

Assurance Argument

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, NE

Review date: 10-05-2026

Welcome Message for Review Team

The University of Nebraska is part of Nebraska's only public university system. The System serves about 50,000 students and employs about 16,000 faculty and staff across its campuses and institutes. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL or the Lincoln campus) is the state's land-grant institution. The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC or Medical Center campus) is the state's academic health sciences center.

Prior to 1968, UNL and UNMC were accredited as one by the HLC. From that time until June 2026, UNL and the University of Nebraska Medical Center were two of five HLC-accredited administrative units in the University of Nebraska System. In early 2025, UNL and UNMC submitted a Change of Control/Change of Structure application to be recognized as a single HLC-accredited entity, the University of Nebraska. After a team site visit in June 2025, the HLC Board approved the action effective November 6, 2025. The Board reaffirmed its decision on May 27, 2026, to allow the University of Nebraska to complete the transaction with the US Department of Education on June 22, 2026. Both UNL and UNMC had their last comprehensive evaluations in 2016, with assurance reviews in 2021 and ten-year assurance reviews scheduled separately for each in Fall 2026. The Change of Structure approval initiated UNMC's resignation from its separate HLC accreditation to facilitate Title IV financial aid processing. The new University of Nebraska has been assigned the institutional identification number (OPEID) previously associated with UNL for purposes of Federal financial aid. Therefore, this comprehensive evaluation is considered the regularly scheduled evaluation that was to occur for UNL coupled with the review of progress, all be it nascent, associated with the approved Change of Structure/Change of Control.

In 2021, both UNL and UNMC individually met all the HLC criteria for accreditation as separate institutions. The initial Change of Structure visit in June 2025 revealed no compliance concerns for either campus, nor any compliance concerns regarding a Change of Structure. The change was a thoughtful process designed to strategically align and elevate the two institutions and the research and educational institutes that resided within a centralized University of Nebraska System administrative structure.

Many operational and governance items have always been under a single umbrella, including key administrative and academic areas such as finance, budget, human relations, procurement, facilities and others. This change allows the record to conform to operational reality by facilitating joint reporting of education and research metrics, while allowing campuses to maintain significant elements of their individual identities. These two high-quality, accredited R1 campuses are working together more synergistically as the University of Nebraska, enhancing existing programmatic strengths and educational opportunities that better reflect our impact in Nebraska, nationally, and beyond. This effort is one of many steps in the University's visionary strategic plan, known as *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* under the leadership of Jeffrey P. Gold, the 9th President of the University of Nebraska System, and the CEO of the University of Nebraska.

The following Assurance Argument will demonstrate continued compliance with HLC criteria

for accreditation of the Lincoln campus and adds information about the new University of Nebraska since the Change of Structure (2 months post change) by integrating Medical Center campus information into the enrollment and program profiles. Because this review includes an embedded post-Change of Structure review, each Core Component includes a “Change of Structure” section at the end to provide updated information on the change. We hope that structure for the document will help in delineating past and ongoing compliance from in-progress and projected changes.

On behalf of the University of Nebraska, and all of its faculty, staff, and students, we thank you for your time and consideration of this Assurance Argument. Your thoughtful feedback is appreciated and will be used to further the University’s pursuit of excellence. It is our sincere hope that this argument reflects the dedication of our researchers, educators, and professionals as they live out the mission and demonstrates we are indeed on *The Odyssey to Extraordinary*. We look forward to engaging with you in the conversation about our path forward.

1 - Mission

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

1.A. Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

Argument

Mission

The University of Nebraska's mission “ *We lead the world in transforming lives and communities to an extraordinary future through our enduring commitment to creating and sharing knowledge, inspiring and nurturing discovery and through forging and sustaining relationships built upon trust. We do this as a University community by building upon our legacy of excellence and our commitment to a future of the extraordinary,*” was developed to encompass the historical missions of both the Lincoln and Medical Center campuses. The Lincoln campus (UNL) operates under a clearly articulated tripartite mission, and the Medical Center campus (UNMC) delineates its tripartite mission focused on the health sciences. The University's mission guides institutional planning, academic programming, student support, and resource allocation.

The current University of Nebraska mission and strategic foundational pillars was unanimously adopted by the Board of Regents (BOR) in April 2025 to guide the HLC structural change and the overarching strategic planning processes. There have been no changes or revisions to the campus mission statements since their 2021 assurance reviews.

Scope of Operation and Program Alignment

The Lincoln campus advances a mission centered on teaching, research, and service. Through its strategic plan, institutional priorities are aligned with excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, research growth, engagement, and student success. Academic programs, enrollment strategies, extension activities, and student support services are intentionally designed to fulfill this mission and respond to evolving workforce and societal needs. The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan utilizes a strategic enrollment management framework based on four domains: academic environment, student needs, market position, and administrative structures and resources. Enrollment goals and strategies reflect careful attention to each domain and core institutional values - “We Are Nebraska” is people centered and mission focused. A global engagement strategy articulates the institution's efforts to ensure that the university's teaching, research, and public service activities have an international dimension to provide its students and the state of Nebraska with a significant global perspective.

Mission statements are communicated broadly through institutional websites, strategic plans, reports, catalogs, and public communications, ensuring transparency and shared understanding among internal and external stakeholders. For example, annual reports demonstrate the application of the institution's mission such as those from the Drought Mitigation Center; Clifton Strengths Institute; Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools; Nebraska Water Center and others. Any proposals for new academic programs, new research centers or institutes must include an explanation of alignment with the mission and the strategic priorities of the campus, the University of Nebraska System Strategic Plan, and the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education.

The Lincoln campus offers a comprehensive portfolio of programs, including 150 bachelor's degrees, 71 master's degrees, 46 doctoral degrees, 5 professional degrees, 6 undergraduate certificates, 60 graduate certificates (including 2 Educational Specialists), and various supplemental endorsements across 169 CIP codes/fields. As the state's only public academic medical center, the UNMC portfolio of programs includes 26 certificates, 8 bachelor's degrees, 18 master's degrees, and 12 doctoral degrees with various concentrations or specialty areas across 54 CIP codes.

Enrollment Profile

The Fall 2025 student population at the Lincoln campus reflects the mission as the public, research-intensive, land-grant university for the state of Nebraska, as well as its role in attracting students from elsewhere who can contribute to the campus learning environment and the economy of the state. Like many institutions of higher education, there have been decreases in overall enrollment during the past 10 years. Total student enrollment declined over the past decade by 5%, from 25,260 in Fall 2015, near an all-time high, to 23,954 in Fall 2025.

Nebraska residents continue to comprise the largest enrollment group for the university, with 16,664 Nebraska residents enrolled in Fall 2025, making up 70% of the total UNL student population. Although the resident population decreased by 5% from 17,494 in Fall 2015, growth came from domestic areas outside Nebraska. Between Fall 2015 and Fall 2025, domestic national enrollment grew 9% (from 5,242 to 5,743), and international enrollment declined significantly, 35% (from 2,524 to 1,547), for a combined decrease of 1,306 students. The majority of the student population (81%) is at the undergraduate level, with graduate students accounting for 17% of the total and professional students for 2%. The proportion of undergraduate students has remained stable since the last review.

The Lincoln campus is primarily a traditional student-aged campus, with 84% of students under age 25; and a residential campus community, where 24% of the total student population lives in university housing and 8% in fraternities or sororities. Ninety-five percent of undergraduates are enrolled as full-time students (12 or more credits), and 51% of graduate students are enrolled full-time (9 or more credits). For the 2024-2025 academic year, 28% of undergraduates qualified for Pell Grants, and 89% received some level of financial aid.

In Fall 2025, the Medical Center campus recorded its 25th straight year of year-over-year enrollment growth. With 1,011 undergraduate students, 3,046 professional students, and 761 graduate students. Nebraska residents make up approximately three-quarters of the

Medical Center's enrollment. Until the Change of Structure combining the campuses under one accreditation and reporting structure, these numbers were reported separately.

Change of Structure

As the colleges under UNL and UNMC continue their integration under the new University of Nebraska accreditation structure, they will maintain operations guided by their individual campus missions, as well as the overarching University of Nebraska mission.

"We lead the world in transforming lives and communities to an extraordinary future through our enduring commitment to creating and sharing knowledge, inspiring and nurturing discovery and through forging and sustaining relationships built upon trust. We do this as a University community by building upon our legacy of excellence and our commitment to a future of the extraordinary."

This statement encompasses the existing missions, embraces the historical Land Grant status of the University of Nebraska, keeps the theme of transforming lives and communities from the Medical Center mission, and emphasizes the tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service. This statement continues to actively guide the future of the University of Nebraska.

Future reporting of student enrollment will be combined under the University of Nebraska with views available by campus. Together, this change of structure combines the strengths of two individual R1 institutions to better carry out their missions to serve the state of Nebraska and beyond by providing a comprehensive suite of educational programs inclusive of a land grant focus and the health sciences.

