's National Drought Mitigation Center is partnering with the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture to develop a Drought Management Center for the Mideast and North Africa, funded by a \$4.2 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development.
- The Nebraska Center for the Prevention of Obesity Diseases through Dietary Molecules was established in 2014 as a National Institutes of Health Center of Biomedical Research Excellence with an \$11.3 million grant.

- A \$3.6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2014 helped to measure the effectiveness of a substance abuse prevention program for Ojibwe youth and their families.
- The software engineering group has been ranked fifth in the world by the International Software Engineering Scholars since 2004.
- The English department faculty has nationally and internationally recognized authors and scholars, including a U.S. poet laureate and a Booker Prize finalist.
- The Center for Digital Research in the Humanities is a national leader in developing digital content and tools for research and discovery. Home to the Willa Cather and Walt Whitman archives, its diverse projects range from the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and Native American language resources to interactive sites exploring the history of U.S. railroads, slavery, newspapers and other events. Spectral imaging research on Dr. David Livingstone's 1871 diaries was highlighted on the PBS Program "Secrets of the Dead."
- A UNL engineer and a UNMC surgeon raised \$11.5 million in equity financing for Virtual Incision Corp., to develop robotically assisted surgical devices (tested in human surgery in Brazil in 2016). The company has moved to Nebraska Innovation Campus.

Student scholarship

In the past ten years students have been selected for prestigious national fellowships, including 5 Boren awards, 64 Fulbrights, 14 Goldwaters, 2 Marshalls, 3 Trumans, and 1 Udall. In 2010 UNL was named a Truman Honors Institution, and in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 was a top producer of student Fulbright awards. Since 2006, 26 UNL students have earned NSF Graduate Fellowships. Since 2010, 17 students have entered the Peace Corps, and 35 joined Teach for America. UNL's student athletes lead the nation with 320 Academic All-Americans and 17 NCAA Top Ten Award Recipients and 41 consecutive years with at least one Academic All-American.

UNL undergraduates collaborate with faculty on creative activity and research. All undergraduates produce a scholarly or creative product within their required ACE 10 courses. [UNL's Honors Program](#) requires students to engage in a senior research project, usually culminating in a thesis.

The [Jeffrey S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management](#) offers a one-of-a-kind academic experience in software development and business for students who are able to compete with the top one percent of their peers. Students participate in the Design Studio, a capstone program integrating concepts of computer science and business to produce design solutions for real-world clients. The school has a national reputation for offering an innovative curriculum that produces excellent graduates who are highly sought after, some of whom have started very successful tech companies locally.

UNL's [Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience \(UCARE\)](#) program provides \$1 million annually in research stipends to over 400 students who engage in research with a faculty mentor and present their results at the Undergraduate Research Fair. The McNair Scholars Program supports 25 first-generation and underrepresented students in research experiences and professional development opportunities. In 2013, UNL was one of 10 institutions selected for the Beckman Scholars Program, which supports interdisciplinary undergraduate research fellowships in life sciences. The [Minority Health Disparities Initiative](#) provides opportunities for minority graduate and undergraduate students to participate in federally funded large-scale collaborative research projects. The Nebraska [Summer Research Program](#) funds undergraduate students from the U.S. and Puerto Rico to work with UNL faculty on research projects available through 11 federally funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates. In 2015, 95 participants were selected from 1,900 applicants. UNL also hosts the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics and the Conference

for Undergraduate Women in Physical Sciences. [Both conferences bring together outstanding student researchers](#) from across the country to present research results, attend workshops and network with peers and faculty. Students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources annually produce the publication [Strategic Discussions for Nebraska](#).

Of the over [500 recognized student organizations at UNL](#), 157 are dedicated to faculty-mentored professional development for students in discipline-specific areas.

UNL provides opportunities for graduate students to present their research and creative activities. The [Graduate Student Conference Travel Grant program](#) assists eligible PhD and MFA students traveling to national conferences and/or seminars to make presentations on behalf of the university. Students have the opportunity to showcase their work at a graduate student poster competition during UNL's annual [Research and Creative Activities Research Fair](#). Graduate research awards recognize the scholarly contributions of graduate students. [Science Slam 2016](#) encouraged undergraduate, graduate and postdoc researchers to communicate their work in short, dynamic and engaging presentations in front of a voting audience. UNL students have opportunities to share creative activities through public art exhibitions (especially at the student-run MEDICI gallery), theatrical performances (especially through the student-run production company Theatrix), and musical performances including operas, orchestra and band, and choral ensembles. Jazz students have won five student awards from *DownBeat* magazine since 2011.

Individual programs promote research and creative activities for students. The Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior sponsors over 20 undergraduate research assistants. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications' Jacht Ad Lab engages undergraduates in handling the accounts of external clients, and the Global Eyewitness Project enables students to travel to underdeveloped countries to conduct research and create photo-documentaries. The psychology department sponsors 26 faculty-led labs that utilize graduate and undergraduate students in voluntary and paid research positions. The marketing department hosts the Robert Mittelstaedt Marketing Doctoral Symposium emphasizing dissertation research. The James A. Rawley Graduate Conference in the Humanities provides a forum for graduate students across disciplines to present their work and receive valuable feedback from department faculty. The [Graduate Fellows Program of the Center for Great Plains Studies](#) provides space for selected graduate students to work, meet, obtain support, learn from fellow students, engage with the center faculty and staff, benefit from the center's resources, and progress in the degree programs in their home departments. The Digital Arts Initiative provides Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts students with hands-on experience applying current technology to the arts.

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- ACE Publications and Presentations-2016
- ACE-Undergraduate Education-2016
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- Civic Engagement Certificate-Student Affairs-2016
- Design + Social Justice Symposium-HLCFPA-2015

- Diversity Leadership Symposia-ASEM-2015
- Education Abroad-International Engagement-2016
- ENHANCE Funding Program-CAS-2016
- Field School in Turkey-HLCFPA-2016
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- Summer Research Program-OGS-2016
- SUSI-Student Affairs-2016
- UCARE-2015
- Undergraduate Conferences for Women-2015
- Unique Facilities-NIC-2016
- University Libraries-2016

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

The university recruits and develops world-class faculty and instructional staff who are innovative, energetic and dedicated to the highest standard of excellence. Faculty, instructors, and student services staff ensure that students receive an exceptional educational experience. The university supports faculty and staff through [regular review](#) and professional development opportunities.

3.C.1. UNL employs sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff.

In fall 2015, UNL employed 1064 full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty, with a student-faculty ratio of 16:1. This student-faculty ratio is consistent with the most recent HLC Institutional Update but is not consistent with the Common Data Set and other data surveys because the method used to determine the ratio for those purposes differs from that specified in the HLC Institutional Update instructions.

Over the past ten years, UNL has hired 586 new or replacement tenured or tenure-track faculty members. The faculty size allows UNL to meet not only teaching needs but also the full range of teaching, research, service, engagement and extension roles that typify a public, land-grant, research-intensive university. UNL faculty members are responsible for a wide variety of governance roles, including leadership in developing the curriculum and assessing student learning, faculty hiring, promotion/tenure and annual review, student recruitment and retention activities, advising roles, departmental and college leadership role.

Investments in new faculty hires have reflected the university's strategic hiring initiatives to ensure that UNL has an appropriate number of faculty members with a scope of expertise to lead existing and emerging academic programs. In 2013, IANR began a cluster hiring initiative in strategic impact areas. [Phase 1 resulted in 38 new faculty hires](#). In 2011 and 2015, a [university-wide voluntary](#)

[separation incentive program](#) for tenured faculty yielded 144 faculty lines and \$14M of salary funding, which were then [competitively reallocated](#) to colleges based on strategic hiring priorities. For example, IANR funded cluster hires in science literacy, computational sciences, healthy humans, stress biology, healthy agricultural production and natural resource systems, and drivers of economic vitality. Academic Affairs invested in early childhood education, digital humanities, food manufacturing, STEM core strength, obesity prevention, bullying prevention, African poetics, climate change, Latina/o immigration and international business.

In fall 2015, UNL employed 324 non-tenured/tenure track, regular faculty and 533 other faculty (equivalent rank, health, research/clinical and other). The professor of practice rank was established to increase stability, professionalism and integration of instructional and clinical faculty. Faculty at the research professor rank are typically funded by external grants and contracts. Both non-tenure track ranks provide opportunities for promotion (assistant, associate and full) and offer faculty benefits such as graduate faculty status, voting rights on many issues and faculty senate membership.

Faculty hired into tenure-leading positions are [automatically granted graduate faculty status](#). Staff or faculty [hired in non-tenure leading positions may be nominated for graduate faculty status](#) after obtaining a majority vote of the entire graduate faculty. Graduate Studies manages this approval process.

UNL employs extension educators in every county of Nebraska with community-based responsibilities ranging from agricultural production research and consultation, to nutrition and health education, and community and economic development. In fall 2015, UNL also employed 324 additional faculty as lecturers and instructors.

3.C.2. UNL ensures that all faculty and instructional staff are appropriately qualified.

The university's [academic appointments policy](#) outlines appointment standards for faculty and other instructional staff. [Faculty hiring](#) follows a standard search process and requires specification of required qualifications and academic credentials for each position. Of all faculty members, 1,127 hold doctorate degrees, 310 hold master's degrees, and 234 hold professional and/or bachelor's degrees. Each department has specified the typical minimum qualifications (as documented by degree level) for tenure- or non-tenure-eligible positions. In some disciplines a master's degree can be considered a terminal degree (e.g., a master of fine arts in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film). The percentage of UNL faculty with doctoral or other terminal degrees is 75%. Although the preference is to hire faculty with terminal degrees in their discipline, there are times when candidates bring other qualifications and experience that merit review and, ultimately, hiring.

In the case of a candidate who does not have a terminal degree, faculty in the hiring department consider the individual's extensive experience or other unique skills that qualify him or her for the teaching position (e.g., a non-tenure track journalism faculty member who has a master's degree and 20 years of industry experience, or a tenure-track architecture faculty member who holds a professional master's degree with extensive industry experience and leadership). The approval process for all faculty hires routes through the academic dean, the senior vice chancellor's office, and the Board of Regents.

Faculty who teach distance courses are hired through the process outlined above and must meet the same qualifications as faculty teaching on-campus courses. Most instructors of distance education courses also teach on-campus courses. In 2015-2016, 348 individuals taught web-based courses. Of those, 334 or 95.9% had also taught on-campus courses in the previous two years. The remaining instructors were a combination of graduate assistants teaching under the supervision of faculty

members and non-tenure track faculty members.

UNL does not offer dual enrollment courses in high schools or have any contractual arrangements for educational offerings. UNL's only consortial programs, the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance and its affiliate program, AG*IDEA, require that [faculty teaching courses for the consortium meet the requirements to teach graduate courses at the individual's home institution](#).

3.C.3. Teaching performance is rigorously evaluated.

Continuous evaluation and improvement of instructors' performance is essential to maintain the quality of academic programs. Faculty members are expected to aspire to the highest levels of teaching, research and service, befitting their positions in a national research university. [Evaluation of all UNL faculty members](#) is governed by University of Nebraska Board of Regents and UNL bylaws and policies. All instructional staff members, including part-time lecturers, are held accountable for meeting educational objectives and teaching effectiveness and are evaluated regularly by students, peers and/or appointed supervisors.

The five principal assessments of faculty member performance are 1) student course evaluations administered each semester in every course, 2) annual evaluation, 3) progress toward tenure review, 4) promotion/tenure review, and 5) post-tenure review.

UNL practices for faculty evaluation are outlined in the [Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluations, Promotion, and Tenure](#). Each department or unit must have an approved process for annual review of its faculty to help them achieve professional goals and maximize contributions to UNL throughout their professional careers.

- **Annual review of tenure-track faculty.** Pre-tenure faculty are evaluated for reappointment during the second, third, fourth and sometimes fifth years of service. [Some colleges conduct a fourth-year review](#) to provide detailed guidance to help faculty members prepare for tenure and promotion review during the sixth year. The department and college review the candidate's dossier and provide feedback. Tenure-track faculty members undergo mandatory review for promotion and/or tenure no later than six years after hire (exceptions are made for approved [interruptions of the tenure clock](#) such as parental or family medical leave).
- **Annual review of tenured faculty:** All tenured faculty members annually participate in reviews of their performance.
- **Post-tenure review:** This process is triggered when an annual review identifies areas for significant improvement. Post-tenure review emphasizes the faculty member's pattern of past performance, current interests and objectives for future contributions and relies heavily on peer review. It provides added assurance that faculty on continuous appointments are accountable for their performance.
- **Annual review of non-tenured full and part-time faculty.** As outlined in the *Guidelines*, these evaluations "focus primarily on strengths and weaknesses, on the best use of a person's talents to meet the unit's needs, and on specific recommendations for improvement and professional development." Reappointment of full-time, multi-term lecturers and professors of practice requires a summative review at the end of the appointment term. Part-time lecturers are evaluated primarily on the basis of course evaluations and peer observations.

[Bylaws require student course evaluations](#) for all instructional staff, regardless of the instructor's tenure/employment status. The [policy for evaluating graduate teaching assistants](#) is described in the Graduate Bulletin. Evaluations are administered each semester (either in class or electronically) and collected by departments or colleges under controlled conditions that assure student anonymity. To

best assess their disciplinary pedagogical and instructional practices, departments and colleges have developed their own student course evaluation forms and procedures. Results from these evaluations inform department conversations about teaching and learning and are used in annual evaluations for faculty performance.

The university also relies on peer evaluation to improve teaching. The [Peer Review of Teaching Project](#) provides a year-long teaching development program that combines the investigation of student performance and teaching effectiveness. A second-year advanced program attracts 20 faculty each year. Over 300 UNL faculty from 53 departments have participated in the Peer Review Project, including 37 faculty from 27 departments and colleges in 2016. The program's outcomes include book chapters and journal articles, over 40 conference papers, almost \$2M of external grant funding and over 60 campus and disciplinary teaching awards for participants.

3.C.4. UNL provides opportunities for professional development for instructors, including graduate teaching assistants.

Quality instruction begins with high-quality faculty, resources for development and assessment of teaching and learning, and institutional commitment to prioritize and reward excellence in teaching and learning. Numerous university-wide or college-based programs recognize excellence in teaching and research. UNL faculty, including graduate teaching assistants, have ample means to keep current in their disciplines and enhance teaching skills.

- Faculty who have held full-time appointments within the NU system for six years or more at the rank of assistant, associate, full professor or professor of practice are eligible to apply for competitive [faculty development fellowship leave](#) (FDL). FDLs provide faculty with full pay for one-half of the normal appointment period, or 50% of regular pay for all of the normal appointment period, so they may engage in scholarly research or artistic activity, or study teaching or professional innovations to UNL's academic programs.
- A fall and spring [Teaching and Learning Symposium](#) focuses on practical strategies for facilitating challenging conversations, managing classroom dynamics and promoting awareness of and reflection about diversity.
- Online and Distance Education supports faculty professional development and the creation of high-quality learning environments by providing technical and pedagogical resources for instructional design. The office sponsors the annual [Summer Institute for Online Learning](#), supports teaching in online and distance formats, and provides instructional design support in partnership with academic colleges.
- The [NU Innovation Pedagogy and Technology Symposium](#) offers opportunities to network and learn about pedagogical innovation across the NU system.
- Information Technology Services provides workshops and online support for learning management and emerging technologies, including web collaboration and IT skills training.
- The CASNR Teaching and Learning Improvement Council sponsors a campuswide teaching workshop for all faculty and graduate students.
- Discipline-based research into teaching also supports instructors' skills and expertise. The Adopting Research-based Instructional Strategies for Enhancing STEM Education Program, a three-year collaboration of 14 UNL departments funded by a \$2M NSF grant, is enriching instruction in STEM courses at UNL. Sixty-seven faculty across 20 departments are engaging in evidence-based instructional practices via peer instruction and just-in-time teaching within the biology, chemistry and physics and astronomy departments.

For over 25 years, UNL has provided [instructional development opportunities for graduate students](#). The *Campuswide Workshop for Graduate Teaching Assistants* features topics on course design,

assessment, pedagogy and building student engagement. The Institute for International Teaching Assistants prepares international graduate students from various UNL departments to teach American undergraduates. Participants attend a two-week intensive training program that focuses on instructional strategies, English pronunciation and intonation, and cross-cultural communication. Approximately 50 students participate in the program each summer. Instructional development opportunities for graduate students are available through the *Teaching Documentation Program* and an online handbook for graduate teaching assistants. The [Preparing Future Faculty program](#) is a professional development opportunity for advanced doctoral students interested in pursuing faculty positions. In fall 2016, UNL will join the Center for Integrated Research, Teaching and Learning Network, a national learning community that seeks to improve teaching skills and increase the diversity of future faculty in the STEM fields.

Colleges and departments provide orientations focused on teaching within particular disciplines. The Departments of English, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, and Modern Languages and Literatures, for example, sponsor orientations to teaching the week before fall classes begin. Graduate students also can pursue graduate certificates and minors focused on teaching within particular disciplines. English offers a [graduate certificate in teaching of writing](#). Chemistry offers a graduate specialization in *teaching chemistry at the postsecondary level*. A graduate minor in college STEM education is designed for graduate students pursuing careers that involve teaching in college-level STEM disciplines.

The [Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award](#) recognizes graduate teaching assistants who have demonstrated special effectiveness in teaching undergraduates at UNL. Many colleges also recognize graduate assistants for excellence in teaching.

3.C.5. UNL faculty and staff use multiple means to ensure they are accessible to students.

In addition to communicating with students via email, texting, social media, posted office hours, and Blackboard, faculty remain accessible in other ways. All syllabi must contain the instructor's office hours and contact information. Some distance education instructors and departments (e.g., chemistry) hold synchronous virtual office hours and review sessions. In 2012, UNL implemented MyPLAN (see 3.D.3.) to enhance effective communication between instructors, advisers and students via online scheduling for advising and support services appointments, as well as an instructor academic warning system.

[Results from the 2013 NSSE show that UNL outperformed its Association of American Universities Data Exchange \(AAUDE\) peers](#) in the summarized engagement indicators of student-faculty interaction, effective teaching practices and quality of interactions. UNL students report higher quality interactions with faculty (first-year +3%, seniors +2%), student services staff (first-year +7%, seniors +4%), and other administrative staff (first-year +5%, seniors +6%). UNL first-year students scored significantly higher in response to questions on talking about career plans with faculty (+6%), instructors providing detailed and prompt feedback on tests or completed assignments (+6%), and instructors providing feedback on draft work in progress (+7%). Results from the graduating senior survey of undergraduates show 88.74% of August graduates and 91.1% of May graduates report their overall UNL experience as excellent or good.

Responses from the [2010-2014 Graduate Exit Survey](#) indicate that the majority of master's and doctoral students would start their graduate program again at UNL (77.3%), choose the same graduate department (78.9%) and field of specialization (84%), and the same graduate adviser (72.7%).

3.C.6. Staff providing student support services are qualified, trained appropriately and

provided professional development opportunities.

UNL recruits and develops highly qualified staff who provide outstanding student support services. Multiple layers of screening, training and professional development ensure that student services staff are appropriately qualified and prepared to support students' needs. Human Resources has [well-established processes for screening and hiring staff members](#), including minimum and preferred qualifications and criminal background checks, and recently hired a diversity officer to work with colleges to increase the diversity of UNL's staff.

Human Resources offers [new employee orientations](#) monthly. Individual units also provide specific training. For example, University Registrar staff are oriented to their jobs by one-on-one supervisor training that includes reviewing the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers statement of professional ethics and practice. Annual merit processes provide employees feedback on performance and opportunities to participate in goal setting.

UNL supports [continuing professional growth opportunities](#) for staff. Full-time, regular employees are eligible for a tuition waiver for up to 15 credit hours per academic year. The University of Nebraska Office Professionals Association and the University Association for Administrative Development actively support professional development for staff in every unit. The Academic Advising Association connects and develops academic advisers. UNL is working toward establishing career plans for career and academic advising staff. Individual units support on-going professional development activities and travel.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

Since 2006, UNL has made strategic investments in technology, infrastructure and personnel to maximize student retention and time to degree. In spring 2011, an associate vice chancellor for academic affairs assumed responsibility for student support services and initiated an aggressive effort to increase undergraduate engagement, retention and six-year graduation rates. The overarching goal was to improve the policies, practices and structures impacting UNL undergraduates' success. Academic Affairs targeted initiatives in the areas of advising, admissions and transfer credit, high impact practices (e.g., learning communities, undergraduate research, etc.), academic support and career services. Several new programs were developed to proactively and systemically support student success.

3.D.1. UNL provides support services for students in a variety of forms from the moment they enter the university until they leave.

- [First-year learning communities](#) help incoming freshmen develop a sense of belonging and support their academic success. Students live on the same residence hall floor, take classes together, participate in social and academic co-curricular experiences and meet with upper class peer mentors. Since 2011, first-year learning communities have expanded from 10 to over 25 and doubled enrollment from 330 students to over 700.
- The [Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising \(Explore\) Center](#) was reimagined from the Office of General Studies in 2012 to better support academic advising and professional networking for undeclared and pre-professional students. This office annually serves over 3,000 students via individual advising appointments, group workshops and programs.
- In 2013, the [Office of First-Year Experience and Transition Programs](#) was created to provide success coaching, academic workshops and programs for particular student populations (transfer, commuter, international). In 2014-2015, staff held over 2,400 individual coaching sessions. FYETP also offers study stop locations staffed with learning consultants for all students and peer mentors for specific student populations (first-generation, transfer, etc.).
- In 2015, the [Veterans and Military Success Center](#) was created to provide seamless support for students' transition from military to campus life, including benefits processing, transfer credit

evaluation, health services and counseling, peer mentoring and social support groups.

- The [Office of Career Services](#) provides university-level services as well as college-specific career counseling to prepare students for success in the workplace.

UNL's diverse student populations require a variety of [unique support services](#). Some are academically focused, others address overall student development. For example:

- The Nebraska College Preparatory Academy, a partnership between UNL, Metropolitan Community College and two Nebraska high schools, provides academic counseling and support, leadership, personal development and financial assistance for college success for first-generation and low-income students. The academy began accepting middle school students in 2006; the first students enrolled at UNL in 2010 and graduated in May 2015.
- The Honors Program recruits about 500 first-year students annually. The program fosters student engagement in scholarship through research and creative activities (culminating in a required senior thesis) and supports close interaction between high-ability undergraduates, upper-class peer mentors and faculty.
- Student Support Services, a TRiO program, supports promising first-generation students and those with financial need or disabilities in meeting the academic, financial and social demands of a college education.
- The Student Money Management Center provides personal coaching, group workshops and electronic resources.
- The University Health Center provides consultations, examinations and treatments that promote students' health, including preventive care, nutrition and support services, wellness advocates, peer educators, and educational events and workshops.
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children-accredited Children's Center opened in 2009 and provides year-round care for children ages six weeks to five years for students, faculty and staff.
- The College of Law provides a year-long course for first-year law students on the academic skills necessary for success in law school.
- Disciplinary resource centers (e.g., Departments of Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry, Engineering, Mathematics, Modern Languages and Literatures) provide discipline-specific free tutoring and learning resource centers. Chemistry and Mathematics resource centers were completely renovated in the last two years.
- Academic counselors at the Herman Student Life Complex offer student athletes support, guidance and resources through graduation, and counselors monitor their progress toward degree requirements. Tutorial support and subject mentors provide study strategies for success, and an orientation program helps student athletes adjust to college life.

3.D.2. Orientation and placement programs help students meet their academic needs.

All new freshmen are required to attend [New Student Enrollment](#), a one-day session during the summer prior to the fall semester. Students meet with an academic adviser, register for classes, meet other students and learn about important UNL resources. Big Red Welcome's 6 Weeks of Welcome includes activities and events such as New Student Convocation, Transfer Student Welcome, Commuter Welcome, a pep rally, a bike ride, Boneyard Bash, and workshops focused on student success. New graduate students attend [New Graduate Student Welcome](#) the week before classes, and most graduate programs provide departmental orientations. The [College of Law provides a two-and-a-half-day orientation](#) that includes a service project and an in-depth workshop on professionalism and ethics led by faculty and lawyers and judges from the community.

All [new undergraduate international students participate in a three-day orientation](#) to learn about their

college/program requirements and campus resources, meet other students, and receive tips to help them succeed at UNL. International graduate students also participate in an orientation that provides them an overview of graduate studies at UNL. [An orientation program specifically focused on helping transfer students transition](#) to UNL is sponsored by New Student Enrollment.

UNL offers placement exams to ensure that students take appropriate courses in selected disciplines (e.g., math, modern languages), enforces Test of English as a Foreign Language requirements for international students, and offers corresponding Programs in English as a Second Language to help students who do not meet minimum TOEFL requirements. Each graduate program establishes discipline-specific entrance requirements.

3.D.3. Advising structures are suited to the needs of students.

Over the past five years, UNL has [improved academic advising](#) by implementing new advising technology, restructuring advising units and governance structures, investing in new positions and increasing salaries for existing positions, and developing and implementing proactive advising programs.

UNL implemented the Starfish electronic advising system (rebranded MyPLAN, for My Personal Learning and Advising Network) in January 2012, making it possible for students to conveniently schedule appointments and allow faculty, advisers and others to share key pieces of information that could impact a student's ability to be successful. MyPLAN has promoted transparency and collaboration across undergraduate advising and academic support units. In fall 2013, an early warning feature was added to enable instructors to make referrals and communicate with advisers about student performance. In 2015 UNL received the [Starfish 360 Award](#), given nationally to three colleges or universities that use the Starfish platform, for valuable contributions to student success and retention.

UNL also has enhanced professional development for academic advisers. The [Advising Coordinating Board](#), comprised of advising leaders from all colleges and some student support units, was created in 2011 to monitor and coordinate undergraduate advising practices. The [Academic Advising Association](#), a network of faculty and staff focused on adviser professional development, was formed in 2013. AAA organizes regular meetings and an annual conference, supports graduate student training about advising, and maintains a listserv and website dedicated to professional development for advisers.

Undergraduate academic advising

Professional staff advisers and faculty advisers are available to assist undergraduates. Many colleges have professional advising centers. All colleges now employ some professional advisers, and some colleges use faculty to supplement professional staff. The [College of Engineering](#) implemented professional advising for first- and second-year students. This effort has allowed better monitoring of student behaviors, provided uniform information, and created a central resource for reliable information and service. Advisers are actively engaged in academic recovery coaching and career and life preparation for students.

Undeclared, pre-health and pre-law students are advised by the Explore Center. Some students receive additional advising through special programs, including Honors, Raikes School, William H. Thompson Scholars, Athletics, Student Support Services and OASIS. Students enrolled in distance education programs are assigned advisers and connected to liaisons in Undergraduate Admissions and Graduate Studies for assistance with academic support and resources.

[Degree audit](#) is available through MyRED, so students and advisers can ensure that students are meeting program requirements. Students view four-year plans and learning outcomes for all undergraduate majors in the Undergraduate Bulletin. In 2014, UNL implemented [Transferology](#), an online system that enables prospective transfer students to run a “what if” audit related to individual undergraduate degree programs.

Academic Affairs has developed [predictive tools to support undergraduate advising](#). In 2014 UNL moved its New Student Enrollment inventory for incoming first-year students online, enabling advisers to better assist students in developing first-semester schedules during orientation. In 2015, categorical questions focusing on grit, aptitude, motivation, time management and campus connection were added to the inventory, creating an even richer model for predicting students’ success. Students’ scores are fed to students’ advising overview pages, enabling advisers to refer students to appropriate programs and services based on their needs. Students with low scores in particular areas are sent invitations to academic workshops, programs and resource centers. Analysis of students’ scores in each category compared to first semester performance in overall GPA and percentage of hours earned vs. hours attempted has demonstrated the strength of this tool in predicting students’ first-term success.

Beyond academic advising, UNL has prioritized career planning and development. In 2012 [Career Services was merged into University Advising and Career Services](#) to facilitate more seamless approaches to career preparation. Faculty and advisers in all colleges also connect academic experiences with career development. For example, the Agribusiness Banking and Finance Program collaborates with the Nebraska Bankers Association and UNL Department of Agricultural Economics on curriculum, internships, scholarships and a fall recognition dinner—to attract interested students and enable them to be career-ready upon graduation. Students receive yearly scholarships and complete paid banking internships following their junior year. To date, nearly 65% of program graduates are employed in the banking industry—all but two students are in rural banks.

[UNL first-year and senior students positively view the quality of advising services \(NSSE 2013\)](#).

Seventy-four percent of first-year students and 69% of seniors reported the quality of academic advising as excellent or good. Their responses were significantly higher than AAUDE peers on the following questions: 1) advisers responded when you contacted them; 2) advisers talked about career and post-graduation plans; 3) advisers have been available when needed; and 4) advisers helped get information on special opportunities.

UNL seniors completing the 2013 NSSE gave a mean score of six on a scale of one (poor) to seven (excellent) for the [quality of interactions with student affairs staff](#), higher than UNL’s AAUDE peer institutions. These scores suggest that UNL students have favorable interactions with student services staff members.

Graduate student advising

Every UNL graduate student is expected to work closely with a faculty adviser to plan a program of study to meet degree requirements. Graduate student advising is achieved through a major professor and the student’s supervisory committee. The [steps to degree completion](#) and relevant advising forms are available on the Graduate Studies website, along with instructional screencasts to help faculty advisers and students complete a program of study. In addition, some UNL graduate programs have an online graduate handbook outlining the essential information particular to the respective graduate program.

3.D.4. A varied infrastructure and related resources support teaching and learning at UNL.

Over the last decade, the campus has invested over \$32 million in the renovation of classrooms, laboratories, student support service centers and learning resource centers. Colleges have invested millions more in specialized instructional facilities and advising and career centers. For example, the College of Engineering enhanced the instructional telecommunications technology linking engineering classrooms in Lincoln and Omaha and renovated the Engineering Library to consolidate advising offices more centrally. Investments in new residence halls, a new multicultural center, new recreation centers and a renovated city campus union have further enriched students' academic experiences with expanded co-curricular opportunities.

Libraries

With a collection of over 3 million print items, almost 4 million books, nearly 183,000 journal titles (in print or online), an annual budget of over \$18 million and 177 full-time equivalent faculty and staff, UNL Libraries support the university's instruction, research, service and economic development missions by acquiring scholarly resources, developing innovative support services and applying new information technologies. In addition to the main Love Library on City Campus, the university library system includes Architecture, C.Y. Thompson, Engineering, Geology, Mathematics, Music and Schmid Law Libraries. UNL also participates in the CIC's Center for Libraries Initiative.