Sources

- UNL Mission Statement-Chancellor-2026
- UNL Strategic Plans-Chancellor-2026
- Annual Reports-EVC-2026
- Program Proposals-EVC-2026
- Program Proposals-EVC-2026 (page number 138)
- Enrollment Management Plan-EVC-2026
- Fall Enrollments-Budget and Analytics-2026
- Global Strategy-Global Affairs-2026
- NU Strategic Plan-NU Admin-2026
- University of Nebraska HLC Application-NU Admin-2026
- Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education-State of NE-2026
- Enrollment Growth-UNMC-2026
- Mission-UNMC-2026
- NU Mission and Strategic Pillars to BOR-NU Admin-2026

1.B. Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

Argument

Serving the Public Good

The institution's mission reflects a strong commitment to serving the public good and advancing the welfare of Nebraska's citizens and beyond. The mission is fulfilled through research, teaching, extension, outreach, and economic development activities that serve communities throughout the state. Nebraska Extension maintains a presence in all 93 counties and translates research into practical applications for agriculture, youth development, business, families, and communities. Research partnerships, innovation initiatives, public media, museums, educational outreach programs, and workforce development efforts contribute directly to Nebraska's economic and social well-being. The public engagement mission is evident in all aspects of programming.

The University's commitment to serving the public good is further demonstrated by its achievement of the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement in January 2024. The classification process provided an opportunity to document community-engaged teaching, research, Extension, and service and serve as a springboard for strengthening the institutional structures that support this work. Examples of these efforts include development of the Engagement Collaborative, which brings together representatives from across the University to strengthen coordination of and support for institutional engagement; the Engagement and Outreach Map, which makes community-engaged activities across Nebraska more visible and accessible; and AMPLIFY Engagement Conferences, which convene faculty, staff, students, and community partners to build relationships, share practices, and address issues facing Nebraska. The Medical Center campus also has a long-standing Carnegie Community Engagement classification, one of the first academic medical centers with this designation in 2015 and renewed in 2026.

In another example of serving the public good, the College of Law students work under faculty supervision representing clients through clinical programs to:

- Serve as Guardians ad Litem through the Nebraska Children's Justice and Legal Advocacy Center in the Lancaster County Juvenile Court.
- Serve at the local prosecutor's office through the Criminal Clinic, gaining firsthand experience handling misdemeanor and low-grade felony cases at one of the few prosecution clinics in the country.
- Work with unrepresented individuals in the Debtor Defense Clinic who have had judgments entered against them in collection cases.
- Assist start-up and early-stage businesses across Nebraska with a variety of legal needs while as part of the Weibling Entrepreneurship Clinic
- Represent clients in preparing wills and other estate planning documents in the Estate

Planning Clinic.

- Work on local and regional cases concerning freedoms of speech, the press, assembly, and petition in the First Amendment Clinic.
- Represent individuals and families facing eviction through the Housing Justice Clinic.
- Review and investigate cases for potential claims of innocence for individuals whose cases originated in Nebraska and who have applied for assistance from the Midwest Innocence Project supported by the Nebraska Innocence Clinic.

Responding to Community Needs

External constituencies are engaged through numerous advisory boards, community partnerships, statewide collaborations, and public service programs. These relationships help ensure institutional priorities remain responsive to community needs and aligned with public expectations. The University educates, trains, and grants certificates and degrees to the largest percentage of teachers throughout the state and develops and provides specialized resources and programs for teachers from early childhood education through high school.

The institution is also responsive to the changing needs of its student population. For instance, student mental health needs have significantly increased since 2021. The previous, short-term model used by Counseling and Psychological Services on the Lincoln campus has been updated to increase the number of visits and add in a new long-term care model that allows students to pay a significantly discounted rate for ongoing care.

Additionally, with an increasing number of students arriving at college needing academic accommodations, Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) launched a new online accommodation software application in Fall 2025 that facilitates online access for students and faculty to communicate approved accommodations. In the first year of use, of the 1,399 registered students with SSD, 678 chose to share their accommodation plans with faculty, a higher percentage than the national average.

To remove barriers and ensure accessibility for individuals interacting with digital content in compliance with Title II Digital Accessibility standards, the units of Information Technology Services, the Center for Transformative Teaching, Libraries, Services for Students with Disabilities, and Institutional Equity and Compliance collaborated to create training for all faculty and staff. This collective effort received the University's Inclusive Excellence Collaboration Award in 2024. The \$25,000 prize was used in AY 25-26 to sponsor the Accessibility Ambassadors Program.

Change of Structure

As the colleges of UNL and UNMC strengthen their integration under the University of Nebraska structure, increased opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to better serve the state of Nebraska are underway with many more expected. As stated in the Strategic plan: "University Collaboration and Internal Alignment: Themes for this strategy include supporting sustainable collaborations and partnerships across all campuses and disciplines within the educational, research and service missions, using policy, technology, finances and incentives to eliminate silos and bridge existing and future gaps".

The Medical Center advances the public good through education of health professionals, biomedical research, patient care, public health initiatives, and statewide outreach, including

rural and underserved regions. Recently, the Medical Center opened a second learning center in central Nebraska to expand health sciences programs and ultimately to support the demand for professional providers in rural Nebraska, including training of physicians and pharmacists for the first time out of this site. This new structure will be a catalyst in growing the workforce and filling critical gaps across the state. Early examples of the Medical Center's partnership with Extension include the College of Pharmacy's efforts to find solutions to fill the shortage of pharmacies and pharmacists in most of rural Nebraska and the Fred and Pamela Buffett Cancer Center work to make cancer screening and education more readily available to rural Nebraskans. The Medical Center campus has made similar changes and enhancements to student services as the Lincoln campus in response to changing needs, including expanded staffing in CAPS and Services for Students with Disabilities. The NU system monitors progress of Title II Accessibility on the campuses with monthly progress reports to the President.

Sources

- Museums-2026
- ADA Title II Collaboration-EVC-2026
- ADA Title II Collaboration-EVC-2026 (page number 15)
- Community Needs-EVC-2026
- Innovation-EVC-2026
- Research Partnerships-EVC-2026
- Law Clinics-LAW-2026
- Nebraska Public Media-NPM-2026
- Teacher Education and Outreach-CEHS-2026
- Community Engagement-IANR-2026
- Nebraska Extension-IANR-2026
- UNL Carnegie Classification-IANR-2026
- UNL Carnegie Classification-IANR-2026 (page number 5)
- NextGen Robotics-R&I-2026
- Accessible Information Management-Student Life-2026
- Extended Care Model-Student Life-2026
- CAPS-UNMC-2026
- Carnegie Classification-UNMC-2026
- Partnership with Extension-UNMC-2026
- Title II Progress Report-UNMC-2026
- UNMC Kearney Expansion-UNMC-2026

1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

The University of Nebraska recognizes that fulfilling its mission requires preparing students to succeed in an increasingly multicultural and globally connected society. This preparation is carefully considered in educational experiences, institutional planning, and community engagement activities.

Experiential Learning

The experiential learning graduation requirement for undergraduates is designed to “innovate student experiences that prepare graduates to be life-long learners and contributors to the workforce in Nebraska and the world.” Students choose an experiential learning course across one of nine categories, including leadership and community engagement. The Achievement-Centered General Education program includes curricular requirements that focus on global awareness and human diversity. The list of over 100 Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) 9 courses illustrates the range of courses that address the human experience, prepare students to be informed citizens, and give each student plenty of choices in how they would like to fulfill this requirement. Alternatively, undergraduates can also meet the ACE 9 outcome by engaging in approved educational experiences such as education abroad or military service.

Civic Engagement

A wide variety of academic programs, civic engagement initiatives, leadership development opportunities, and programs that foster engagement dialogues for students to enhance their learning. The Honors Program partners with the Foundry, a nonprofit incubator in Lincoln, to provide internships in community-focused nonprofits and public service agencies. In the summer of 2026, interns worked on behavioral health projects identified by Nebraska Health and Human Services across the state of Nebraska. The College of Architecture’s “Community Engagement Partnerships” engages students and faculty opportunities in hands-on projects that design impactful futures together. Recent partnerships include designing a ceremonial landscape for the Otoe-Missouria tribe within Lincoln’s Saline Wetlands, creating economic development plans for the cities of Peru and Kimball, and exploring downtown revitalization strategies through community-driven design in the city of Axtell. The College of Engineering’s 2025 senior capstone project for civil engineering entailed renovating Hickory Street Square in Sidney, Nebraska. College of Journalism and Mass Communications students covered democracy and democratic processes by reporting on the 2022 and 2024 elections and hosting congressional and mayoral debates in 2022 and 2023 respectively. The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Global Arts Academy immerses international and U.S. students in academic, co-curricular, and career-

building experiences.