In 2013, the first floor of Love Library South underwent a \$2.5 million renovation to create a home for centralized student support services, including the Explore Advising Center, First-Year Experience and Transition Programs, Undergraduate Research, Education Abroad, and International Engagement. In January 2016, the [Adele Coryell Hall Learning Commons](#) opened as the academic hub for scholarly and creative activities. This \$10M technology-rich research and learning space offers group and individual study spaces and provides library and information technology support for faculty and students. Included is a centrally supported 274-seat exam commons that accommodates the electronic testing needs for the entire university. The East Campus C.Y. Thompson Library is also undergoing renovation.

Arts and cultural facilities

UNL has three American Alliance of Museums-accredited facilities: Sheldon Museum of Art, International Quilt Study Center and Museum, and the State Museum of Natural History, a Smithsonian Affiliate. UNL has facilities for public exhibition of student and faculty creative activity, including the Lied Center for the Performing Arts, the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center, the Kimball Recital Hall for musical performances, Howell Theatre and the Johnny Carson Theater for theatrical productions, and the Eisentrager-Howard and MEDICI galleries in Richards Hall for art exhibitions. The Digital Arts Lab in Richards Hall has cutting-edge equipment for students to use to create multimedia artworks.

Research laboratories and centers

UNL's laboratories and clinical practice sites enrich the learning environment for students. Dedicated teaching laboratories for chemistry and biological sciences were renovated and expanded in Hamilton, Brace and Manter Halls. (see Core Component 5.C.2.) Specialized teaching labs include the Neuropsychology Lab, the Nebraska Athletic Performance Lab, NIMBUS Lab for robotics and software engineering, the Meteorology-Climatology Lab and the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory. Laboratories in the humanities include the Language Lab and the Nebraska Literature Lab. The College of Education and Human Sciences utilizes state PreK-12 schools for practicum purposes as well as the Barkley Center, Family Resource Center, the Kit and Dick Schmoker Reading

Center, Ruth Staples Child Development Laboratory, and the Early Development and Learning Lab. In 2014, Agricultural Economics launched a commodities trading classroom for students to experience real-time, realistic commodities trading. The Pixel Lab provides technical and creative support services to UNL students, faculty and staff. Freshmen engineering labs in Lincoln and Omaha (and soon one at the University of Nebraska-Kearney) are designed to provide hands-on and group-based mastery of engineering fundamentals. An array of labs in the Department of Art and Art History, Nebraska Innovation Studio and a Makers Space at Innovation Campus foster interdisciplinary teams in hands-on creation using woodworking, machinery, metalwork and 3-D printing.

Information technology

Information Technology Services, the academic colleges and UNL Libraries provide technology resources and support for effective teaching and learning. Information Technology Services supports 15 centrally supported computer labs and 140 general-purpose classrooms. ITS is responsible for network and Internet services and server-based applications, and provides central support for LMS and collaborative technologies. Detailed information about UNL's technological infrastructure is included in Core Component 5.A.

3.D.5. Students receive guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

The UNL libraries support the intellectual discovery and research needs of students and faculty through a wide range of services:

- Independent-study modules that familiarize students with online information resources and specific library services
- 24/7 access to librarians through email, instant messaging, phone, or text services for research coaching
- Workshops on using discipline-specific research and information literacy skills, and selecting, accessing, evaluating and citing resources
- Electronic resources, such as RefWorks and Safe Assignment, to help students understand issues of copyright, intellectual property and appropriate citation methods

Information Technology Services offers group and one-on-one training in the use of instructional technologies and operates the Computer Help Center.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

UNL enhances the educational experience through a broad array of co-curricular offerings, ranging from programs like Education Abroad to student-run activities like the highly successful [Big Event](#) each spring. These opportunities promote co-curricular learning while simultaneously connecting students to their academic goals and enhancing retention. The institution provides academic, social and career-focused opportunities for engagement and acts as a living-learning laboratory for students.

3.E.1. Co-curricular experiences enrich student learning and student life.

The university expects students to participate in experiences both inside and outside the classroom that foster inquiry and discovery, enhance academic and personal development, and promote citizenship, economic development and quality of life in Nebraska. Fifty-four percent of seniors taking the 2013 NSSE indicated that UNL had "quite a bit" or "very much" contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development in the area of being an informed and active citizen.

All undergraduates are required to take an ACE 8 course, which prioritizes ethics, civics and stewardship. Academic departments also provide courses and programs that enable students to develop understanding of sustainability issues (e.g., energy science minor, environmental studies major). Engineers Without Borders engages students in environmentally sustainable, equitable and economical engineering projects. The athletic department's Life Skills Service Abroad Program provides similar outreach on a global stage (e.g., building homes in Guatemala).

The Center for Civic Engagement facilitates student connections with civic engagement opportunities in the Lincoln community. It also sponsors an undergraduate certificate in civic engagement, which combines academic courses, experiential learning and reflective analysis. The Justin Smith Morrill Scholars program supports leadership and civic engagement activities. UNL departments and programs (agriculture, math, chemistry, modern languages and literatures, engineering) engage in numerous collaborations with K-12 schools. Each year the Dental College hosts free dental checkups for low-income students, and law students provide free tax preparation services.

Co-curricular units also support civic engagement and stewardship. Housing and ASUN have partnered to promote environmental sustainability. [ASUN approved a student fee increase in 2015 to support campus sustainability initiatives](#), and through its annual Big Event, 3,000 students, faculty and staff give back to local communities through one large day of service. The student-organized dance marathon has raised over \$500,000 for the Omaha Children's Hospital. [UNL student athletes participate annually in over 300 service projects](#), impacting nearly 100,000 people in Nebraska. Scarlet Guard, the student chapter of UNL's alumni association with over 1,400 members,

sponsors professional and social development events.

UNL student mentors provide social and wellness programming and serve as learning consultants in academic support centers. Undergraduate teaching assistants work in 100-level courses. Students also serve as mentors to people in the Lincoln community (e.g., immigrant high school students). The Nebraska Human Resources Institute pairs 360 UNL student mentors with children in the Lincoln Public Schools.

Over 500 student organizations provide additional opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and get involved with activities that meet their academic, professional, cultural, political, religious, art, service and other interests. The Office of Student Involvement provides an electronic hub for all recognized student organizations, campus nightlife events, the University Program Council, and gender and LGBTQ programs. The [Outstanding Student Leadership Award](#) recognizes outstanding leadership in academic, co-curricular and/or extracurricular activities and involvements. Some examples of student leadership opportunities include:

- ASUN oversees some student fee allocation and sponsors [Student Legal Services](#), College Readership Program, and other initiatives. The president of ASUN is a non-voting member of the NU Board of Regents.
- Undergraduate research ambassadors speak to classes and organizations about their research experiences.
- Peer mentors in Honors, Learning Communities, First-Year Experience and Transition Programs, OASIS, and William H. Thompson communities serve as academic, leadership and social role models for UNL undergraduate students by sharing their experiences related to student success.
- [Orientation leaders](#) participate in New Student Enrollment, Big Red Welcome and other activities to promote UNL programs and services.
- Diversity ambassadors support the recruitment of underrepresented minority students through programs with prospective students, parents and community members.
- College student ambassadors promote awareness of academic programs and activities with prospective students, parents, alumni and the general public.
- Graduate student ambassadors support prospective, new and current students.
- International orientation leaders give international students a more visible and active leadership role within the University of Nebraska.
- The [OASIS Leadership Program](#) develops student leaders through social action.

University Libraries, Campus Recreation and Housing employ the largest number of student staff members and provide a diverse range of opportunities. For example, UNL Libraries employs over 200 students annually in positions such as peer guides, ambassadors, technology assistants and social media promoters. A two-week housing [resident assistant \(RA\) orientation](#) includes training on community development, confrontation, conflict resolution, peer helping skills, emergency procedures and other skills. Learning outcomes are identified for each training session. Students complete an assessment to ensure that key information, knowledge and skills have been acquired. RAs who do not demonstrate sufficient knowledge and/or skill are referred to their direct supervisor (residence director) for additional coaching. New RAs are also required to participate in a university-accredited course during the first semester of their employment that expands upon concepts, theories and practices introduced during the fall orientation.

3.E.2. UNL delivers on its promises: Education, research, and outreach pillars are integrated.

UNL is the state's only public, land-grant, research-intensive university, setting Nebraska apart from

many other states that have at least two research institutions (Kansas and Kansas State, Michigan and Michigan State, Iowa and Iowa State), and from other colleges and universities in Nebraska. Although the university's mission is three-fold, research and outreach are not separate from the educational mission.

As more fully described in Core Component 3.B.5 under "student scholarship," UNL offers a rich research-intensive environment that benefits undergraduate and graduate students. Undergraduate and graduate courses are taught by leading experts, and students have numerous and diverse opportunities to engage in research and creative activity in laboratories, studios and off-campus locations. Such experiences include research-related jobs through student employment, full-time summer research projects and Research Experiences for Undergraduates. These opportunities equip students with disciplinary and applied skills for career preparation. For instance, undergraduate and graduate assistants work at Nebraska Innovation Campus labs with UNL professors and private sector sponsors to identify classes of salmonella present on raw foods. Several of these students have been hired in the private sector food processing industry immediately after graduation. UNL was named a top university for supporting undergraduate research by *U.S. News and World Report* in 2013 and 2014.

Departments offer numerous opportunities for students to enhance classroom learning with real-world experience. The English Department offers internships with the Nebraska Slam Poetry organization and *The Prairie Schooner*, one of the oldest literary journals in the country. Broadcasting students can work for KRNU, the college's radio station, and help produce HuskerVision, the athletic department's broadcast unit, as well as Big Ten Network broadcasts. The Big Red Investment Club supports business students with hands-on investing experience to gain knowledge of financial modeling and equity and debt markets. The Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design holds a [biennial runway show](#) to showcase student work produced in various fashion design courses. The College of Business Administration hosts Entrepreneurship Days, with venture competitions in which students seek funding by pitching business ideas to a panel of professionals. And the HIVE Startup weekend brings together developers, designers, marketers and product managers to form teams, build products and launch startups.

UNL provides numerous career exploration and preparation opportunities for all student populations. Career Services offers individual consulting and group workshops on writing resumes and application letters, honing interview skills, using social networks for career planning and preparing graduate school applications. Employer career fairs each semester further support the future success of students as they prepare for life post-graduation. Graduate Studies' [Career and Professional Development unit](#) provides online resources, workshops and individual services to UNL graduate students to aid in career planning, managing prospective careers and developing the skills and knowledge needed for professional and career advancement. The College of Law [Build Your Character](#) program builds skills students need to become complete lawyers. Day-long workshops, discussions and lectures led by nationally-recognized speakers address eight areas. A smart phone app, developed by the [Raikes School Design Studio](#), allows students to track and record their progress.

Sources

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- New Student Enrollment-ASEM-2016
- OASIS Leadership Program-Student Affairs-2016
- Orientation Leaders-ASEM-2016
- Outstanding Student Leadership Award-Student Affairs-2016
- RA Training-Student Affairs-2016
- Runway Show-CEHS-2016
- Student Ambassadors-2016
- Student Legal Services-2016
- Sustainability-2016
- The Big Event-2016

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

UNL meets all the core components of Criterion 3.

- The ACE program operationalizes the university's commitment to a liberal education in the context of a research-intensive university and creates a framework for assessment.
- Significant investments in building and expanding services to advise, track, tutor and provide peer mentoring are helping students overcome barriers to retention and degree progress.
- UNL has highly qualified faculty to carry out overall teaching responsibilities. Staff are well-trained and support is appropriate.
- Full-time faculty have terminal degrees in their fields or appropriate experience relating to their disciplines.
- UNL has the appropriate facilities, including teaching laboratories, technological infrastructure and libraries, and adequate space to support student learning. Co-curricular activities serve to enhance and enrich students' learning experiences.

Next Steps:

- Because UNL is a large and decentralized institution, communicating with faculty and students about the availability and value of utilizing services to support student success remains a key challenge.
- Educating and encouraging faculty to use advising, referral and flagging technologies to support student success also remains a challenge. Future steps include developing information campaigns, trainings and tours for faculty to educate them on how support services can be beneficial partners.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A.1. As required by the Board of Regents, UNL engages in a process of regular external and internal review of curricular and co-curricular programs.

This review process ensures the quality of UNL's educational programs. [Regular and systematic academic program reviews \(APR\)](#), typically conducted every seven years, occur for both graduate and undergraduate programs. Periodic academic program reviews for all programs are required by both the Academic Planning Committee (APC) and the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE).

Like accreditation, the APR process focuses on improving quality. A standard procedure ensures institutional consistency and provides necessary data for long-range planning. APR processes are incorporated into the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) comprehensive review for programs in IANR. APR processes also meet requirements for periodic program review required by the CCPE.

The multi-stage academic program review process includes an internal self-study, an external review of the program, a final report that provides a clear plan for applying review results, and specific responses to the review developed by the vice chancellor, deans and department chairs.

Program review is the responsibility of and coordinated by Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the departmental and deans' offices. The vice chancellor for IANR (VCIANR) oversees CREES reviews.

Degree-seeking programs that undergo specialized accreditation reviews are allowed to substitute that process for the APR. Such programs are required to submit a report to the respective dean explaining how the review and its results relate to program/college/and university strategic plans. The dean responds to these reports, submitting the program's report and the college's response to the SVCAA and/or VCIANR as appropriate.

Recommendations resulting from academic program reviews are cycled back into departments' decision making for improvement. Examples of such impact in recent years include:

- The English APR identified the need for more teaching assistant training beyond the first semester and recommended that only funded students be admitted to the PhD program. As a result, more training options are included in the required teaching practicum course, and the department eliminated non-funded admissions at both MA and PhD levels.
- The Department of Entomology review triggered the development of learning outcomes for the BS, MS and PhD degrees, a gap analysis of the curriculum, and a redefinition of student learning outcomes and measures for each course.
- Based on feedback from the last Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) review, the College of Business Administration re-deployed resources to enhance the college's career services center to ready students for the job market. CBA's placement rate has increased and the average starting salary has also risen.
- The APR for the sociology department recommended a focus on four areas of strength, which the department then prioritized for graduate curriculum and faculty hiring. The department rose in comparative rankings of sociology PhD programs nationally (Academic Analytics) from 65th to 13th.

Other UNL units also conduct regular program reviews designed to facilitate continuous improvement. For example, the Program in English as a Second Language underwent a major review in 2008, resulting in new leadership and major curriculum revisions. The Education Abroad Office evaluates UNL-administered programs on program selection, preparation of students, quality of academic components and student support services, financial accessibility, and attainment of goals and outcomes. [All Student Affairs departments participate in a program review every six years](#), including assessment of learning outcomes that align with those of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education.

APR guidelines are reviewed every ten years. A review committee that included representatives of the APC, Academic Affairs and IANR revised the guidelines in spring 2016 to ensure that APR processes continue to meet the needs of a changing academic environment.

4.A.2. UNL has established policies for evaluating credit by examination and military credit.