Student Life provides numerous opportunities for global and civic engagement outside the classroom. For example, the Vote Ambassador program's 43 student vote ambassadors led efforts to register 12,235 voter registrations in 2025-26. As new students come to campus every August, the UNL Urban Plunge allows students to sign up for service with local nonprofits. Additionally, 3,852 UNL students volunteered 57,813 hours supporting 115 local nonprofits, coordinated through Student Leadership, Involvement, & Community Engagement and Fraternity & Sorority Life offices.

Change of Structure

As the colleges of UNL and UNMC strengthen their relationships under the University of Nebraska structure, increased opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to better provide for civic engagement and prepare students for a multicultural society and globally connected world are expected. Each campus will continue its offerings, however, there may be opportunity for individuals based on one campus to participate through the other's activities. For instance, UNL's Explore Center offers study abroad courses each year on global and public health care topics for students pursuing pre-health interests in countries such as Costa Rica, Rwanda, and South Africa. There may be opportunities for students at both campuses to participate in these offerings. The Medical Center campus prepares future healthcare professionals to serve diverse populations through community-based learning, clinical experiences, service-learning programs, pathway initiatives, and partnerships with underserved communities, ensuring equitable treatment and access to healthcare is ingrained in the culture. Many of these are student-run clinics and service-learning organizations. In addition, the Medical Center's iEXCEL facility is the nation's leading experiential learning center focused on building competency using simulations, virtual, and augmented reality. Opening these opportunities to students on the Lincoln campus may be an option. Student participation in undergraduate research programs is another opportunity to explore. Both campuses already offer summer research programs, and the Lincoln campus sponsors 300+ undergraduates in paid faculty-mentored research annually. Offering additional undergraduate research opportunities at the Medical Center campus would further build the expertise of Lincoln campus students pursuing admission to post-graduate health programs.

Across both campuses, students engage in meaningful experiences that develop cultural competence, civic responsibility, ethical leadership, and respect for a wide spectrum of diverse perspectives. These efforts strengthen institutional effectiveness while advancing the broader impacts of the public missions of the University of Nebraska.

Sources

- ACE 9-UGED-2026
- Experiential Learning 1-UGED-2026
- Student Engagement and Outreach-EVC-2026
- SLICE Annual Report-Student Life-2026
- Community Partnerships-UNMC-2026
- iEXCEL Annual Report-UNMC-2026
- Student Groups-UNMC-2026

Criterion 1 Summary

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

Argument

The University of Nebraska provides sufficient evidence that its mission is publicly articulated and appropriate to its role as Nebraska's flagship land-grant research university and public academic medical center. The University of Nebraska mission statement, approved by the Board of Regents in April 2025, appropriately encompasses the historical missions of both the Lincoln and Medical Center campuses. The mission provides a framework for the institution's structural change, strategic planning, academic programming, student support, research, service, and resource allocation.

The University of Nebraska's educational programs, enrollment profile, and scope of operations are aligned with its mission. The Lincoln campus offers a comprehensive program array, including 150 bachelor's degrees, 71 master's degrees, 46 doctoral degrees, and 5 professional degrees across 169 CIP codes/fields. The Medical Center campus offers programs in the health sciences, including certificates, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees across 54 CIP codes. Enrollment data also support mission alignment, with Nebraska residents comprising 70% of the Lincoln campus enrollment in Fall 2025 and approximately three-quarters of the Medical Center campus enrollment.

The institution demonstrates a clear commitment to serving the public good, specifically demonstrated through Nebraska Extension's presence in all 93 counties, both campuses' Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement, the Engagement Collaborative, Engagement and Outreach Map, and AMPLIFY Engagement Conferences. The Medical Center campus further demonstrates this commitment through health professions education, biomedical research, patient care, public health initiatives, and outreach to rural and underserved regions.

The institution responds to changing student and community needs. Examples include expanded Counseling and Psychological Services at both campuses, and in Lincoln, a new long-term care model for students, implementation of online accommodation software, and digital accessibility training developed collaboratively by Information Technology Services, the Center for Transformative Teaching, Libraries, Services for Students with Disabilities, and Compliance. Additional evidence of responding to community needs includes rural health initiatives, such as the Medical Center's second building in central Nebraska, pharmacy workforce efforts through the College of Pharmacy, and rural cancer screening and education through the Fred and Pamela Buffett Cancer Center.

The University of Nebraska provides meaningful opportunities for students to engage in civic learning, multicultural understanding, global awareness, leadership, service, and experiential learning. Evidence includes the undergraduate experiential learning requirement, Achievement-Centered Education courses focused on global awareness and human diversity, education abroad opportunities, the Honors Program partnership with the Foundry,

College of Architecture community engagement projects, among others. Student Life and other auxiliaries provide additional opportunities for civic engagement and public service. These examples provide evidence that students have opportunities to apply their learning in civic, community, and globally connected contexts.

The University of Nebraska change of structure, combining UNL and UNMC under one accreditation and reporting structure, is mission-aligned. Each campus will continue to operate in accordance with its existing mission while contributing to the broader University of Nebraska mission. The combined structure is expected to strengthen collaboration, expand student opportunities, support coordinated reporting and planning, and enhance the institution's capacity to serve Nebraska and beyond.

The University of Nebraska mission is clearly articulated, broadly communicated, aligned with its programs and enrollment, reflected in institutional operations, and demonstrated through sustained service to the public good.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

Argument

The University of Nebraska institutions operate within a comprehensive governance and compliance framework designed to promote ethical conduct, accountability, transparency, and responsible stewardship. Through Bylaws, Policies and Standing Rules established by the University of Nebraska System's Board of Regents, institutional procedures, and campus-level oversight structures, the institution demonstrates it maintains adherence by governing boards, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Governing Board

The Board of Regents (BOR) establishes and provides oversight through Bylaws, Policies, and governance structures that create a framework for other policies and procedures. The Board's Standing Rules guide its operations, committee structures, and responsibilities. Each Board committee meets on a scheduled basis to consider items within its purview, prior to the Executive Committee and full Board consideration.

The elected Regents are subject to conflict-of-interest requirements, financial disclosure obligations, and ethical standards governing public officials. Faculty, staff, and students at each institution undergo annual compliance training on a variety of topics such as Title IX, Cleary Act, FERPA, conflict of interest, and others. Faculty handbooks, Student Code of Conduct, and employee handbooks further outline policies and procedures in addition to what is established by the Board. Many common policies are established within the Board policies; others are delegated to the campuses to establish if appropriate.

Institutional Integrity and Adherence

The institution operates with integrity in its financial and fiduciary activities by following the guidelines outlined in the Regents' bylaws and policies. The University of Nebraska System (NU) Internal Audit and Advisory Services (IAAS) provides an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity that adds value and improves the university's operations. IAAS assists the Board of Regents, its Audit Committee, and the President in achieving their objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. IAAS reports directly to the Audit Committee of the Board of Regents. This reporting relationship promotes

independence and assures adequate consideration of audit findings and recommendations.

Ethical conduct is reinforced through institutional codes of conduct, personnel policies, student conduct expectations, and compliance programs. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to uphold principles of honesty, respect, professionalism, academic integrity, and responsible stewardship. Policies addressing discrimination, harassment, conflicts of interest, sexual misconduct, intellectual property, nepotism, outside employment, and employee conduct provide clear expectations and processes for accountability. Students, faculty and staff have access to grievance procedures and reporting mechanisms designed to ensure equitable treatment and resolution of concerns.

In addition to policies to provide expectations and required trainings, policies are adhered to by employing management strategies as appropriate. For example, significant conflicts of interest are handled through management plans, and nepotism agreements will specify requirements for changes in reporting relationships or financial approvals.

Change of Structure

The Lincoln and Medical Center campuses have maintained robust compliance infrastructures that support institutional integrity across academic, financial, human resources, research, and operational functions. Compliance responsibilities are distributed across specialized offices while remaining coordinated through institution-wide oversight structures. As the colleges of UNL and UNMC enhance their integration under the University of Nebraska accreditation structure, the same overarching Bylaws, Policies, procedures, and governance structure established by the Board of Regents will remain in force, and each administrative unit will continue to operate within those boundaries. In the short term, each campus will maintain its own compliance training and tracking infrastructure and capacity while exploring opportunities for cross-training and greater efficiencies.

The Student Code of Conduct is a document that is already consistent across all five campuses in the NU system, holding students at both the Lincoln and Medical Center campuses to the same standards and processes for remediation. Additionally, NU's Office of General Counsel serves as the university's legal adviser in matters concerning internal and external constituencies. Both campuses use Ethics Point, managed by the NU System office, as a way for any stakeholder to submit concerns anonymously, if desired. Together, these governance structures, policies, compliance systems, educational programs, and oversight mechanisms demonstrate a sustained institutional commitment to ethical conduct and responsible operations. Through continuous monitoring, training, assessment, and improvement, the University of Nebraska fosters cultures of integrity that support the University of Nebraska's mission, including education, research, academic/university service, patient care, and public engagement.