[Faculty have established equivalents for selected AP, CLEP and IB exams](#). Relevant departments review other exams for acceptance. Credit for most military courses is accepted based on American Council on Education recommendations, and the colleges determine where to count the credits. UNL

awards one credit for 90 days of active duty military service – up to 4 credits – which may be applied toward a general education outcome (ACE 8 or 9), based on the student’s essay describing how the experience meets the outcome. Essays are retained for ACE assessment.

4.A.3. UNL has well-established [policies governing transfer of credit](#) from regionally accredited institutions.

These policies are easily accessible to students online at the UNL websites for transfer credit evaluation, the UNL Admissions website and the undergraduate and graduate bulletins. The degree audit and [Advising Center policies and procedures](#) in each college provide assurance that policies are observed. Individual colleges may require that specific courses or a certain number of credit hours be completed on the UNL campus to satisfy [residency requirements](#).

In 2012, UNL [significantly revised processes](#) for evaluating undergraduate transfer credit to ensure consistency and efficiency. Transfer equivalents previously had been made individually and manually by faculty members. Under the new process, transfer credit evaluation specialists use rubrics established by faculty to identify and enter course equivalencies from other institutions in an electronic system. Equivalencies are then standardized for future students with the same transfer courses. Between 2012 and 2015, 20,000 new equivalencies were created. If an equivalency cannot be ascertained, courses transfer as elective credit and the student’s college determines how credit applies. Course catalogs of institutions from which UNL receives the majority of transfer courses are reviewed annually, and courses are re-evaluated when there are significant curriculum changes.

Master’s and doctoral students may transfer up to half of their program with permission of the graduate committees and/or doctoral supervisory committee, which review and approve all transfer credits. All doctoral students must meet an academic residency requirement to ensure their doctoral program is reasonably compact, continuous and cohesive, and that a substantial portion is completed under close supervision by the faculty.

UNL accepts transfer credit from an institution that offers dual credit if the institution is regionally accredited. UNL offers concurrent credit through the [Nebraska Now](#) program. Concurrent courses are taught at the same level as those on campus, using the same faculty, syllabi and grading scale to assure the quality of teaching and learning.

4.A.4. UNL maintains authority over course prerequisites and rigor, as well as expectations for student learning and faculty qualifications for all its programs.

Each academic unit is responsible for developing courses to support its majors and minors and the general education curriculum. Course rigor and expectations are determined by the faculty and approved at the department level. Undergraduate courses undergo review and approval by college curriculum committees and the University Curriculum Committee. Graduate committees for each graduate program review and approve graduate courses. The university registrar reviews new courses for functional issues like proper course numbers. Course approval summary reports are available online.

Department and college faculty determine course prerequisites. Several practices ensure that students enroll in courses for which they are qualified. For example, prerequisites are submitted to the university registrar at the time of course approval and enforced during the student registration process through MyRed, UNL’s student information system. Specific enrollment in any upper-level course requires completion of appropriate prerequisites; students without specific prerequisites are prevented from enrolling. Prerequisites are communicated in the course catalog and on course syllabi. Advisers

help students select appropriate courses to fulfill degree requirements.

Comprehensive faculty governance ensures the curriculum is rigorous and current. [Unit-, college-, and university-level curriculum committees systematically evaluate all course proposals](#), reviewing prerequisites, course rigor and learning outcomes. Some departments and colleges evaluate grade distributions in individual courses to ensure high and fair standards. [ACE general education courses are assessed and reviewed on a five-year staggered schedule](#).

Expectations for student learning are developed for each course and included in course syllabi. All undergraduate major learning outcomes are communicated to students via the Undergraduate Bulletin. Instructors are required to include ACE general education outcomes, course objectives and other learning outcomes in syllabi. Curriculum committees at all levels monitor instructor compliance with this requirement.

Faculty qualifications are established by each academic unit and consistently applied to ensure faculty excellence across the university (see Core Component 3.C.). Promotion and tenure guidelines specify criteria for initial appointments as well as for promotion and tenure. Membership on the graduate faculty recognizes scholarly accomplishments and affords privileges, including chairing thesis and dissertation committees. Colleges provide oversight for all programs and are responsible for verifying faculty credentials and course criteria.

4.A.5. UNL maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as required.

UNL has a long history of earning disciplinary and professional [accreditation for specific programs](#). Specialized accreditors evaluate 46 units, schools or programs within the university as required. A complete list is included in the *UNL Fact Book* and is published online.

4.A.6. UNL has multiple ways of measuring the success of its graduates.

UNL's Career Services [conducts a post-graduate career survey](#) within six months of graduation. The total response rate over the last 10 years is 90.9% for graduate students and 92.6% for undergraduates. The Office of Graduate Studies [conducts an exit survey of graduate students to measure response to the overall graduate student experience](#) and students' plans for employment. In August 2015, Academic Affairs piloted a graduating senior survey to collect students' perceptions of how well their educational experience prepared them in a variety of areas (writing, critical thinking, human diversity, information resources, etc.). This survey is being distributed to all graduating students (August, December, May) and will be used to track trends in students' educational experiences over time. UNL also collects data on student experiences through its participation in the NSSE, administered every three years to first-year and senior students (see Core Component 4.B).

Individual colleges and programs also track student success. Graduate programs such as those in chemistry, math, communication studies, sociology, psychology, English and entomology track student career placement and post-placement data on their websites. The [College of Law conducts a survey of graduating students](#) to assess their experiences and tracks the job placement of every graduate ten months after graduation. These employment results are published on the College of Law website. The College of Business Administration tracks its own undergraduate and graduate students' post-graduation employment. The College of Education and Human Sciences tracks all teacher education graduates employed in Nebraska through the end of their first year of teaching.

Individual academic units also compile and monitor indicators that reflect program effectiveness. For example, architecture graduates have pass rates from 71% - 88% on individual portions of the

Architect Registration Exam. Speech and language pathology and audiology students have a 100% pass rate on national certification exams. Clinical psychology PhD students have a 91% pass rate on the national exam. Dietetics graduates have a 100% pass rate on the national registration exam.

The College of Law tracks its graduates' success with bar examinations, noting that the class of 2015 achieved a 90% pass rate across all state exams.

UNL tracks the participation and success of its students who apply for nationally competitive fellowships (e.g., Boren, Rhodes, Truman, Gates, Goldwater). See Core Component 3.D. for details.

Sources

- Academic Program Reviews-Academic Affairs-2016
- ACE Assessment Schedule-Undergraduate Education-2016
- Credit Evaluation Tables-ASEM-2016
- Curriculum Committees-2016
- Evaluation and Survey-Law-2015
- Graduate Student Exit Survey Report-OGS-2014
- Nebraska Now-ASEM-2016
- Post Graduation Survey-Career Services-2016
- Program Accreditations-Academic Affairs-2016
- Program Review-Student Affairs-2016
- Residency Requirements-2016
- Transfer Credit Policy-ASEM-2016
- Transfer Credit Revisions-Academic Affairs-2012
- Transfer Evaluation Procedures-CAS-2016
- Transferology-ASEM-2016

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

4.B.1. UNL has articulated student-learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional level and has established processes for assessing them.

All [undergraduate majors have associated outcomes](#) describing what graduates will know, understand or do upon completion of their program of study within the major, and students can easily find these outcomes in the Undergraduate Bulletin. UNL measures achievement toward student learning outcomes against established standards and employs policies and procedures that ensure the quality of its programs and support for student learning.

Given the wide range of degree programs offered, assessment processes vary considerably across campus. Many degree programs, for example, rely primarily on senior capstone courses to assess student learning. Others emphasize student portfolios or experiential learning (simulations, internships, etc.). Multiple sources are used to gather data on student learning, and all academic programs are required to report on their efforts to improve student learning during the regular academic program review process. Each college approaches assessment in ways that honor its own discipline yet address essential questions related to assessment.

In 2015 the University-wide Assessment Committee [developed recommendations based on review of ACE 10 and biennial program assessment processes](#). In 2016, Academic Affairs purchased a commercial online system, TK20, to facilitate assessment and align the requests for assessment from institutional and external accreditation bodies. This system will enable faculty to pull samples of student work from UNL's Blackboard LMS, enter quantitative or qualitative assessments of such work, and route results to colleges and university-level units. The system is currently being implemented with three pilot groups: business faculty are mapping course outcomes needed for ACSB accreditation; faculty in life sciences, English, and communication studies are piloting rubrics for ACE courses; and faculty in CASNR are piloting course assessment for biennial program review. UNL administrators understand the continuing need to provide professional development for faculty and instructional staff on how to effectively use assessment for improved student learning.

UNL has carried out various assessment activities over the past 10 years, coordinated and led by different units on campus. These efforts occur within a strong culture of collection and use of data for decision making at the institutional level. Integration of a culture of assessment at the academic unit level has been more varied and challenging, with some units and assessment processes being more

advanced than others. Consistent implementation and use of assessment data remain a challenge, as does coordination of various assessment efforts. The establishment of a collaborative structure to provide guidance is critical to building a culture of assessment and maximizing the use of results to improve teaching and learning.

4.B.2. UNL measures achievement towards student learning outcomes against established standards.

Achievement-centered education assessment

[UNL's Achievement-Centered Education \(ACE\) general education program](#) is built on 10 assessable student learning outcomes. (See Core Component 3.B.2.) ACE outcomes are mapped and reinforced in particular co-curricular activities.

Since ACE was implemented in 2009, faculty have assessed over 700 ACE courses on a staggered five-year rotation. Departments collect student work related to achievement of a particular outcome and evaluate the level of student attainment toward that outcome. Programs are encouraged to assess a manageable set of learning outcomes each year and to use methods that fit with disciplinary traditions and scholarship. Some departments involve all members of the committee in the evaluation. Others have professionals in the field judge student work. ACE assessment results are used to facilitate program and college discussions about effectiveness of the curriculum, pedagogy and co-curricular activities.

Faculty submit [recertification requests for ACE courses](#) to UNL's ACE curriculum subcommittee, which reviews the reports and evidence of student work. Assessment reports are submitted first to respective academic colleges and then to the University-wide Assessment Committee, which provides feedback to departments. Results have been disseminated across the campus via posters, newsletters and faculty learning communities and nationally via presentations and articles.

Biennial undergraduate program assessment

All units offering undergraduate degree programs [submit biennial assessment reports](#) that identify their learning outcomes and respond to a set of questions aligned with ACE and HLC assessment criteria:

- What programmatic or learning outcome(s) does the report address?
- What measure/method(s) were used? How was the information collected?
- What were the results? How were the results summarized, shared and discussed?
- How did the assessment activity inform program changes? How did or will the program follow up on these changes?

These biennial assessment reports are submitted to individual colleges and to the Office of Undergraduate Education Programs. College summary reports are also reviewed by faculty on the University-wide Assessment Committee.

Systematic analysis of assessment reports indicates that program improvements focusing on student learning and the educational experience have increased steadily and significantly since 1997. (See Core Component 4.B.3.) Such [results have produced](#) insights into student learning, including the continuous improvement of learning outcomes, revision of curriculum, improvements in advising, increased student-faculty interaction, and more focused attention to retention and career preparation. For example, an [analysis of ACE 10 reports](#) revealed a general sense of satisfaction with the level of

student accomplishment with the exception of two weaknesses detected in writing and research skills.

Graduate assessment

Most students awarded master's degrees complete a thesis or capstone project; all doctoral students complete comprehensive examinations before admission to candidacy, conduct a public oral examination and submit an approved dissertation. These requirements ensure that degree recipients meet Graduate College goals that include demonstration of proficiency in a broad subject of learning, an ability to critically evaluate work in the field, and a significant original contribution to the advancement of knowledge. UNL graduate chairs and the Graduate Council have identified a set of [broad goals for master's and doctoral students](#). These goals are assessed through the graduate exit survey, distributed every May, August and December.

Co-curricular program assessment

UNL recognizes that not all learning takes place in the classroom. [Student Affairs \(SA\) has developed a multi-year strategic plan](#) with learning, development and service outcomes. The learning domains identified in the SA plan align with ACE learning outcomes. [SA units assess learning outcomes](#) annually at both the program and the division levels and have adopted uniform templates and a web-based reporting platform. Three AACU values rubrics were adopted as the primary measurement for assessing learning. Since fall 2010, more than 2,700 students documented their service-learning experiences.

SA units use the Campus Labs platform to assess co-curricular student learning. From 2006 to 2015, 13 SA departments, including the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, have administered 220 surveys receiving feedback from 187,751 students and used these data to improve student affairs programs, services and facilities.

The [International Student Barometer](#) was administered every year from 2012 through 2015 to assess international students' satisfaction with housing, arrival experience, orientations, academic support and U.S. living experiences. Results indicated that international students have largely been satisfied with their UNL experience. Areas of dissatisfaction have been actively addressed, and additional support services have been added across campus. For example, arrival services have been established, and an international welcome team assists in a week of welcome activities for new international students. Housing hired a residential international housing coordinator whose primary role is to support international students who live on campus and encourage interaction with domestic students. A team of international and domestic cultural ambassadors was organized to create year-round programming that highlights international students' culture and customs and introduces U.S. customs and culture. In 2015, Graduate Studies hired an international graduate student support specialist who works closely with academic departments to assist international graduate students in their transition to graduate studies at UNL.

UNL also uses assessment of co-curricular learning for program improvement. Students on the University Program Council are [evaluated annually by their program coordinator using a rubric based on defined UPC learning domains](#). Results guide future trainings and development objectives.

National Survey of Student Engagement

UNL has distributed the National Survey of Student Engagement at least once every three years (from 2002 through 2016) to all first-year and senior students to identify student participation in and satisfaction with academic and co-curricular programs, services and activities. The results are shared

with faculty and staff, college deans and the Board of Regents. UNL uses NSSE results to identify areas of weakness for program improvement. For instance, when the NSSE was administered in 2010, 55.4% of first-year students reported they would graduate within four years or less. UNL used this information to [revise messaging](#) at New Student Enrollment and to require published four-year plans for all undergraduate majors. By 2013, 66.2% reported that they planned to graduate in four years or less, underlining the importance of creating a climate where student believe they can succeed.

4.B.3. Faculty use assessment results to improve student learning.

Assessment reports require faculty to identify areas where learning could be improved and describe changes they have made or plan to implement. Given the diversity of student work across the campus, assessment of student learning is diverse and context specific.

The School of Biological Sciences requires graduating undergraduate majors to take the Educational Testing Service Major Fields Exam for Biology and to participate in an exit survey. This instrument is used by biology departments nationally, so [student performance can be comparatively ranked](#). As a result of lower-than-predicted performance on the plant organismal biology subtest, the department revised the curriculum to ensure more exposure and engagement with organismal biology across major courses and integrated specific areas of plant biology in the two-semester introductory LIFE courses. Graduating seniors who took the exam in 2014 ranked in the 84th percentile on the organismal biology subtest compared to the 70th percentile ranking of the 2009 graduates. These scores suggest important gains in learning.

In the Department of Food Science and Technology capstone course, students integrate knowledge gained in previous courses to develop a commercially viable food product with a company client. Students use a multidisciplinary approach to develop their products, from basic sciences (chemistry, microbiology and engineering) to more applied sciences (sensory, packaging, culinary and statistics). Students present their work and are [assessed via a rubric and discussions](#) between company representatives and department faculty. Student performance results are then presented to the faculty in the annual department retreat. Strategies are developed to improve and/or enhance the capstone experience by implementing new activities or assignments.

Theatre and film students have [rigorous student-assessment checkpoints](#) throughout their degree programs, including juried assessments of acting in the BA performance degree; yearly portfolio reviews in the BFA design and technical production program; sophomore-year reviews in the BFA program in film and new media; third-semester assessments of BA students in directing and management; and biannual review of graduate student work. Faculty provide individualized evaluations on these outcomes. The assessments also significantly impact design of the undergraduate curriculum, resulting in recent changes to the core curricula for BA programs to better support the emphases within the degree.

[Assessment of student learning](#) required by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business indicated that business undergraduates were not as strong as desired in their ability to integrate various functions of business (accounting, finance, marketing, management) to solve business problems. As a result, the faculty created common assignments in the required capstone course for all business majors, adding a case analysis that requires integrating functional business areas. The college also now requires a simulation in all capstone sections. These changes have allowed faculty to evaluate students against each other and to continually improve effectiveness of the common assignments.

Students majoring in advertising and public relations complete one of three capstone courses to

develop an integrated marketing communications campaign for a real client. [Faculty evaluate final projects](#) using The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment and AAC&U's VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubric. Results have indicated that, overall, students demonstrate technical proficiency and proficiency in broad knowledge, information collection and synthesis, interpretation and presentation. However, faculty have noticed deficiencies in writing and secondary and primary research for strategy formation. The department revised an existing strategy course to emphasize research earlier in the curriculum and developed a new required course in strategic writing.

Construction engineering [faculty assessment of the undergraduate major](#) revealed that students needed more proficiency in using professional and engineering standards. Courses, assignments and assessments were adjusted to bolster this knowledge and skill set. Current monitoring reveals that the adjustments are having the desired impacts.

[Teacher education programs are assessed](#) through careful examination of 1) final evaluation of student teaching, 2) first-year teacher administrator survey, and 3) first-year teacher survey. These data provide the department complementary sources to assess the success of the program from the perspectives of faculty, employers and graduates. A cross-comparison of these data provides potential discrepant data points on which to base discussions, program changes and prospective curriculum revisions to improve students' learning. The department chair presents these data each November to the faculty for deliberation and discussion. In 2015, outcome review of elementary and secondary education produced 472 data values. Of these data values, only 17 (<4%) failed to reach an anticipated threshold value. Careful scrutiny of these 17 below-threshold values indicated a theme related to delivery of instruction that considers student development, diversity and special needs. The department has taken appropriate steps to reinforce and strengthen this curriculum.

In the College of Architecture, the common first-year curriculum introduces students to design through courses in three areas: technique, design discipline and design practice. dThink and dMake are sequential hands-on courses in which students learn to work in teams to address problems and promote innovation. [Assessment data were used to completely revise the first-year curriculum](#) to reflect a systems approach to learning. Continuing its efforts to improve learning, the College of Architecture has embarked on a longitudinal assessment of these changes.

The history department conducted a [focused self-assessment of its existing graduate program](#) during a faculty retreat in fall 2014 to map the graduate curriculum to its student learning goals. The end result was a more coherent curriculum with streamlined requirements, an emphasis on key strengths and the identification of more diverse job skills.

The College of Journalism and Mass Communications has [established a long-term, cohort-based assessment plan](#) that includes five direct and indirect measures of student learning. The plan incorporates assessment requirements at the university level (ACE assessment; biennial program assessment) as well as the college level (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications assessment). Curriculum changes resulting from recent assessments have included revision of the beginning reporting course to include basic math and statistics, a re-designed visual communication program focused on student-centered, emporium style teaching; a revised ACE 10 capstone courses across all three majors with a stronger focus on research; and a revised ACE 8 course to strengthen the stewardship component of the outcome.

The Chemistry Graduate Program Review Committee conducted an [internal review of the chemistry PhD program](#). Changes in degree completion requirements were implemented as a result of this review, which took effect in fall 2014.

4.B.4. UNL strives to reflect good practice in assessing student learning.

Faculty members are primarily responsible for developing their programs' learning outcomes, which are expected to be aligned to mission, student-focused, measurable and represent an appropriate level of learning. Learning outcomes are influenced by standards and recommendations of national professional associations and similar programs at other institutions, and are reviewed by internal and external constituents, including departmental faculty, students, alumni, employers, advisory boards, accrediting agencies and program review teams.

UNL assessment has evolved in the past decade to involve more faculty and instructional staff and to redirect efforts from "doing assessment for reports" to "using assessment to improve student learning." Every college has a committee that reviews assessment. An associate dean from every college meets with the University-wide Assessment Committee four times a year. The adoption of ACE learning outcomes and greater emphasis on assessment from professional accreditation bodies has helped shift UNL's culture. The ACE website profiles faculty use of assessment. Other examples of meaningful assessment practices:

- Sixty-six faculty and 12 associate deans participated in two Spencer grant assessment projects from 2011-2014. One project centered on ACE 1 and resulted in the creation and implementation of a rubric to assess writing. The other investigated how faculty used assessment data.
- ACE assessment practices have been presented at AAC&U general education conferences, and UNL has been highlighted as a LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) exemplar.
- The ACE Assessment Report 2014, summarizing ACE assessment from 2009-2014 and describing changes implemented in particular programs, was disseminated to faculty in fall 2014.
- Colleges are addressing identified gaps. College of Education and Human Sciences associate deans met with those charged with program assessment to conduct an assessment task analysis aimed at developing better assessment planning and execution. The College of Arts and Sciences assessment committee held small group sessions that enabled faculty to share best practices.
- Teacher education programs have adopted LiveText, an online competency monitoring system that allows students, instructors and academic program managers to systematically monitor student mastery of key competencies in the program. Faculty collect and analyze course assignments and assessment data using pre-planned competency-linked rubrics they have entered into the system. Students receive immediate feedback, and data can be used for accreditation needs and to support program improvement planning and evaluation. Graduate programs in school psychology have also adopted LiveText, and programs in marriage and family therapy are in the planning stages.
- The ACE-10 Faculty Inquiry Project (a component of [UNL's Quality Initiative](#)) engaged 26 faculty in monthly meetings to develop a common rubric for ACE 10 assessment. Faculty shared samples of student work and analysis of performance to identify opportunities and challenges with shared assessment tools. (See also Core Components 3.B.3 and 3.D.3.)
- In 2015-16, faculty groups formed around ACE learning outcomes to revise outcomes and create universal rubrics that can help faculty focus on areas where learning might be improved. These rubrics are being piloted in 2016 with a new commercial assessment tool that will enable sampling of student work across ACE courses through UNL's learning management system.

Sources

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1. UNL has established goals and made efforts to improve retention, persistence and degree completion.

In 2012, members of the campus community, in a larger conversation related to enrollment growth, developed the [Campus Blueprint](#) to present an initial response to the chancellor's enrollment, retention and graduation goals for 2020: increase total enrollment from 24,000 to 30,000, and increase the six-year graduation rate from baseline of 63% to 70%. In 2015, the 2016-2020 enrollment management plan expanded on these goals.

UNL has invested significant resources in initiatives designed to improve retention, persistence and completion rates. In particular, Academic Affairs has prioritized four areas: 1) developing intentional first-year experience programs; 2) implementing proactive advising and early warning systems; 3) using analytics to track persistence and degree completion; and 4) eliminating institutional barriers to students' success and timely degree completion. UNL has implemented several initiatives to address these priorities:

- In 2008, UNL established the [William H. Thompson Scholars Learning Community](#) with funding from the Buffett Foundation to support Nebraska low-income students. Approximately 270 freshmen receive a Susan T. Buffett Scholarship each year; a total of 1,100 Thompson Scholars participate in the learning community.
- In 2012, [all undergraduate programs conformed to 120 credits](#) unless otherwise required for program accreditation (e.g., ABET in Engineering).
- UNL implemented [MyPLAN](#), a common university-wide, technology-based advising system in 2012. This system enables all advisers and support providers to enter and see advising notes and referrals for all undergraduates regardless of major.
- From 2011-2013, the number of first-year [learning communities](#) was expanded from 10 to 26. In 2016, enrollment totaled 715 students, more than doubling 2011 enrollment.
- The Office of [First-Year Experience and Transition Programs](#), created in 2013, provides free

academic coaching and workshops focused on time management, goal setting, test taking and study skills for all undergraduates. FYETP also provides peer mentors and programs for select students (first generation, transfer, commuter, and international).

- In 2013, a [referral feature](#) was opened in MyPLAN to enable instructors to identify students who need additional academic or personal support services and refer them to FYETP staff, who contact student and instructor within 24 hours.
- In 2013, Academic Affairs required all units offering undergraduate degrees to [create and publish four-year academic plans](#) in the Undergraduate Bulletin.
- In 2015, UNL created the [Military and Veteran Success Center](#) to provide a one-stop resource for benefits processing, transfer evaluation, academic coaching, peer mentoring, and counseling and career services for military and veteran students and their dependents.
- In 2015, the university developed [HuskerScan](#), which tracks students who use academic services by scanning their NCards and feeding data into the advising system for reporting.
- The [First Husker](#) orientation program for first-generation students was implemented in 2016.
- A retention program with a required class, success coaching, and peer mentors for [Emerging Leaders](#) scholarship recipients was implemented.
- An [Integrating Planning and Advising Solution](#) (year one of a three-year development project) will require students to enter four year plans and will flag students when they get off track in degree completion.

Individual colleges also have developed programs and services intended to increase student persistence and success. For example, engineering has developed four courses to help students master essential skills. The first-year course develops students' awareness of strengths, goals and values and requires an action plan. The second-year course develops students' competence in teamwork with particular focus on intercultural awareness. The third-year course develops students' competence in leading and managing teams. These essential skills are then exercised in the senior capstone course. Initial data indicate that students taking the first-year course are retained at a rate 10% higher than those students who do not take the course.

4.C.2. UNL regularly collects information on student retention, persistence and graduation.

[Online dashboards](#) provide metrics on retention, graduation rates and time to degree by year, college and demographic (gender, first generation, ethnicity, international, etc.) and student cohorts (learning communities, honors program, William H. Thompson program, etc.). These dashboards enable deans to easily identify and monitor trends for different student populations.

Over the past 10 years, first-year retention remained relatively stable from 84.2% (2004 entering year) to 82.5% (2014 entering year); second-year retention rose from 74.0% (2003 entering year) to 76.2% (2013 entering year), and third-year from rose from 70.9% (2002 entering year) to 73.4% (2012 entering year). In the last ten years, the six-year graduation rate has increased from 63.3% (1999 entering class) to 67.0% (2009 entering class), the highest in the university's history. Four-year graduation rates have also increased, from 29.39% for the 2006 entering class to 38.76% for the 2011 entering class.

Although retention and graduation rates for graduate students have not historically been tracked at the institutional level, departments and programs monitor students' success through their programs. Graduate Studies is currently developing electronic mechanisms for tracking graduate student progress that will be integrated in MyPLAN for faculty advisors and department graduate chairs.

4.C.3. UNL uses data to improve programs.

Academic Affairs has developed instruments to collect data supporting improvements in student retention and time to degree. All first-year students take the [New Student Enrollment Inventory](#), an online assessment, prior to summer orientation. This inventory asks students to self-report study habits, academic preparedness, motivation and plans for campus involvement. Students' responses in these areas are scored from "very high" to "very low" and fed to the advising system. Advisers can use these scores to initiate conversations with students at orientation and during the first year. Students with low scores in particular areas are sent invitations to related university services (e.g., Writing Center, Math Center, success coaching, etc.). For example, the First-Year Experiences and Transition Program provided phone coaching to 250 first-year students with low scores in two areas prior to their fall arrival.

In spring 2014, UNL implemented an [Academic Recovery Program](#) for students placed on academic probation (about 1,500 per semester). Students on probation have a registration hold on their account until they meet with a recovery coach and complete a success plan. Initial data suggest that this program has been successful in re-engaging students academically. In its first year, this program increased 6.44% of students to good standing. Students who participated retained at 86.96% compared to 57.97% for students who did not. In 2016 this program was named a Model of Excellence honoree by *University Business Magazine*.

Based on low retention rates for undeclared students, the [Compass Program](#) was developed. Compass requires advising for undeclared students beyond the first year. Compass increased students' declaration of majors from 30.6% and 34.2% in 2012 and 2013, respectively, to 61.8% in 2014 and 51.3% in 2015.

UNL offers [fall check-in](#) for first-year and transfer students. This program, which runs four nights during the fifth week of fall semester, reminds students of academic expectations while providing information on advising and co-curricular programs. Student participation is tracked and reported to the colleges. These are just a few of the data-driven initiatives targeted toward improving undergraduate student retention.

UNL has made broader changes designed to facilitate students' timely completion of their degrees. Beginning in AY 2012-13, UNL brought its total undergraduate credit hour requirement in line with peer institutions, reducing the degree requirements from 125-128 credit hours to 120 credit hours. Many UNL colleges took this opportunity to review requirements for their majors and degrees. Arts and Sciences, for example, reduced its college distribution requirements by three hours after reviewing the average number of credit hours earned by A&S students upon graduation. CASNR developed [associates-to-bachelor's degree programs](#), reducing the complexity of the transfer process. All undergraduate academic programs at UNL were required to develop semester-by-semester advising plans, providing students clear guidance on how to complete a UNL degree in four years.

Data-informed course improvement

There are numerous examples of data-informed educational improvements within individual courses. One example is the development and ongoing improvement of an introductory-level interdisciplinary life sciences course sequence across three colleges (Arts and Sciences, Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and Education and Human Sciences). A life-sciences curriculum committee collaboratively identified learning outcomes for this introductory sequence, developed new course proposals, shared assessment of student learning data and made adjustments based on those assessments. A second example involves a [substantial revision of the 100-level mathematics courses](#) in an effort to improve student performance. In this case, success rates (defined as earning a C or better) in MATH 101 improved from 59% in fall 2012 to greater than 80% in fall 2014. The math

department was initially supported in these efforts with a grant from Academic Affairs from 2011-2013. Subsequent investments included the Brace Hall renovation which created four interactive classrooms.

Data-informed institutional improvement

UNL also uses survey data to make improvements to students' educational experiences. NSSE responses indicate student satisfaction with UNL. Respondents rated their experience at UNL as "excellent" or "good" (first year: 89%; seniors: 87%), and 88% of first-year students and 84% of seniors reported they would "definitely" or "probably" attend UNL again. UNL students also respond to questions from the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) consortium, added to the NSSE survey. When asked to rate the quality of interactions, UNL first-year students rated their experiences more favorably compared to AAUDE peers: 3% higher with faculty, 7% higher with student services staff, and 5% higher with other administrative staff.

UNL has invested in an analytics infrastructure (Insight Analytics) so administrators can easily access data on student learning (e.g., course success rates, DFW rates, etc.) and use it to facilitate and inform continuous improvement efforts. These efforts may be significantly enhanced by UNL's decision in 2015 to become a founding member of the [Unizin consortium](#) of research institutions collaborating to improve student learning by enhancing access to learning content, platform and analytics solutions. Unizin services will allow faculty to store and share high quality learning content and pedagogical knowledge while gaining access to sophisticated learning analytics.

4.C.4. UNL's data collection and analysis methods reflect good practice.