Sources

- Conflicts of Interest and Commitment-EVC-2026
- Nepotism Policy-EVC-2026
- Board of Regents Bylaws-NU Admin-2026
- Board of Regents Policies-NU Admin-2026
- Board of Regents Standing Rules-NU Admin-2026
- Compliance Trainings-NU Admin-2026

- Internal Audit and Advisory Services-NU Admin-2026
- RP 1.6 Committees-NU Admin-2026
- Grievance Procedures-Student Life-2026

2.B. Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

Argument

The University of Nebraska is committed to presenting itself clearly, accurately, and completely to students, employees, and the public, and maintains comprehensive systems for communicating information regarding academic programs, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, accreditation relationships, governance structures, student services, and educational outcomes.

Extensive public information is provided through institutional websites, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, Nebraska Today, social media channels, the online Fact Books, and interactive data resources maintained by Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics. Students have access to tools that support informed academic decision-making and degree planning, such as MyRED, MyDegreeAudit, and Transferology. Publicly available reports provide information regarding enrollment, retention, graduation rates, employment outcomes, and program-specific performance measures.

Student Life promotes numerous opportunities for campus involvement, communicating them in multiple ways. In addition to activity and information through student organizations, students receive information from the Daily Nebraskan, the student newspaper on campus. The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN), UNL's student government body, has been increasingly active in advocating for students' needs over the past several years. ASUN has spearheaded projects such as Uber Safe Ride program, hosted student leadership summits, and has continued to work to increase transparency and engagement with student government on campus.

The University Communication team is the chief public relations arm, curating the university's central campus news hub, distributing news releases and managing information through many of the methods listed above. Colleges, departments, student organizations, centers, and other units also have established communication channels and social media outlets. The Directory provides contact information for faculty, staff, and students. Together, these resources demonstrate the commitment to transparency.

Change of Structure

The Medical Center campus similarly promotes transparency through its comprehensive online catalog, which consolidates information regarding academic programs, tuition and fees, admissions requirements, policies, student services, accreditation, and governance. The Division of Student Success serves as a central access point for academic support, financial aid, records, counseling, and student engagement services. Information is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure consistency and accuracy.

As the colleges of UNL and UNMC strengthen their integration under the University of Nebraska, both campuses will maintain web presence and communications with constituents. As the University of Nebraska, a combined web presence has been created with content that is under development to communicate the strength and position coming together has created, meet federal compliance requirements, and facilitate navigation to individual campus sites. Both campuses, and the University, support public accountability through publication of institutional data, assessment results, annual reports, and program outcomes. Evidence of educational quality is demonstrated through retention and graduation metrics, licensure and certification results, student placement data, research productivity, experiential learning opportunities, and accreditation reviews. By maintaining accessible and reliable information resources, the University of Nebraska enables students, families, policymakers, and community stakeholders to make informed decisions and evaluate institutional effectiveness.

Sources

- Social Media and News-UCOMM-2026
- Student Tools-ASEM-2026
- Common Data Set-Budget & Analytics-2026
- Fact Book-Budget & Analytics-2026
- Tableau Reports-EVC-2026
- University Communications-EVC-2026
- Safe Ride Program-Student Life-2026
- Student Organizations-Student Life-2026
- The Daily Nebraskan-Student Life-2026
- Catalog-UNMC-2026
- Division of Student Success-UNMC-2026
- Combined Website-NU-2026

2.C. Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

Argument

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents (BOR) provides governance and fiduciary oversight for both UNL and UNMC while preserving the institutional autonomy necessary to fulfill the mission of the newly formed University of Nebraska. The Board operates under authority established by the Nebraska Constitution and state statutes and is responsible for approving institutional missions, budgets, major policies, tuition and fees, capital projects, and academic programs.

The BOR operates constitutionally apart from other State of Nebraska entities; however, the legislature controls state appropriations to the System. The BOR consists of eight voting members, elected from each state district for staggered six-year terms, and four non-voting student members, elected as student body president at their respective campuses. The Standing Rules of the Board of Regents describe board structure and sets procedures for how the BOR will conduct meetings, compile and make public the minutes and agendas, handle conflicts, and take actions. The transparency of policies, minutes and agendas holds the BOR accountable for preserving and enhancing the institution. The BOR oversees the NU system's infrastructure; however, it does not manage campus-specific functions and operations. These are delegated to the President/CEO and, thereafter, to the campus Chancellor, Provost, CFO, or General Counsel, as appropriate. The BOR Policies outline the governance responsibilities given to Board members. Their authority extends to approving or rejecting matters related to administrative units and to overseeing general NU functions. The BOR is mindful of its ethical responsibility to state officials, the institutions it oversees, and the public. The group adheres to its Conflict-of-Interest policy as stated in the Standing Rules. Any board member who has a conflict of interest with any matter before the BOR must report the conflict to the chairperson prior to deliberation. If the chairperson agrees there is a conflict, the member abstains from all discussion and voting or may be recused from the meeting. Failure to comply with the rules, Policies or Bylaws can result in impeachment.

Governing Board

Chapter 1, Section 2 (1.2) of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents delegates general responsibility for the administration to the President of the University and responsibility for developing rules for self-government to faculty and recognized student groups. Chapter 2, Section 12 (2.12) of the Bylaws further gives the Faculty Senate the responsibility to "act on academic matters that affect more than one college" and to "provide for the protection of academic freedom." As described in the Bylaws, the BOR has constitutional and statutory power to oversee all elements of the operation of the NU system under Nebraska Revised Statute Chapter 85. The independence and transparency of the BOR is provided by NRS

85-104, which requires that all meetings are open to the public and that the members receive no payment for their services. Chapter 85 also describes the general powers of the BOR, which include:

- Enacting laws to govern the University (85-106)
- Electing officers and appointing leadership (85-106(1))
- Hire faculty and staff and set compensation and benefits (85-106(2))
- Approval of academic programs (85-108)
- Purchase and sell property of the University (85-105)

The members of the BOR are bound by the Code of Ethics in Chapter 1, Section 10 of the Bylaws Regents Policy (RP) 1.1.2. Both the bylaws and policies state “The activities of the BOR and its employees shall be consistent with the principle that there shall be no conflict between private interest of a public official or employee and his or her official duties.”

As elected public officials, members of the BOR are required to make annual Statements of Financial Interest to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission (NADC) as required by the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act if an action or decision may result in financial gain or loss to the member, immediate family, or an associated business. BOR members are required to abstain from participating in discussions of or voting on matters in which they have a conflict of interest. Statements of Financial Interest are available to the public upon request to the NADC.

Selection and Evaluation of the President

Chapter 2 of the University of Nebraska System BOR Bylaws outlines the structure of the university, including the appointment of the President/CEO. The Board appoints an advisory committee to assist in identifying suitable candidates and consults constituents. Dr. Jeffrey P. Gold became the ninth president and CEO of the University of Nebraska System on July 1, 2024. Regents Policy 4.2.8 states, “The annual evaluation of Central Administration personnel has been and will remain the responsibility solely of the Board...”. The President’s performance is reviewed by the Board with performance indicators and a narrative annually at the June Board meeting.

Deliberations of the Board

Board deliberations reflect the educational, research, service, and public engagement priorities of the University of Nebraska System. Through standing committees focused on academic affairs, business and finance, audit and compliance, and executive matters, the Board exercises informed oversight of institutional operations while maintaining attention to long-term sustainability and mission fulfillment.

The BOR’s agendas and minutes show that its deliberations focus on preserving and enhancing the NU system and its administrative units. For example, recent meetings of the BOR have included discussion and approval of a number of items which further the mission of the University of Nebraska, including:

- Creation of the Research Center for Developmental Toxicology and Pharmacology
- StarTran transportation agreement
- Morrill Hall Renovation
- New Computer Engineering PhD

- Elimination of Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Economics
- Creation of the Nebraska Children's Justice and Legal Advocacy Center
- New Emergency Nurse Practitioner Graduate Certificate

Transparency and stakeholder engagement are central features of Board governance. Meetings are conducted publicly, agendas and minutes are published in advance, and opportunities exist for participation by faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Board decisions are informed by consultation with institutional leadership and consideration of the interests of internal and external constituencies.

The Standing Rules of the Board of Regents allow public comment on any item on the agenda for consideration by the BOR. The Standing Rules also allow the public to speak on items not on the agenda with 24 hours' notice. To ensure the public is informed of items to be considered by the BOR, printed notice of the meeting including the agenda is provided to the public as required by NRS 84-1411. In addition to public posting on the BOR's website, the agenda is provided to both local and national news outlets.

Change of Structure

As the colleges of UNL and UNMC continue their integration under the University of Nebraska, there are no governance changes anticipated. The entire Nebraska System is governed by one Board of Regents, delegating overall administrative responsibility to the University President, who is the CEO of all campuses including the University of Nebraska. At the same time, the Board and the President appropriately delegate day-to-day management responsibilities to campus/administrative unit leadership. Chancellors serve as the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) for their respective campuses. They, along with senior administrators, faculty governance bodies, and academic units, are responsible for operational and academic decision-making within the framework established by Board policy. Faculty play a central role in curriculum, academic standards, and shared governance. This balance of oversight and delegation promotes accountability while allowing institutions the flexibility necessary to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges.

Sources

- 1.2 Board of Regents-BOR Bylaw-NU Admin-2026
- 1.10 Code of Ethics-BOR Bylaw-NU Admin-2026
- 2.8.1 Chancellors-BOR Bylaw-NU Admin-2026
- 2.9 Colleges-BOR Bylaw-NU Admin-2026
- 2.12 Faculty Government-BOR Bylaws-NU Admin-2026
- Board of Regents Bylaws-NU Admin-2026
- Board of Regents Bylaws-NU Admin-2026 (page number 17)
- Board of Regents Policies-NU Admin-2026
- Board of Regents Standing Rules-NU Admin-2026
- Board of Regents Standing Rules-NU Admin-2026 (page number 5)
- BOR Agenda Items-NU Admin-2026
- BOR Public Comments-NU Admin-2026
- President Performance-NU Admin-2026
- RP 1.6 Committees-NU Admin-2026

- RP 1.6 Committees-NU Admin-2026 (page number 2)
- State Statutes for BOR-State of NE-2026
- State Statutes-State of NE-2026
- Meet The President

2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

Argument

The University of Nebraska recognizes academic freedom and freedom of expression as essential components of higher education and the pursuit of knowledge. Institutional policies, governance structures, and educational practices support the rights of faculty, students, and staff to engage in inquiry, scholarship, teaching, research, and public dialogue without undue interference.

Faculty are entrusted with responsibility for curriculum, scholarship, and intellectual exploration. Policies that protect academic freedom while establishing processes to address grievances, disputes, and allegations involving professional conduct are maintained and followed. Faculty Ombuds were created in 2019 and provide a confidential resource to faculty while also being responsible for elevating policies and practices that merit review or further consideration for the good of the faculty and university. Faculty governance bodies, such as Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, play an important role in safeguarding these principles and ensuring due process when concerns arise.

In 2018, the American Association of University Professors imposed censure on UNL after the university suspended a part-time faculty member through the end of her teaching appointment. In response, university leaders prioritized strengthening protections for academic freedom and free expression through Board-approved commitments to free expression, faculty development programs, revisions to governance policies, and efforts to address concerns raised through external review processes. These actions resulted in removal of UNL from the censure list in November 2021.

Students are encouraged to engage in civil discourse, public dialogue, and participation in student organizations and media outlets as part of their educational experience. As students continue to be active and showcase a desire for free expression, Student Life created Expressive Activities Guidelines in 2022, to support students in planning expressive activity. Further, in Spring 2026 Student Life launched the Expressive Activities Action Team Hosts to support students as they exercise free speech and are able to provide on-site support to resources.

Change of Structure

At the Medical Center, academic freedom is also embedded within policies, bylaws, and institutional expectations regarding teaching, research, and professional practice. Students, faculty, and staff are provided avenues for reporting concerns and resolving disputes while maintaining respect for diverse viewpoints and experiences. As the Colleges of UNL and UNMC become more integrated, we do not anticipate change in this area as both are governed by the same overarching policies. In response to the updated Regents' policy in

2018, the Medical Center campus designated public forum areas and created a policy for use of University Facilities and Grounds. Recently, there have been town halls for Graduate Students in response to unrest at other institutions and there is a process for students to request things such as chalking events in the designated public forums. In the UNMC Student Satisfaction Survey, of over 1000 respondents, 90% said the Medical Center campus was very encouraging or somewhat encouraging to the open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs in 2024 and 91% in 2025.

Together, these demonstrate efforts to foster environments in which open inquiry, intellectual diversity, evidence-based discussion, and respectful engagement support learning, discovery, and innovation.

Sources

- ARRC-EVC-2026
- Community Conversation on Academic Freedom-EVC-2026
- Faculty Ombuds-EVC-2026
- 4.2 Academic Freedom-BOR Bylaw-NU Admin-2026
- Expressive Activities Action Team-Student Life-2026
- Expressive Activities Guidelines-Student Life-2026
- Student Survey-UNMC-2026
- Use of Facilities and Grounds-UNMC-2026
- UNL Censure-Chancellor-2026

2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

Argument

The University of Nebraska maintains policies and procedures that support the responsible acquisition, discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge. The institution recognizes that research, scholarship, teaching, and professional practice require adherence to ethical principles, regulatory requirements, and disciplinary standards.

Integrity and Compliance

Research oversight is provided through institutional review boards, animal care and use committees, conflict-of-interest review processes, research integrity officers, and specialized compliance offices. These structures ensure protection of human participants, humane treatment of animals, responsible conduct of research, management of conflicts of interest, and compliance with federal, state, and institutional requirements.

Faculty, staff, and students receive education regarding research ethics, academic integrity, information literacy, and responsible scholarship. Required training programs address responsible conduct of research, conflicts of interest, compliance obligations, data stewardship, and professional ethics. Academic programs reinforce ethical expectations within individual disciplines and professions. The Guidelines for Good Practice in Graduate Education centers on responsible interactions between graduate students and faculty and emphasizes professionalism and ethical conduct.

Libraries, research offices, technology services, and academic support units provide resources that help students and faculty access, evaluate, use, and communicate information effectively. Workshops, consultations, online learning modules, and instructional resources strengthen information literacy and scholarly practice.

Academic integrity and honesty policies apply across the University of Nebraska and establish expectations for original work, proper citation, ethical use of information, and responsible participation in educational activities. Procedures for addressing allegations of research misconduct provide fairness, consistency, and due process.

Change of Structure

Through these coordinated efforts, the institution promotes a culture of integrity that supports excellence in teaching, research, clinical practice, and public service, efforts that will be maintained as the two campuses are enhancing their integration as the University of Nebraska.

The University of Nebraska System, and by extension each of its administrative units, has

policies and procedures to ensure the responsible and ethical conduct of research. Training (much of it required) and support are provided to faculty, staff, and students to establish the highest levels of integrity in research and scholarship. Libraries provide resources to students and faculty regarding the responsible use of information, such as copyright infringement and plagiarism. The University enforces its academic honesty, integrity, and research misconduct policies and procedures. New resources have been provided regarding the appropriate uses of Artificial Intelligence tools. Each campus and its colleges have additional policies and procedures relevant to their specialized focus areas. As a result of the change, there will likely be opportunities to share and enhance these resources and streamline procedures.

Sources

- Academic Integrity-EVC-2026
- AI Guidance and Resources-EVC-2026
- Ethics and Integrity Training-EVC-2026
- College Integrity-EVC-2026
- Information Literacy-LIBR-2026
- Guidelines for Good Practices in Graduate Education-OGS-2026
- 3.10 Inventions and Discoveries-BOR Bylaw-NU Admin-2026
- Research Integrity-R&I-2026
- Research Misconduct-R&I-2026
- Research Integrity-UNMC-2026

Criterion 2 - Summary

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Argument

The University of Nebraska demonstrates that actions taken by its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff adhere to established policies and procedures. The University of Nebraska operates within a comprehensive governance and compliance framework established through Board of Regents Bylaws, Policies, Standing Rules, institutional procedures, campus-level oversight structures, and compliance training, evidenced by annual training for faculty, staff, and students on topics such as Title IX, FERPA, conflict of interest, cybersecurity and related compliance obligations, as well as faculty, student, and employee handbooks that further communicate institutional expectations. Any changes in policy or compliance requirements are widely communicated at the system or campus level, or both.

The institution maintains structures to promote integrity, accountability, transparency, and responsible stewardship through independent audits and management plans for significant conflicts of interest and nepotism agreements where changes in reporting relationships or financial approvals are required. Ethical conduct expectations are communicated and addressed across institutional constituencies through system-level policies. The Student Code of Conduct is consistent across the five campuses in the University of Nebraska System, and both the Lincoln and Medical Center campuses use EthicsPoint, managed by the NU system office, to allow stakeholders to report concerns anonymously. The university system finances are annually audited, under the guidance of the Board of Regents, by a third-party external audit firm and by the Nebraska State Auditors.