UNL uses multiple processes for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs that reflect good practice. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) tracks retention, persistence and graduation rates, providing consistent data for internal purposes as well as peer comparisons. Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support (IRADS) provides expertise in analysis of issues confronting higher education in general and UNL in particular. IRADS maintains, manages and reports information on students, faculty and staff, academic programs, national and peer institutions, higher education trends and agency data. UNL uses IPEDS definitions to inform the institution about retention, persistence and program completion using methods consistent with good practice.

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- Fall Check In-2016
- First Husker Program-Academic Affairs-2016
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- MyPLAN Referral-2016
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- WHT Scholars Learning Community-2016

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

UNL has invested in developing authentic assessment and data collection processes for improved retention, persistence, time to degree and student learning.

- New structures for collecting and disseminating data (e.g., scorecards, HuskerScan) enable academic units to make more evidence-informed decisions.
- UNL maintains programmatic accreditation as appropriate.
- The Quality Initiative is a strong example of using assessment results to facilitate program improvement and integrate learning outcomes with student career preparation.
- Regular and systematic academic program review processes are in place at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Although assessment of student learning remains uneven in some places, it is established and provides colleges and units a systematic means for gathering evidence they can use to inform curricular change.

Next Steps

- Although faculty engagement with assessment is an ongoing challenge, UNL remains committed to building a culture of assessment for improved teaching and learning that prioritizes student success.
- Investment in assessment technology (TK20) creates opportunities to implement institutional rubrics to provide aggregated data on student learning outcomes across courses and programs.
- Several university initiatives address achievement and graduation gaps for underrepresented students, and UNL has been named a national leader in such efforts. Next steps include identifying measures and assessing effectiveness of current initiatives.
- More coordination of assessment activities across units, including Student Affairs, will benefit the university. This goal will be facilitated when the Office of Student Affairs is administratively structured under the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor.
- Results from current ongoing assessment processes need to be cycled back more systematically for department and college decision-making related to teaching and learning.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

5.A.1. UNL has the necessary resources to support its operations.

Fiscal resources

UNL is in a strong fiscal position, with a [budget of \\$1.22 billion](#) in fiscal year 2016. UNL's expenditures are consistent with institutional priorities and sufficient to fulfill the mission of the university.

UNL's budget is comprised of five fund types:

- General funds – State tax revenue allocated to the university: \$259,274,699
- Cash funds – Revenue from tuition, fees, investment income and other miscellaneous sources: \$201,177,298
- Federal funds – Revenue for research (grants and contracts) and student aid: \$231,201,594
- Revolving funds – Self-generated revenue from auxiliary units, including Athletics and University Housing, and similar activities: \$403,242,803
- Trust funds – Gifts, grants and contracts and non-federal student aid programs: \$123,894,807

Since 2005, increasing expenses and a concomitant decline in state support have strained the university, resulting in [university-wide budget reductions](#). Throughout this time, UNL has continually employed vertical cuts to protect, as far as possible, the academic enterprise and key institutional priorities. These cuts required the university to find ways to [reduce costs and discover innovative revenue streams](#) to enable UNL to maintain effective delivery of educational programs and to

strategically expand in key areas.

UNL has adapted to increasing costs and shifting economic and political realities. Although UNL still enjoys an unusually [high level of support from state-appropriated funding](#), the university also experienced a decrease in the percentage of state appropriations in its overall budget and a need for increases in other revenue areas.

[Tuition increases have remained relatively stable](#) for the last decade, with increases ranging year over year from 0% to a high of 6% in 2009. Tuition rates remained unchanged for in-state students from FY14 to FY15 and increased only 3.0% for out-of-state students. This compares to average increases of 5% in other years for non-resident students.

Human resources

While balancing issues of cost containment, UNL strives to maintain appropriate human resources to support its operations and strategic agenda. Investments in faculty have resulted in a [5.6% increase in tenure-track faculty positions since 2014](#) and a 30.1% increase since 2006. One hundred forty-four tenured faculty have participated in [voluntary separation incentive programs \(VSIP\)](#), allowing UNL to reinvest significant resources in tenure track positions in top priority academic areas. The 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio compares favorably to other research universities.

[UNL has a total of 6,427 employees](#), up by 12.2% or 645 FTEs since 2006. UNL faculty comprise approximately 35.4% of total employees. Most employee growth was in the managerial/professional and general faculty categories, while office/service numbers declined slightly. Growth in managerial/professional staffing has been driven primarily in response to UNL's articulated priority of undergraduate education. Thus, [staffing levels for student support increased](#) (FY06-FY15) 46% in direct advising, 44% in career counseling and 64% in other student success positions.

Physical resources

UNL's physical footprint reflects its tri-part mission and land-grant status. [UNL owns 43,015 acres of land across Nebraska](#), including at UNL's research and extension centers. The main campuses (City and East) comprise 622 acres, and Nebraska Innovation Campus is approximately 233 acres. UNL's building inventory on City and East Campus includes 241 buildings with 14 million gross square feet (gsf) and a value of over \$2.9 billion. The Nebraska Innovation Campus has seven buildings with 234,385 gsf and a replacement cost of \$84 million. Other Nebraska locations, including research and extension sites, have an additional 405 buildings with 1,651,034 gsf and a value of \$109 million.

Athletics operates multiple facilities for Nebraska's competitive sports teams, and there are 20 residence halls throughout the campus. Combined, the replacement value of these buildings is approximately \$2.1 billion. The majority of new construction is funded through private donations (e.g., Nanotechnology, Virology Center and College of Business Administration building). Only two facilities in the past ten years—the Jorgensen Hall for Physics and the Veterinary Diagnostics Center, currently under construction—have been funded through state appropriations augmented by private donations. Most renovation projects are financed through private donations or discretionary funds held by the university and colleges. Student fee revenue also supports appropriate auxiliaries such as the Campus Recreation Center.

Deferred maintenance is a significant issue. Although the campus has completed a [facilities condition assessment](#) and engaged consultants (Sightlines and Sasaki) to help in prioritization, the primary obstacle to deferred maintenance is funding. During the 2016 Nebraska legislative session, the

University of Nebraska sought approximately \$400 million in bonded capital renewal funds. Approximately \$200 million of those funds were requested for UNL and \$110 million were allocated. Strategic facilities identified in the capital request included UNL's Engineering Complex for new construction and capital renewal, and Education and Human Sciences to renovate main buildings housing UNL's teaching, and child, youth and family studies programs.

Information technology resources

[UNL's technology resources have significantly evolved](#) to meet the needs of the campus in support of the teaching, research and outreach missions. Information Technology Services (ITS) was created in 1995 and charged with supporting an information technology infrastructure. In 2007, the Faculty Senate recommended creation of the position of chief information officer to serve on the chancellor's senior advisory team. The CIO was further elevated to vice chancellor for information services in 2015.

In 2012, ITS began a two-year collaboration with UNL's Organization Development Services. This collaboration has led to multiple SWOT sessions with campus stakeholders, a complete revamp of the [ITS strategic plan](#), and a [new communication plan](#) focused on improving the organization's reputation on campus. ITS developed IT priority lists by collaborating with groups on campus, in the NU system and with institutions nationwide.

ITS is a critical partner in the academic enterprise, supporting 140 general purpose classrooms, 15 centrally supported computer labs and Blackboard, which is used by 99% of UNL students and 86% of their instructors. Collaboration with Academic Affairs and IANR has led to strategic budget decisions in the areas of learning spaces and academic technologies. Specifically, ITS is facilitating a pilot of the Echo 360 lecture capture system and researching active learning classrooms/spaces in the newly renovated Brace Labs. In fall 2015, the ITS Learning Technologies group was co-located in Brace Labs with Online and Distance Education instructional design and technology specialists to provide opportunities for collaboration and efficiencies in faculty support and pedagogy development. The collaboration between ITS and Academic Affairs led to UNL joining the Unizin consortium in 2015 and starting a pilot process for [transitioning to Canvas by 2018](#).

Additional collaboration with both internal and external groups has allowed ITS to improve technology and support services for both academic and non-academic groups. Some units have in-house IT support services that can respond to unit-specific technology needs and actively collaborate with UNL's enterprise-level ITS staff.

Through partnerships with Microsoft and Box, all students, faculty and staff have free access to Microsoft 365, One Drive and Box. A partnership with Adobe allows students to access Adobe's Creative Cloud at no cost to them. For those without a personal device, computer labs are conveniently located across the City and East Campuses with state-of-the-art computer hardware, fast network connections, scanning, printing and other services. Students can also check out one of 185 laptops (115 PC and 70 Mac) available to both campuses.

Collaboration between UNL's ITS and the University of Nebraska at Omaha IT on the [analytics initiative](#) has better positioned UNL to make decisions based on data and develop predictive models. Both UNL and UNO contract with Blackboard Analytics and leverage their expertise to quickly analyze data and provide reports and dashboards for campus leaders. UNL is actively moving from purely transactional systems to more integrated analytics and information management in support of the university's goals. See Core Component 4.C for more information.

Since UNL has joined the Big Ten Academic Alliance, ITS has actively collaborated with other Big Ten Alliance schools, participated in the IT Leaders Program (ITLP), and taken a leadership role in facilitating the Tech Forum.

UNL's network serves 100% of UNL's office, academic, research and living spaces and a large percentage of the outdoor space. In FY14, UNL was among the first institutions in the country to upgrade the Internet2 research network connection from 10Gb/sec to 100Gb/sec, further ensuring that UNL faculty have the necessary IT foundation for teaching and research opportunities. ITS has seen dramatic increases in the demand for services and bandwidth. In FY15, 119,545 devices were registered to use the network, and approximately 81,000 were actively using the network during a single 24-hour period. More than 3,600 wireless access points have been installed across campus. In 2012, UNL migrated all faculty and staff email from on-premise Lotus Notes to Office 365 in the cloud, becoming the first R1 institution in the country to move to the cloud-based system. Box was recently licensed for the entire UNL community for storage and file sharing.

Recognizing the critical role technology will play in UNL's future, UNL has reallocated approximately \$6M of new permanent funding, such as the [student technology fee](#), which will increase as enrollments grow.

During the last five years, UNL has increased IT security investments from \$70,000 annually (including 1 FTE) to \$1,483,654 (including 8 FTEs). To further strengthen IT security, UNL and the central administration combined individual security teams under a single chief information security officer in 2015. ITS is investigating leasing space in a Tier-3 data center to ensure that the institution's IT infrastructure is protected from outages or other disasters.

5.A.2. Resource allocation processes ensure that the educational mission is not adversely affected by allocations to other areas.

Resource allocation at UNL is framed by the state constitution, legislative enactments and Board of Regents actions. UNL operates under generally accepted accounting principles. Strategic planning, along with a rigorous budget process, ensures resources are appropriately allocated even in times of resource reductions.

UNL operates on a biennial budget. The state legislature provides policy and forecasting information to the central administration, which works with the Board of Regents to establish each campus' institutional budget. That information is integrated with UNL's enrollment forecasts of tuition and other revenue sources. University priorities are outlined in UNL's strategic planning documents, and both new allocations and budget reductions reflect these priorities. UNL has undergone \$40M in vertical state-aided budget reductions since FY02, but continues to invest in key areas of strategic importance and campus infrastructure while seeking new forms of revenue enhancement. This form of resource allocation also is very common at the college level. When the need for budgetary reductions occurs, UNL initiates a [comprehensive, participative, faculty-led process](#).

To enhance resources and accommodate the higher costs of key strategic programs, [differentiated tuition was implemented](#) as a 25% premium over existing tuition rates in FY12 in the Colleges of Business Administration and Engineering, and in FY13 in the College of Architecture. Since its inception, differential tuition has generated incremental gross tuition revenues of \$35 million. Each college has [directed its investments in accordance with academic priorities](#). Business Administration has focused primarily on growing its tenured/tenure track faculty ranks, as well as its population of professors of practice, lecturers and graduate assistants. Engineering and Architecture have invested most heavily in student success infrastructure and staffing.

The University of Nebraska system competitively allocates permanent new funds for [Programs of Excellence](#) when revenues allow. Since 2003, UNL has received \$12.3 million. These funds have helped support creation of 100 classes taken by more than 5,000 students, publication of 850 scholarly works, and receipt of 340 grants with a total value of \$95 million.

To recognize the colleges' real costs to deliver online courses, the campus allocated a portion of the gross distance education revenue in FY14 as a permanent increase to college base budgets. [Examination of revenue and incentive models](#) is ongoing.

5.A.3. University goals are realistic.

UNL's goals are incorporated into mission statements and are realistic in light of the university's resources and opportunities. In 2008, [A Strategic Plan for UNL: Setting our Compass](#) articulated a realistic vision, core values and key priorities for UNL. These were founded on the highest-level strategic priorities of undergraduate education and research (see Core Component 1).

In his 2011 state of the university address, Chancellor Harvey Perlman declared that by 2020, UNL will be a university with 30,000 students, 1,300 tenure track faculty, a 70% six-year graduation rate and total research expenditures of \$300 million, \$150 million from federal awards.

UNL is making reasonable progress toward these goals. Enrollment has increased by 3% to 25,260—the highest enrollment figure in university history—during a time when, according to National Center for Education Statistics, and undergraduate enrollment dropped 3% nationally. Research expenditures totaled more than \$278 million in 2014, the most recent year for which expenditure information is available. This total included more than \$94 million in federal research expenditures. This represents a 30% increase in total research expenditures since FY2005 and a 23% increase in federal expenditures.

UNL's retention and graduation rates are below the average of peer and Big Ten institutions. However, graduation rates are correlated generally to the academic credentials of the student body and the financial resources they have available to them. In an effort to maintain the proper balance between student access, costs and quality, UNL has invested heavily in its first-year and advising support infrastructure (see Core Component 4). Notably, graduation rates have increased to a record 67% from under 59.4% in fall 1997, even as a larger and more diverse student body has been admitted. Lastly, a number of initiatives have allowed us to increase tenure-track faculty by 6% in the past five years and over 26% in the past 10 years.

5.A.4. The university staff is qualified and well-trained.

UNL strives to hire qualified employees by creating detailed job descriptions, appropriately marketing hiring announcements, and offering competitive salaries and benefits. Before serving on any search committee, university faculty and staff are required to attend a seminar covering legal issues and university policies and procedures. All [new employees attend orientation](#). UNL offers [job-specific training programs](#) in university operations such as supervisor training, research administration, business systems and organizational development. Staff also participate in [personal development programs](#) on such topics as wellness and retirement. [Staff training on emerging topics](#), such as Title IX and Canvas, also has been developed and offered across campus.

Academic Affairs and IANR oversee faculty search procedures in partnership with Institutional Equity and Compliance. Academic Affairs, IANR, and the colleges have clear procedures to ensure that decisions regarding [staff and faculty hiring](#), [reappointment](#), [tenure and promotion](#) are fair to

candidates and maintain high standards.

The [University of Nebraska Research Administration Management Program \(NURAMP\)](#) is designed to ensure UNL faculty, staff and students are in compliance with federal, state and university requirements related to research.

The [Office of Postdoctoral Studies](#) is a centralized career development resource for postdoctoral researchers and their faculty supervisors. The office provides information, resources and networking opportunities and will assist PIs in developing individual development plans, postdoc/mentor compacts, and annual performance reviews with their postdoctoral researchers to maximize the career interests of each.

5.A.5. UNL has a well-developed budget monitoring process.

Within each of the funds (general, cash, federal, revolving, and trust), UNL establishes budgets that are approved by the unit's supervisor, the relevant dean or director, the appropriate vice chancellor and the budget office to ensure consistency with university interests and compliance with relevant statutes, policies and agreements. [Transfers between budgets](#) require approval from the relevant dean or director and vice chancellor to ensure such transfers are appropriate and consistent with university needs and priorities. Employees with management responsibility for budgets monitor activity in real-time using SAP, the university's financial accounting software. Ongoing training is available to provide appropriate support for budget managers. SAP users can see their budgets, commitments and expenditures in real time for current and past budget periods. [UNL's Office of Business and Finance](#) employs financial experts, accountants and support personnel to monitor transactions for compliance with university, state and granting agency policies as appropriate. The [Office of Internal Audit](#) provides independent, objective assurance and consulting services to improve the university's operations. The director reports to the chancellor and is a part of the university-wide audit committee. At the system level, central administration provides strategic oversight, guidance and support on budget and management issues.

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- Organizational Chart-B&F-2016
- Postdoctoral Studies-OGS-2016
- Programs of Excellence-Academic Affairs-2016
- State Appropriations-B&F-2016
- Strategic Compass-2015
- Strategic Plan-ITS-2015
- Student Support Staffing-Academic Affairs-2015
- Student Technology Fee Increase-Academic Affairs-2015
- Total Employees-UNL Fact Book-2015
- Total Faculty-UNL Fact Book-2015
- Undergraduate Full Time Tuition-UNL Fact Book-2015
- UNL Budget Summary-B&F-2016
- Voluntary Separation Incentive Program-Academic Affairs-2014

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

5.B.1. The university engages in a model of shared governance.

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) maintains a [Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education](#) that defines institutional roles and missions, reviews existing programs and approves new instructional programs. The CCPE reviews and approves all higher education appropriation requests, tuition levels, admission requirements and capital construction projects.

The Board of Regents, whose powers are defined in the state statutes, maintains publicly available bylaws and policies. The regents are involved in UNL governance from setting overall strategic direction to budget development and approval. Members of UNL's administration participate in regular briefings for the regents at their scheduled meetings.

The Board of Regents is continually informed about UNL at its monthly meetings and through performance indicators in the system's *Strategic Framework*. The committee structure of the board (Academic Affairs, Audit, and Business Affairs) allows the regents to request specific information. The board monitors several [accountability measures](#), including state funding, tuition, need-based financial aid, enrollment, graduation rates, faculty merit compensation, faculty diversity, recruitment of top students, workforce development, research, entrepreneurship, facilities, business process efficiencies, student learning, global engagement and distance education.

5.B.2. UNL's internal constituencies are engaged in governance.

The University of Nebraska central administration is engaged in UNL decision making and governance at multiple levels. UNL's chancellor and IANR vice chancellor/vice president are part of the system-level President's Council; UNL's senior vice chancellor for academic affairs is part of the system-level Council of Academic Officers; and UNL's vice chancellor for business and finance is part of the system-level Council of Business Officers. UNL's student body president serves as a member of the Board of Regents and convenes UNL's student government assembly, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, whose members serve as student representatives and advocates for both undergraduate and graduate students.

UNL has a strong culture of shared governance to facilitate decision making. [BoR Bylaw 2.9](#) provides that “the immediate government of each college shall be by its own faculty.” UNL’s Faculty Senate provides a structured forum for faculty to develop ideas, address concerns and communicate positions to campus leadership. The vice chancellors report to the chancellor and are members of the [chancellor’s senior administrative team \(SAT\)](#). The SAT includes the chancellor, all vice chancellors, the chancellor’s chief of staff and directors of the Offices of Community and Government Relations, Communications, Equity and Compliance, and Alumni Relations.

5.B.3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes.

Academic policy starts at the departmental level, where the faculty are responsible for academic requirements and standards, curriculum and instruction, graduate admissions and shared governance of academic policies, faculty hiring and promotion and tenure. These activities are administered by chairs at the departmental level and by deans at the college level. Each college dean monitors the strategic agenda of his or her unit to assure alignment with university priorities. Deans’ activities are overseen by the senior vice chancellor for academic affairs or the vice chancellor of IANR. Monthly, the SVCAA meets with the [Academic Deans Council](#) and works with the deans to collectively ensure university activities and resource allocations are directed toward the highest university priorities.

The VCIANR seeks feedback from the faculty and engages departmental leadership in key decision making. Department heads, deans and members of the vice chancellor’s office comprise the [IANR Leadership Council](#) that meets monthly. Annual retreats address longer-term planning and decision making – e.g., determination of priority hiring areas for the institute. The [Liaison Committee](#) of faculty members from across the institute meets monthly with the vice chancellor.

The [Academic Planning Committee \(APC\)](#) reviews new and existing academic programs, academic facilities proposals, academic program review reports, the comprehensive facilities plan, the campus master land-use plan, etc. The APC also reviews and holds hearings about proposed budget reductions or reallocations. Members of the APC include elected faculty, Faculty Senate and Graduate Council representatives, ASUN and graduate student representatives, and senior university administrators. When the chancellor invokes the budget reallocation and reduction process, representatives from [UAAD](#) and [UNOPA](#) are added to the committee to represent these constituent voices.

Sources

- Academic Planning Committee-2016
- Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education-CCPE-2006
- Deans Council-Academic Affairs-2016
- Leadership Council-IANR-2016
- Liaison Committee-IANR-2016
- Senior Administrative Team-Chancellor-2016
- Strategic Planning Framework-BoR-2015
- University Association for Administrative Development-2016
- University of Nebraska Bylaw 2.9-BoR-2016
- University of Nebraska Office Professionals Association-2016

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

5.C.1. UNL's allocates resources in line with its mission and priorities.

The [Strategic Compass](#) outlines a framework for planning and budgeting priorities. Over the past decade, significant organizational changes and strategic investments have been made at UNL to align people, processes and resources with articulated priorities.

Resources allocated to student enrollment

A key priority for the campus is increased enrollment and associated recruitment activities. In 2011, the Office of [Academic Services and Enrollment Management \(ASEM\) was created](#) to support UNL's enrollment growth goal of reaching 30,000 students. An umbrella structure reporting to Academic Affairs, ASEM includes Admissions, New Student Enrollment, the University Registrar, and Scholarships and Financial Aid. The new configuration created operating efficiencies and optimization opportunities, the benefits of which helped to fund a significantly enhanced admissions operation. [Significant financial commitments](#) added staff in marketing, website development, campus visits, events management, recruiting technology, and admissions counseling for freshman, out-of-state, transfer and diversity students. UNL hired Archival, a local creative agency with an expertise in youth culture, to evaluate every college recruitment plan and new commercials and [develop a strategically focused marketing campaign](#). Since 2012, UNL's enrollment has grown from 24,207 students to 25,260 in 2015.

In addition, UNL [invested significant resources to add more student success professionals](#), created space that invites students to engage with them, and built data and information systems that allow focused collaboration in support of student success (see Core Component 3.D.1).

Resources allocated toward research goals

UNL has also aligned resources to invest in its research goals. UNL's [Research and Economic Development Initiative \(REDGI\)](#) has guided efforts to strengthen UNL research, scholarship and creative activity since 2012. The REDGI plan outlines goals, metrics and action steps for achieving the campuswide goals outlined in the 2011 state of the university address:

- Enhance the quality of research and increase total research expenditures to \$300 million, with at least half of this coming from federal agencies
- Increase the academic stature and double the number of faculty receiving prestigious national awards and memberships in honorary societies
- Increase the number of faculty working with the private sector translating research into innovations and job creation.

UNL has made a number of [significant investments to provide the quality and scale of infrastructure](#) necessary to realize the campus growth goals contained within the REDGI plan. Representative examples of enhanced research facilities and equipment include:

- Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior. The recent \$63.5 million expansion of Memorial Stadium includes 50,000 square feet of research space to integrate UNL's athletic and research endeavors. Housed within this new space are UNL researchers who are at the forefront in the study of genetics, neuroscience, physiology, cognition and other areas of brain science. The Nebraska Athletic Performance Laboratory seeks to enhance the performance, safety, health and well-being of student-athletes.
- Voelte-Keegan Nanoscience Research Center. A \$7 million National Institute of Standards and Technology grant and matching philanthropic gifts enabled the construction of a 32,000-square-foot centralized research facility for more than 80 physics, chemistry, engineering and other faculty members from Arts and Sciences and Engineering. This facility gives UNL faculty added momentum to continue making life-changing discoveries in one of the nation's highest-priority research areas.
- Ken Morrison Life Sciences Research Center addition. A recent \$8 million, 30,000-square-foot addition added seven research labs, support facilities and offices, and a seminar room to the Morrison Center. The \$21 million research facility houses the Nebraska Center for Virology, one of UNL's signature research programs. The addition will enable the center to expand its research capacity by recruiting and adding up to six senior and junior faculty.
- Behlen Laboratory renovation. An \$11 million renovation is converting the Behlen Laboratory of Physics into a modern, versatile research hub that is uniquely suited for export-controlled and other research requiring higher levels of security. Renovation of the space became possible after the Department of Physics and Astronomy relocated to Jorgensen Hall.
- Extreme Light Laboratory. This research core facility supports basic research on hyperspectral ultrafast radiation sources, advanced accelerators, relativistic nonlinear optics, high field physics and extreme light. The laser housed in this facility was purchased with funding from the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

During the last decade, ORED also has [expanded the scope of its staff and the scale of its services](#)—all with an eye toward enhancing research competitiveness and reducing administrative burdens among UNL faculty. This growth has been essential for UNL to continue to meet the administrative and compliance requirements mandated by public and private funders. For example, UNL has recently added staff to help faculty meet the increasing demands of federal export control and conflict of interest regulations. In addition to dynamic, client-focused units with responsibility for sponsored programs, research compliance, information systems and communications, ORED also [provides in-depth proposal development assistance](#) to UNL grant applicants. Five proposal development professionals support faculty, staff and administrators as they write and refine external grant proposals. [ORED staff](#) work collaboratively with the campus research community to realize UNL's growth goals, either in direct partnership with faculty or through close collaboration with administrators at the departmental, center and college levels.

UNL has [allocated resources to enhance research partnerships](#) such as those fostered at Nebraska Innovation Campus, which is adjacent to UNL and provides strategic access to research faculty, facilities and students. Currently, more than a dozen private sector partners are located at NIC, ranging from ConAgra Foods—a nationally-known food manufacturer—to faculty-led startups such as MetaGenome Analytics and Virtual Incision. Construction of the Food Innovation Center and the Greenhouse Innovation Center at NIC led to the development of an advanced sanitation alliance among major food producers. The alliance’s first meeting included representatives from ConAgra, Kellogg, Mars, Nestle, Johnsonville, Cargill, Neogen and Ecolabs.

5.C.2. UNL links assessment of student outcomes with planning.

The budgeting processes used by Academic Affairs [link enrollment growth and student learning outcomes to resource allocation](#). Within academic colleges, deans use a wide range of information to allocate funds, and reports from academic program external review teams highlight areas of need within departments. Considerable data and information, analytics, and statistical and other analyses on a vast variety of measures are generated through the Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support team to aid deans and all university administrators with decision making.

Campus strategic priorities have dramatically impacted the physical environment of the university and propelled the campus master plan forward. UNL has made important capital investments and [established efficient business processes to directly support and advance student learning](#).

- An \$8 million renovation converted 107-year-old Brace Laboratory into a facility dedicated to using innovative teaching methods to further undergraduate education. The building houses four life sciences laboratories and support space; a 186-seat auditorium; four classrooms dedicated to active and collaborative instruction; a Technology Transforming Teaching classroom; and office space that will allow ITS employees and instructional design technology specialists to provide classroom and learning support.
- When the \$8.1 million renovation to Manter Hall labs is complete, the facility will transform the way life sciences faculty educate students through digital learning, interactive classrooms and laboratories that support active learning, group problem solving and student engagement.
- Almost one-third of all UNL students enroll in general chemistry courses and labs during their college careers, 80% of them as entering freshmen. Completed in 2013, a \$6 million renovation of teaching labs and the Resource Center in Hamilton Hall changed how chemistry is taught, added flexibility to scheduling, and optimized the space usage overall. Students now benefit from the highest-quality laboratory design, the latest in audio/visual technology and innovative storage for inquiry-based teaching assignments. [The renovations were aligned with UNL’s goals to enhance the student learning experience and to prepare for university-wide growth](#).
- As part of Campus Recreation and university master plans, students at UNL invested in The [Yes-to-Better-Rec Initiative](#), a student-developed referendum to enhance recreation facilities and overall health and wellness. A \$5.2 million Outdoor Adventure Center opened in May 2014; a \$2 million renovation of the strength and conditioning space on City Campus was completed in October 2014, and a newly built \$14.8 million-dollar recreation and wellness center on the East Campus opened in July 2015. This initiative provides quality space, equipment and programming to meet the needs of students, staff and faculty at UNL.
- With a nearly \$2M renovation to Andrews Hall, classrooms and public spaces will enhance accessible student learning environments.
- The Love Library renovations have been designed to enrich the student experience. In 2013, a \$2.5M renovation created a centralized student support services hub. In 2016, a \$10 million renovation created the [Learning Commons](#), which provides collaborative study spaces open 24 hours a day. See Core Component 3.D for details.

These upcoming student-success-related investments also are included in the master plan:

- [A new 240,000-square-foot building for the College of Business Administration](#), one of the colleges expected to experience significant student and faculty growth. Opening in 2017, the building will have state-of-the-art classroom space, a mock stock floor, a management strengths center and sufficient office space for faculty growth. Private donors are exclusively funding this \$84M building.
- The C.Y. Thompson Library, which will soon undergo renovation to provide collaborative study spaces, a visitor center, the Center for Rural Futures Initiative, the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program and meeting spaces. The facility will provide resources for students, faculty and the community.
- A new East Campus residence hall, scheduled to open in 2017, will accommodate growth in the student population. The Plan Big framework was used to locate the housing adjacent to the C.Y. Thompson Library, the East Campus Union and the Legacy Mall – all areas of student activity.
- Construction began in June 2015 on a new building for the Veterinary Diagnostics Center, Nebraska's only accredited veterinary diagnostic lab. The center supports improved animal and public health through disease surveillance, development of new testing methods, food safety and biomedical research, and education of future veterinarians and scientists. This facility will provide much needed space to expand research on livestock-related disease, as well as better diagnostic facilities for livestock producers.

All major divisions at UNL align their budget requests with institutional priorities as identified in UNL's strategic plan. Units provide assessment data to support their budget priorities. Business and Finance, as a part of ongoing quality and customer service improvements, regularly conducts [customer surveys and customer qualitative assessment](#) to identify constituents' needs and satisfaction. UNL's Office of Internal Audit provides independent, objective assurance for UNL's operating and financial processes. In the last few years, reviews have addressed course and lab fees, travel processes for study abroad programs, and scholarship and financial aid processes; [recommendations for improvements were identified and executed](#). This systematic and disciplined approach provides continued evaluation of processes and improvements to be implemented and considered in budget requests.

5.C.3. Planning processes take into account all constituent groups.