The University of Nebraska presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public. Public information is provided through institutional websites, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, Nebraska Today, social media channels, Fact Books, and interactive data resources maintained by Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics and Enterprise Data Solutions. These resources communicate information regarding academic programs, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, accreditation relationships, governance, student services, enrollment, retention, graduation rates, employment outcomes, and program-specific performance measures. The Medical Center campus similarly provides evidence of transparency through a comprehensive online catalog that includes academic programs, tuition and fees, admissions requirements, policies, student services, accreditation, and governance information. The Division of Student Success serves as a central access point for academic support, financial aid, records, counseling, and student engagement services. As UNL and UNMC integrate under the University of Nebraska, a combined web presence is under development to support federal compliance requirements, and provide navigation to campus-specific information.

The Board of Regents is appropriately empowered to act in the best interests of the institution and students. The Board operates under authority established by the Nebraska

Constitution and state statutes and is responsible for approving institutional missions, budgets, major policies, tuition and fees, capital projects, and academic programs. The Board consists of eight elected voting members and four students who serve as student body presidents at their respective campuses. The Board operates with appropriate independence, transparency, and accountability through public meetings and communications. Board members are subject to conflict-of-interest requirements, annual financial disclosure obligations, and ethical standards for public officials. Board deliberations focus on institutional mission, academic quality, fiscal responsibility, and public service, evidenced by items on recent Board agendas. Board Bylaws delegate administrative responsibility to the University President and day-to-day operations are delegated to campus and administrative unit leaders, including chancellors, chief financial officers, general counsel, senior administrators, faculty governance bodies, and academic units.

The University of Nebraska supports academic freedom and freedom of expression. University policies, governance structures, and educational practices protect the rights of faculty, students, and staff to engage in inquiry, teaching, scholarship, research, professional practice, and public dialogue without undue interference. The institution supports free expression among students. Student Life created Expressive Activities Guidelines to assist students in planning expressive activity, and in Spring 2026 launched the Expressive Activities Action Team Hosts to provide on-site support and resource connection during expressive activities. At the Medical Center campus, public forum areas and a policy for use of University Facilities and Grounds were developed in response to the 2018 Regents' policy update.

The University of Nebraska maintains policies and procedures for the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Research oversight is provided through institutional review boards, animal care and use committees, conflict-of-interest review processes, research integrity officers, and specialized compliance offices. These structures support protection of human participants, humane treatment of animals, responsible conduct of research, management of conflicts of interest, and compliance with federal, state, and institutional requirements. Faculty, staff, and students receive education and support regarding research ethics, Federal and State compliance requirements, academic integrity, information literacy, and responsible scholarship. Required training programs and policies address responsible conduct of research, conflicts of interest, data stewardship, compliance obligations, and professional ethics. Academic honesty and responsible use of information are supported through policies, procedures, and educational resources. Libraries, research offices, technology services, and academic support units provide workshops, consultations, online modules, and instructional resources related to information literacy, copyright, plagiarism, scholarly communication, and ethical use of information.

The change combining UNL and UNMC under the University of Nebraska accreditation structure will continue to maintain compliance with Criterion 2. Existing Board bylaws, policies, procedures, governance structures, compliance systems, academic freedom protections, and research integrity processes will remain in force and apply to both campuses. Each campus will maintain its compliance infrastructure and may explore opportunities for cross-training, efficiency, shared resources, and streamlined procedures.

The University of Nebraska operates with integrity through established policies and compliance structures; presents itself accurately and transparently to students and the public; maintains appropriate Board governance independence, public accountability, and

delegation of authority; supports academic freedom and freedom of expression; and maintains policies and procedures for the responsible conduct of teaching, research, scholarship, clinical practice, and public service.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Argument

The University of Nebraska provides educational programs characterized by academic rigor, clearly articulated learning outcomes, systematic review, and alignment with institutional mission. Through shared governance, academic program reviews and specialized accreditation, curriculum oversight, assessment activities, and continuous improvement processes, the institution ensures that academic offerings remain current, relevant, and appropriate to the credentials awarded.

Mission Aligned and Faculty Directed Educational Programs

Faculty committees govern the development and revision of courses, minors, certificates, degree programs, and the general education program referred to as the Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) program. All academic programs undergo regular review through institutional program review processes and specialized accreditation cycles, both of which evaluate academic quality, program effectiveness, and mission alignment and include an external peer review. Board of Regents' policy requires formal academic program review on a no more than seven-year cycle, and faculty-led curriculum committees continuously evaluate curricular relevance and rigor between review cycles. The Board of Regents reviews at more frequent intervals for academic programs with significant performance improvement goals.

All UNL undergraduate students complete the Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) program, which entails four institutional objectives and 10 student learning outcomes and culminates in a scholarly or creative product that demonstrates synthesis, interpretation, communication, and reflection. Courses utilized for the ACE general education program are assessed and reviewed for recertification on a no more than five-year cycle. A Canvas module for all instructors who teach ACE-certified courses provides an overview for ACE program assessment and detailed instructions for certifying and recertifying ACE courses.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are maintained and clearly articulated, differentiated according to credential level. Course numbering and degree requirements communicate undergraduate, graduate, professional, and certificate-level expectations. Undergraduate courses are numbered 100-499, Architecture, Law, and other Professional School Offerings are 500-799, and Graduate Level are 800-999. In cases where undergraduate and graduate courses are combined, faculty delineate outcomes and differentiate assignments for both levels within syllabi.

Learning outcomes for each baccalaureate degree are published in the undergraduate catalog. Examples include:

- Bachelor of Arts in English
- Bachelor of Journalism
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting
- Bachelor of Science in Animal Science
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Graduate programs emphasize advanced disciplinary knowledge, independent inquiry, and professional competence under the oversight of departmental graduate committees and the Graduate Council. Each department offering graduate courses has a graduate committee comprised of the faculty responsible for the supervision and assessment of graduate curriculum. Programs provide learning outcomes through graduate handbooks and web pages. Programs with external accreditation share learning outcomes on their website such as Master's degrees in the College of Business or the doctorate in psychology, clinical psychology track. As appropriate, learning outcomes are articulated by specific specializations within the master's or doctoral degree, such as Agronomy and Horticulture.

Locations and Delivery Methods

Educational quality is maintained across all instructional locations and delivery methods. Programs may be offered through traditional face-to-face instruction, online learning, hybrid delivery, experiential education, and other instructional formats. Regardless of location or modality, programs maintain consistent learning outcomes, academic expectations, curricular standards, and assessment practices. For instance, online and face-to-face courses have identical learning outcomes, and all students and faculty, whether on-campus or at a distance, are held to the same academic policies and standards.

UNL's Faculty Senate syllabus policy requires core information on all course syllabi along with a fillable template to promote consistency across the campus and promote learning outcomes. ACE outcomes are required to be listed on syllabi for all ACE courses.

There is extensive experience in distance education offering 428 undergraduate, 391 graduate, and 13 professional courses online originating from the Lincoln campus. Online programs include 2 bachelors for degree completion, 23 master's degrees, 32 postbaccalaureate certificates, 2 undergraduate certificates, and collaborative programs through consortia such as IDEA. The Medical Center campus also has extensive experience in offering health sciences education at a distance, with public health, allied health, nursing, and graduate degree options.

The online offerings consistently receive recognition for quality. For example, the College of

Business MBA program was ranked #1 for Best Value in the U.S. for Online MBA by *Financial Times* (2025), #25 Online MBA Among Public Institutions, U.S. News and World Report (2026), #20 Online MBA Among Public Institutions, Poets & Quants (2025), #22 Best Online MBA Program for Veterans by U.S. News and World Report (2026) and #7 Online MBA program by the Princeton Review (2025). These rankings are further evidence of the quality of educational programs offered.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC enhance their integration as the University of Nebraska, both campuses will continue their individual academic programming as it exists within their unique missions. Similar to Lincoln, the Medical Center provides academically rigorous, nationally ranked educational programs aligned with its health sciences mission. Rigor, level, and content are determined by faculty and affirmed through accreditation and external reviews. In addition, under the new University of Nebraska structure, fully leveraging the strengths and expertise of both campus' curriculum and degree programs is a priority.

Faculty and staff from both Lincoln and the Medical Center campuses have been engaged in discussions on College of Nursing programs, including creating more seamless admission transitions from undergraduate pre-nursing students and developing dual degree pathways with several colleges based on the Lincoln campus. There are also significant opportunities for cross-campus graduate program collaboration. For example, the two master's programs in nutrition are working on combined program accreditation. In Spring 2026, faculty and academic leaders from both campuses developed a proposal for a new curriculum committee to review new or existing programs being substantially revised that use courses across both campuses. The proposed committee will ensure the expertise of faculty from both the Lincoln and the Medical Center campuses is included in the decision-making process, that the program is aligned with accreditation and professional program standards, and that both campuses endorse its creation and are committed to providing the resources and infrastructure to enable its success.