UNL's formal strategic planning process includes students, faculty, staff and administrators. This iterative process flows between departments, colleges and the campus administrative levels. Every college has one or more external constituent boards, as do many departments, which provide input on current curriculum and research needs in the relevant disciplines and industries. Although the chancellor does not have a formal external advisory board, public constituency input continually comes from the elected regents as well as ongoing informal consultations with local and regional opinion leaders, businesses and educational organizations. The chancellor sits on numerous boards that include external professionals who routinely provide feedback and insight regarding the university and its direction. Examples include the Innovation Campus Development Corporation and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. The chancellor also works closely with donors and the Nebraska Foundation Board.

There are regular opportunities for engagement of external constituents in university issues through the assistant to the chancellor for community relations, who regularly engages with elected officials, community organizations and neighborhood leaders; the vice chancellor for business and finance, who works closely with local businesses and leaders from the city of Lincoln; and UNL's campus

planner, who engages with city planning officials and neighborhood leaders regarding the university's master planning efforts.

For example, in June 2012, UNL launched [Plan Big: UNL Campus and Landscape Master Plan](#) to guide the university's growth over the next fifteen years. The development of *Plan Big* included a highly participatory process guided by a steering committee and working committees on land use, academic and research issues, circulation, utilities, storm water, student life, space planning, security and sustainability. Seventy meetings were held with Lincoln neighborhoods, city representatives and the Downtown Lincoln Association, as well as open houses on City and East Campuses for each milestone of the master plan. A website, an online mapping tool and an online survey tool were implemented to solicit input from a wider audience. The website had nearly 15,000 views between September 2012 and April 2013. More than 1,500 responded to the MyCampus mapping tool. An interactive on-line survey site, PlanBigIdeas, elicited 25,553 views. This participatory feedback was used to help define the principles of the master plan and the campus framework.

UNL has begun investing in key capital priorities that have the greatest impact on students and the strategic plan, especially the enrollment management plan (see Core Component 5.C.2). Achieving all of UNL's goals will require renovated and innovative space on campus to accommodate student, faculty and staff growth and additional research space. The master plan has identified ample room to accommodate future needs for new buildings and expansions on both campuses, with a development potential of between 2.8 million and 3.6 million gross square feet on City Campus and between 800,000 and one million gross square feet on East Campus. [University Housing conducted a study](#) on the number of beds needed to support enrollment growth, which has shaped plans for residence hall renovations and the construction of new halls.

5.C.4. UNL's planning is based on a sound understanding of its current capacity.

Since 2005, UNL has not experienced significant budget fluctuations. Small incremental fluctuations in revenue sources are monitored and managed to guarantee continued excellence while controlling costs. The campus has a well-established shared governance process for making specific vertical budget reductions intended to protect advance priorities (see Core Component 5.A.3).

Central administration of the NU system communicates with the state legislature and governor in order to anticipate any fluctuations in state aid. UNL's budget process includes estimation of all revenue sources. The university monitors enrollment projections and capacity, including factors such as high school graduation trends, matriculation patterns, changes in state and federal support and instructional capacity (see Core Component 5.D.1).

UNL tracks [space assignment and utilization](#) through its space management system, Archibus, and web interface, FAST, for planning purposes and for the A21 space survey. This information is considered in decisions to build new facilities, lease space, renovate existing facilities, or make do with the existing situation. Spatial analyses look at usable square footages, current use rates, [course scheduling and projected enrollments](#), leading, for example, to the plan to invest in Brace Hall for additional life sciences spaces followed by full renovation of Manter Hall. Similar analyses took place when deciding to move UNL's research offices and the Office of Admissions into new spaces and are continually being conducted to optimize university physical resources.

Initiatives intended to reduce campus expenses include 1) UNL's Information Technology Services partnership with Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions on technology procurement to reduce hardware and software licensing costs; 2) Facilities Management and Planning's major utilities infrastructure projects, as well as energy-efficient building systems and fixtures that are both

sustainable and have 7-10 year paybacks to reduce utility costs significantly; 3) eShop, a campus procurement system that allows for bulk buying and economies of scale in purchasing, thereby reducing costs; and 4) strategic management of campus services, including custodial, mail delivery and transportation, to save resources that can be redirected to the campus base budget.

The university has undertaken initiatives intended to reallocate some revenues to campus priorities and increase revenue from non-state sources. For example, since 2014 a 5% fee is assessed against auxiliary revenue, generating \$4 million annually. The collected funds are controlled by the chancellor's office and used as needed for priority projects. A special assessment is also in place between Intercollegiate Athletics and the chancellor's office. These funds total approximately \$7 million annually.

Targeted student fees have been carefully increased to pay for specific enhancements related to student success. For example, revenue from the increased international student fee provides funding for international student advisers at the campus and college levels, faculty and technology enhancements in the Programs in English as a Second Language, a \$1.5 million renovation of the PIESL classrooms and offices, and training for international graduate teaching assistants. [Increases in the library and technology fees](#) were supported by the ASUN student government in recognition of increased costs and enhanced services in those enterprises.

Funds accrued through the recovery of the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs associated with sponsored projects are used to fund research infrastructure and facilities, faculty start-ups, required cost share and costs of compliance. [ORED distributes F&A funds to campus units each fall based on established procedures, which are published online](#). More than \$24.6 million in F&A were distributed during FY15.

5.C.5. UNL takes emerging trends into account in its planning process.

Student demographic shifts play a significant role in UNL's planning efforts. The number of high school graduates in Nebraska plateaued around 2010. Numbers of Nebraska high school graduates are expected to grow among first-generation students or members of historically underrepresented groups. For over a decade, UNL's recruitment strategy has anticipated these demographic shifts. A stronger emphasis on broader in-state and more aggressive out-of-state recruiting has been implemented; additional financial aid dollars have been allocated and targeted programs that reach out to first-generation college students or underserved populations have been created; [international partnerships have been forged globally](#) with countries including China, India, Brazil and Turkey, among others. Since fall 2010, non-resident enrollments have increased from 18% to 24% of UNL's undergraduate population, and international students as a percentage of UNL's total enrollment increased from 7% to 10% during that same period, mainly from countries with newly formed partnerships. (See Core Component 1.A.)

Additional emphasis and investments in the structure of International Engagement are taking place. In 2013, the position of senior international officer (SIO) was created, and investments were made in PIESL, the International Students and Scholar Office and Education Abroad. In 2016, the position was elevated to SIO and associate vice chancellor for international engagement and global strategies. In recognition of the increased health, safety and security concerns with international travel, [updated policies and procedures](#) were put into place for students, faculty and staff. Risk management remains an area for further examination and enhancement.

Future growth in distance education anticipates the growth of nontraditional undergraduate and graduate students. For example, the College of Business Administration's MBA program is entirely

online and is ranked #6 in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*. The college strategy includes leveraging the online MBA with the face-to-face part time MBA program to offer flexibility for regional students. In addition, two graduate certificate programs in business analytics and supply chain management are available to students entirely online and can be obtained by non-degree seeking students, as well.

The [Rural Futures Institute \(RFI\)](#) focuses on the future of regional, national and global agriculture. RFI mobilizes the diverse resources of the University of Nebraska and its partners to support rural communities and regions, building upon their unique strengths and assets to achieve their desired futures. This is accomplished through research that addresses critical challenges and opportunities facing rural areas, and faculty-led community engagement and service learning programming for students. Such programs encourage the development of civic engagement in both students and community partners, and fosters college student involvement in providing services to meet the community's needs. The RFI aspires to be an internationally recognized leader for increasing community capacity and building confidence in rural citizens, to create resilient and sustainable rural futures.

UNL has organized and invested in data analytics staffing and technologies to be more proactive regarding academic management data. Teams from Institutional Research, Business and Finance, Information Technology Services, and Academic Affairs tackle the university's decision-support needs, reduce redundancy and maximize scale. UNL purchased and implemented enterprise analytical software tools to provide management information campuswide. UNL Insight is built on the Blackboard Analytics platform and provides secure, reliable dashboards that put academic and financial data at users' fingertips. Faculty Insight, built on the Digital Measures Activity Insight platform, is a secure, reliable web-based tool for faculty to manage their research, teaching and service activities. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning has been reorganized and renamed Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support to further support the effort to build capacity in analytics and decision-support campuswide. These multiple efforts are intended to discern, track and respond to emerging trends and opportunities.

Sources

- Academic Services and Enrollment Management-2011
- Budgeting Process-Academic Affairs-2016
- Business Processes for Student Support-Academic Affairs-2016
- Campus and Landscape Master Plans-B&F-2013
- Course Scheduling-ASEM-2014
- Customer Service Assessment-B&F-2016
- Facilities and Administrative Costs-ORED-2016
- Faculty Retreats-ORED-2016
- Funding Request-ASEM-2016
- Hamilton Hall Renovation-2013
- Housing Projections-Student Affairs-2016
- Infrastructure Investment-ORED-2016
- Internal Audit-Chancellor-2016
- International Partnerships-2016
- International Travel Registry-2015

- Investments in Student Success Professionals-Academic Affairs-2016
- Learning Commons-University Libraries-2016
- New Building-CBA-2015
- Organizational Chart-ORED-2016
- Proposal Development-ORED-2016
- Recruitment Strategy-Admissions-2012
- Research & Economic Development Growth Initiative-ORED-2012
- Rural Futures Institute-2016
- Space Planning-Chancellor-2016
- Staffing Increase-ORED-2016
- Strategic Compass-2015
- Student Fee Increases-Academic Affairs-2015
- Yes to Better Rec Initiative-2010

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

5.D.1. UNL continually monitors performance indicators, adjusts resources and actions and considers the continuing relevance of each indicator.

When the chancellor introduced the Strategic Compass in 2011, it included goals and metrics for monitoring performance. These goals align with the University of Nebraska's systemwide *Strategic Framework*. Progress toward these goals influences university decisions and investments. The chancellor has evaluated progress on the goals in each subsequent state of the university address.

Campus leaders – from the senior administrative team to deans and chairs – were engaged to discuss campus data needs and to build consensus on reporting output and data definitions. The outcome of this effort in 2015 was a [common set of reporting metrics to be used to collectively](#), and by college, track academic progress. These reports include academic management data on enrollments, faculty and staff FTE, and revenue/cost ratio data.

UNL conducts annual salary studies, using peer data for faculty and administrators' comparisons and market data for staff, to investigate salary competitiveness. These reports are used to make decisions about university-wide salary distributions and equity. Results are provided to supervisors and the [Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee](#), which makes recommendations to the chancellor about salary distributions and policy issues. Salary equity is a necessary and desired competitive advantage, yet an influx of resources is needed to bring UNL's average faculty salaries to the midpoint of its peers.

Academic Services and Enrollment Management monitors recruitment and admissions efforts, policies and practices, course offerings, and other items that support and enhance the university's enrollment, academic delivery and overall student success. This office relies heavily on the data analytics and reporting infrastructure to work with campus academic leaders on course loads, course creation and maximization of classroom use.

Facilities Maintenance and Operations developed a detailed campus [energy management plan](#) and invested heavily in major utilities infrastructure projects and energy-efficient building systems. UNL takes a very proactive approach to sustainability efforts and tracking of effectiveness and cost savings from these investments. Utility Services, for example, gathers significant amounts of data to gauge machinery efficiency and utility usage throughout the year. These data reflect environmental impact and inform decisions on plant improvements and changes in operation. These statistics are published annually on the facilities website. (See Core Component 5.B.4.)

UNL's student government, ASUN, created the Environmental Sustainability Committee in 2010 to increase student input on environmental issues throughout campus. The committee facilitates annual

activities and selects projects to work on during the year. Nebraska Innovation Campus is not only empowering sustainability research partnerships, but is modeling sustainable practices in its physical plant and culture. The buildings are built to LEED Silver standards, and NIC is committed to becoming a zero-waste campus.

Business operations are managed through a system of policies and monitoring functions. For example, the eShop software integrates many vendors into a central electronic shopping system that employees can use to initiate purchases and supervisors can use to approve transactions. Costs can be easily tracked in the accounting software. To ensure that expenditures comply with university policy, UNL's Accounts Payable office approves compliant transactions.

The [Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts performs annual audits](#) to verify the quality of financial management processes. The auditors periodically identify concerns and recommend changes, such as improved monitoring of payroll reports.

The institution as a whole is under continual assessment by the University of Nebraska Central Administration and the Board of Regents. The regents use a [dashboard of indicators](#) to track operational performance, and detailed reports are presented periodically at meetings, and underlying issues are explored.

5.D.2. UNL applies what it has learned about its operations to improve institutional effectiveness, capabilities and sustainability.

Over the past 10 years UNL has made dramatic changes in operations, structure and leadership in response to the changing needs of the university and the effects and impact of the strategic plan. Important transformations have occurred to specifically support the work of the colleges and advance articulated university goals:

- Undergraduate Admissions, Scholarships and Financial Aid, and Records and Registration were merged into a single unit renamed Academic Service and Enrollment Management (ASEM).
- The First-Year Experience and Transition Program was established to engage, empower and support all students in and out of the classroom.
- The Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center, or Explore Center, was created as an academic advising home for students who are undecided on a major or transitioning between majors, and to assist pre-health or pre-law students with professional school application, admission exams and interview processes.
- A vice chancellor for information technology and services was named.

The university acquired significant capital investments for a new College of Business Administration building, new and renovated College of Engineering facilities and a renovated College of Education and Human Sciences building. Investments were recently made to accommodate a large lecture hall in Kimball Recital Hall, a performance venue at UNL. The identified need for these facilities has evolved as the university adapts to and attempts to accommodate the pressures experienced due to growing enrollments and student and faculty expectations.

UNL is continually investigating opportunities to improve services to faculty, staff and students and to reduce operating costs. For example, [UNL transferred management of the University Health Center to the University of Nebraska Medical Center \(UNMC\) and its primary clinical partner, Nebraska Medicine](#). The current Health Center building will be replaced with a new state-of-the-art building that also will house UNMC's College of Nursing Lincoln division in a combined \$41.5 million structure of about 100,000 square feet.

Sources

- Auditor of Public Accounts-2016
- Dashboard Indicators-2016
- Energy Management Plan-2010
- Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee-Faculty Senate-2016
- Reporting Metrics-Academic Affairs-2012
- University Health Center-2016

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

UNL makes the most of its fiscal, human, physical and information technology resources to ensure consistent progress toward its overall goals, meeting Criterion Five.

- The necessary infrastructure is in place, including resource and budget monitoring processes.
- UNL has invested over \$32 million in the renovation of classrooms, laboratories, student support service centers and learning resource centers.
- New undergraduate and graduate enrollment growth goals for the next four years have been identified for each college, and new and enhanced academic and student support services needed to support such growth are anticipated.
- Measures to boost technology infrastructure have been the subject of significant focus since UNL's last review. Technology infrastructure was prioritized for investment and innovation, and campus-wide IT services were transformed to meet UNL's priorities for undergraduate education and research.
- Progress has been made toward developing data-sharing tools to provide direct access to various learning analytics.

Next Steps:

- Through strategic planning, analysis of organizational scaffolding will create a more unified, interconnected system of the academic, student, research and athletics components of our mission.
- A review of the budget model will align funding with UNL's core mission and support strategic resource allocations for high quality academic programs, enrollment growth, research, and outreach initiatives.
- Processes and systems for collecting and managing data and reports will be strengthened.
- New leadership provides opportunities to better align UNL's resources, goals, activities and processes with outcomes and impact.

Sources

There are no sources.