Sources

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- Graduate Council-OGS-2026
- Graduate Learning Outcomes-OGS-2026
- ACE-UGED-2026
- ACE-UGED-2026 (page number 4)
- In Person and Online Learning Outcomes-EVC-2026
- Undergrad vs. Grad Expectations-UGED-2026
- Undergraduate Learning Outcomes-UGED-2026
- Online Programs-UNMC-2026
- Nursing Collaboration-NU-2026
- Nutrition Collaboration-NU-2026
- Online Program Rankings-NU-2026
- Online Program Rankings-NU-2026 (page number 6)
- Undergraduate Curricular Review Proposal-NU-2026

3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Argument

The University of Nebraska provides students with substantial opportunities to engage in intellectual inquiry, creative activity, research, experiential learning, and the application of knowledge. These experiences prepare students to communicate effectively, think critically, solve problems, work collaboratively, and contribute to the workforce and communities of Nebraska and beyond.

Intellectual Inquiry through General Education

The ACE general education program operationalizes the university's commitment to liberal education at a research-intensive land-grant university through 30 credit-hours encompassing 10 student learning outcomes that faculty have determined all undergraduates should acquire. ACE requires all undergraduates to engage in written, oral, and visual communication; inquiry and analysis; critical and creative thinking; quantitative reasoning; information assessment; teamwork; problem solving; ethics; civic responsibility; and global and diverse perspectives. ACE 10 requires students to complete a scholarly or creative product that synthesizes and interprets information and includes presentation and reflection. The 10-year ACE review provides a mechanism for ensuring that general education continues to meet students' needs and aligns with the university's strategic priorities related to preparation for lifelong learning and workforce readiness.

To equip students with skills adaptable to changing environments, an experiential learning graduation requirement was implemented in 2022. Undergraduates are required to engage in documented Experiential Learning, developed as part of the *N2025* strategic plan to “innovate student experiences that prepare graduates to be life-long learners and contributors to the workforce in Nebraska and the world”. Undergraduates can choose courses across nine categories from any college to fulfill this requirement. The Dean of Undergraduate Education regularly reviews data on students' completion of this requirement by cohort and program to identify areas for improvement.

Practicing Modes of Intellectual Inquiry or Creative Work

In addition to ACE and the Experiential Learning requirement, academic colleges engage students in scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge that requires collecting, analyzing, and communicating information and developing skills adaptable to changing environments. Students participate in research laboratories, creative productions, design studios, capstone projects, public exhibitions, clinical and community-based experiences, and client-based projects. Examples include:

- The College of Journalism and Mass Communications Experience Lab engages

undergraduates from their first semester to gain hands-on experience and expertise working with professional mentors.

- College of Architecture students regularly partner with Nebraska communities and Extension in studio projects to develop sustainability plans and design concepts that entail tours, surveys, resident interactions, and community forums.
- The College of Arts and Sciences Inquire Program builds around a college-wide series of public faculty lectures centered on annual themes and discussions with college thought leaders.
- The College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences Engler Entrepreneurship Program provides experiential, community-based learning to help students build their own enterprise from the ground up.
- The Jeffrey S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management's two-year Design Studio engages undergraduates with companies on a year-long project to develop a business solution through the full product development lifecycle, including design, implementation, and testing. Recent expansions of the capstone allow students to participate in Startup Studio, Research Studio, or a sponsored nonprofit project to complete their capstone requirements.
- Graduate students engage in intellectual inquiry, creative activity, research, experiential learning, and the application of knowledge through their specialized discipline or research area rather than general education requirements. All graduate students produce a final original product at the culmination of their program. Due to the comprehensive nature of graduate programs, these may range from capstone projects to dissertations and may also include art exhibitions or recitals. The process through which graduate level projects are developed and guided by Graduate Faculty is outlined in the Graduate Catalog, and student performance is assessed by a committee of faculty experts.

Developing Skills for Changing Environments

There are many examples that can highlight preparing students for success in changing environments. The College of Business and College of Engineering engaged with industry leaders and members of their advisory boards to revise curriculum and programming to better prepare students and respond to their changing environments. The College of Business revised core curriculum, launched in 2025, prioritizes hands-on learning, cross-disciplinary experiences, corporate engagement, and peer-to-peer mentorship to develop skills to lead the future of business. The core curriculum includes two new courses — Applied Improv for Successful Business Leaders and Navigating Emerging Technologies in Business to help students develop advanced communication and critical thinking skills and the ability to adapt to new technologies. The College of Engineering's Complete Engineer program prioritizes six essential non-technical core competencies to give undergraduates an edge in today's global setting. University Honors students complete a required independent thesis or equivalent scholarly project to receive honors cords at graduation. The Undergraduate Creative Activity and Research Experiences and First-Year Research Experience programs fund approximately 400 undergraduates annually to engage in faculty-mentored research throughout the academic year or the summer. Their research is

presented through posters at two research fairs a year.

Evidence of Success

University of Nebraska students regularly excel in national competitions which further demonstrates the quality of their educational programs and intellectual inquiry. In 2026, UNL students in journalism, speech and debate, soil science, and business all placed in the top five in national competitions and an 11-student team won the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Book and Journalism Award for *Nebraska Behind Bars*.

Since 2020, many students have been selected for prestigious national fellowships, including 5 Boren Scholars, 8 Critical Language Scholars, 30 Fulbright U.S. Students, 155 Gilman Scholars, 2 Goldwater Scholars, 25 NSF Graduate Research Fellows, 1 Truman Scholar, and 1 Voyager Scholar. In 2021, UNL was named a Top Producer of Fulbright U.S. Student awards, and in 2026, was recognized as a 25th Anniversary Gilman Scholarship Top Producer in the large institutions category. In addition, UNL leads the Big Ten Conference with 383 Academic All-Americans, ranks second nationally for all Division I institutions, and leads the nation with 19 NCAA Impact Award honorees (formerly known as the NCAA Top Ten Award). Impressively, there has been at least one Academic All-American for 51 consecutive years.

Student achievement in intellectual inquiry is made possible because it is directed by the exceptional faculty. Recent notable accomplishments include:

- Nine faculty members earned National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Program awards in 2025, tying an institutional record set in 2024. Nebraska's 2025 CAREER awards, one of the nation's most prestigious awards for rising teacher-scholars, totaled \$6.9 million.
- In 2024-25, faculty received 105 external honors and awards, recognizing the impact of their research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. Highlights include elections to the National Academy of Sciences, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, and National Academy of Sciences Prize in Food and Agriculture Sciences.
- Researchers are making discoveries that shape their fields and gain national and international visibility through publication in high-impact journals. For example, in a recent study published in *Science*, a team of international collaborators led by a UNL faculty member illuminates the biological secrets that enable *Phyllotis vaccarum*, also known as the Andean leaf-eared mouse, to thrive at the highest elevations of any known mammal.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC enhance their integration under the University of Nebraska, both campuses will continue their engagements in intellectual inquiry with additional opportunities for partnerships that benefit students and faculty. There are many ongoing collaborations between the Lincoln and Medical Center campuses, with more under development, which will strengthen the relationship between the two and the University as a whole. The University of Nebraska Graduate College already spans both campuses. The Medical Center students, guided by their faculty, also produce an extensive body of research with many prestigious awards. The new relationship may also provide enhanced access to

interdisciplinary competitive research awards as well as summer research programs hosted at the Medical Center (INBRE, SURP) for Lincoln campus undergraduate students.

Sources

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- CAS Inquire Program-CAS-2026
- Community Projects-COA-2026
- Experience Lab-CoJMC-2026
- Raikes School Design Studio-2026
- The Complete Engineer-COE-2026
- Graduate Project Evaluation-OGS-2026
- ACE 10 Capstone Syllabi-UGED-2026
- ACE Assessment Schedule-UGED-2026
- ACE-UGED-2026
- Experiential Learning 3-EVC-2026
- Honors Senior Project-EVC-2026
- Student Competitions-EVC-2026
- Undergraduate Research-UGED-2026
- Engler Entrepreneurship Program-IANR-2026
- Athletic All American-NU Admin-2026
- Faculty Research-R&I-2026
- Student Awards-UNMC-2026
- Summer Research Programs-UNMC 2026
- Thesis and Dissertations-UNMC-2026
- Ongoing Collaboration-NU-2026

3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

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

Argument

Faculty and staff are recruited and continually developed to deliver and support high-quality academic programs, student learning, research, professional and clinical education, effective student services, and extension responsibilities consistent with the mission of a public, land-grant, research-intensive university. Established hiring, evaluation, credentialing, and professional development processes are used to ensure that faculty and staff are appropriately qualified and supported in their roles.

Faculty: Sufficiency, Qualifications and Evaluation

In Fall 2025, UNL employed 1,026 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty with a student-faculty ratio of 16.79. This ratio is based on HLC Institutional Head Count instructions and is not limited to tenure line faculty. In Fall 2025, UNL also employed 552 non-tenure line promotable faculty, including 232 faculty of practice, 115 research faculty, and 205 Nebraska Extension and public service faculty.

Faculty qualifications are reviewed through established appointment processes, and most faculty hold doctoral or other terminal degrees appropriate to their disciplines. In Fall 2025, among full-time permanent faculty, over three-fourths (81%) held a doctoral degree or other terminal degree in their discipline and another 16% held master's degrees. The remaining 3% held bachelor's degrees or other professional credentials. Graduate faculty appointments are governed by the Graduate College, which spans both campuses.

Faculty evaluation systems support teaching effectiveness and professional growth. The processes and guidelines are periodically reviewed and modified; they were last updated in December 2023. Faculty are evaluated through student course evaluations, annual review, progress toward tenure, promotion and tenure review, and post-tenure review. Faculty in positions that are not tenure-leading, as well as graduate teaching assistants are reviewed in similar ways. In 2020, a Task Force recommended and implemented a common student course evaluation survey and a set of campus policies as a standardized method of review, and to support faculty and student interests.

Faculty Support

Instructors are supported through the Center for Transformative Teaching (CTT), teaching and learning symposia, NCFDD, graduate teaching assistant training, international teaching assistant preparation, Preparing Future Faculty, CIRTL, and college-based teaching initiatives. These teaching and learning resources are well utilized:

- New faculty are provided with resources specific to navigating and launching their faculty careers through new faculty orientation, new faculty resource guide, and a

Teaching@UNL Canvas module.

- Since Summer 2023, the Center for Transformative Teaching has engaged with 1506 individuals at UNL, across the University of Nebraska system, and from other institutions. At UNL alone, 853 instructors engaged with the CTT, representing 27% of the instructors of record for the colleges supported by the CTT. Instructional designers helped these faculty with 1,596 courses, representing 68,062 student learning experiences.
- The Faculty-Led Inquiry and Research into Scholarly Teaching (formerly Peer Review of Teaching Project) celebrated its 30th anniversary in AY 24-25 and engaged 500+ faculty from 50+ departments in a year-long inquiry program on course development, instructional design, and assessment. This is an institutionalized example of a rigorous program that supports and promotes continuous instructional improvement.

Graduate teaching assistants are offered an orientation, a formal teaching development program, teaching consultations, and resources through UNL's partnership with the national network of research institutions with the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning. The Institute for International Teaching Assistants is a two-week intensive training program that is required for all teaching assistants for whom English is not their native language.

The Faculty Development Fellowship program allows faculty to focus on teaching-related professional work such as curriculum development or improvements in instructional practice during their leave. While most faculty traditionally focus their efforts on their research programs through study, research, and writing during a Faculty Development Fellowship, outcomes are expected to be cycled into the classroom and lab. Additional offerings and aspects of faculty life are supported by professional development and training programs offered by Faculty Affairs, Research and Innovation, Academic Technologies, Student Life and others.

Staff: Sufficiency, Qualifications and Support

Student support staff are similarly qualified, trained, and supported with established human resources processes, new employee orientation, position-specific training, professional associations, career ladders, tuition remission, and staff development programs. Examples include:

- Organizational Development and Training offers in-person and online courses, workshops, learning groups, a staff leadership academy and an annual All-Staff Conference that attracts hundreds.
- In 2023, Student Life added a full-time staff position to oversee support for over 700 Student Life staff through intentional onboarding and ongoing development opportunities. Previously, each unit had provided its own development, limiting opportunities for shared approaches and collaboration.
- The University of Nebraska's Bridge training library supports all employees for professional development, employee wellness and compliance training, providing individuals and the campus training records to track participation.
- In 2020, Undergraduate Education created and hired a specialist position to train all academic advisors. The New Advisor Series and a Shadowing Program build advisors' skills in alignment with NACADA standards and promote campus collaborations.
- In 2023, a clearly defined career ladder was implemented to recruit and retain high

quality, professional academic advising professionals and to ensure equity in salary and job duties regardless of unit.

- From 2023-2025, UNL held six Promoting At-Promise Student Success (PASS) Forums for faculty and staff on the barriers and challenges at-promise scholars face. Attendees reported increases in understanding of PASS framework from 54.84% to 88.87% and how to tailor strength-based support for students from 75.72% to 95.16%.
- In 2025, an external program review was conducted for University Career Services with follow-up retreats to discuss findings and update its strategic plan. As a result, all colleges are now responsible and credentialed for providing localized career development support while University Career Services focuses on general support and overall data reporting.
- In 2025-26, Undergraduate Education hosted a multi-session workshop on motivational interviewing for all student success staff to improve their interpersonal interactions with students. Participants gained overall confidence in using this technique, with a reported improvement of 7.54%.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC strengthen their integration as the University of Nebraska, both campuses will continue their strategies to ensure sufficiency of qualified faculty and staff to deliver high-quality educational programs and student services in accordance with their missions. There will be opportunities for joint hires, teaching, and student services across campuses in overlapping areas, and this relationship will help facilitate those opportunities in new ways going forward as the human resources policies and procedures are shared system wide. The campuses are currently learning what opportunities for shared professional development might be leveraged and available to both audiences. An example that has already occurred was an AI workshop delivered to faculty and students across campuses, both live and remote during the Spring 2026 semester. Other areas to investigate could include shared delivery of instructional design best practices between the Lincoln campus CCT and the Medical Center's decade old Interprofessional Academy of Educators, Faculty Leadership Development programs, and other Faculty Development offerings from the respective campus groups.

Sources

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- New Employee Orientation-B&F-2026
- Organizational Development and Training-B&F-2026
- Common Course Evaluations-EVC-2026
- Evaluating Instructors-EVC-2026
- Evaluation of Faculty-Faculty Affairs-2026
- Faculty Development Fellowship-Faculty Affairs-2026
- Faculty Hiring Process-EVC-2026
- New Faculty Resources-EVC-2026
- Appointing Graduate Faculty-OGS-2026
- Graduate Teaching Development-OGS-2026
- Academic Advisor Professional Development-UGED-2026
- Academic Advisor Salary Recommendations-UGED-2026
- Basic Motivational Interviewing-UGED-2026

- Career Services-UGED-2026
- CTT Instructor Usage-UGED-2026
- FIRST-UGED-2026
- PASS Forum-UGED-2026
- Director of Staff Development-Student Life-2026
- Shared Professional Development-NU-2026

3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Argument

The University of Nebraska provides mission-appropriate support services and learning resources that promote student success and effective teaching with significant investments in advising, academic support, counseling, accessibility, technology, libraries, laboratories, and learning environments.

Student Support Services

UNL's Husker Student POWER (Purpose, Ownership, Well-being, Engagement, Relationships) framework underpins messaging regarding support for student success from entry through graduation. Developed by the Offices of Student Life and the Executive Vice Chancellor, POWER is introduced to new students during New Student Enrollment and reinforced through Big Red Welcome events, college "Start Smart" courses, first-year seminars, and Husker Student POWER weeks. It also serves as the framework for a student survey to determine interventions targeted for student persistence and retention.

The HLC Quality Initiative, Scaling an Ecology of Validation Framework, i.e. Building a UNL Culture Where Every Person Matters, underlies the campus approach to building an intentional, proactive, and collaborative ecosystem of academic, financial, social, and emotional wellbeing support. The units involved include the Center for Academic Success and Transition, Military and Veteran Success Center, The Academic Navigator Team, Services for Students with Disabilities, University Career Services, Student Advocacy and Support, Center for Advocacy, Response, and Education, Student Legal Services, Husker Hub, TRIO Student Support Services, International Student Support Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Digital Learning Commons, to name a few. A student referral guide was promoted to all campus leadership, faculty, and staff for better supporting their interactions with students and making effective referrals to campus resources.

Student support units show high usage rates for the students they serve. In AY 25-26, the Military and Veteran Success Center recorded 5,229 total visits with 2,243 for benefits certification while in Fall 2025, two Digital Learning Commons supported 214 instructors for 425 courses, totaling 87,697 registrations. In AY 25-26, the Center for Academic Success and Transition provided free tutoring to approximately 700 unique students through more than 1,800 tutoring appointments and facilitated 2,733 one-on-one coaching appointments, reflecting a 34.3% increase over the previous academic year. Also in the 25-26 academic year, Student Advocacy & Support provided assistance to 1,267 students, Counseling and Psychological Services served 1,859 clients through 8,446, and Student Legal Services provided legal counsel to 567 student clients, with primary areas of support being around

landlord/tenant policy, and low-level misdemeanors.

In response to the quickly evolving federal landscape regarding immigration and visa requirements, the International Student and Scholar Office maintains a website with just-in-time updates and regularly communicates with students. In person and virtual sessions for students and scholars to seek guidance and advice are offered.

UNL's support for advising, career development, and overall student support has been strengthened through new technologies and staff roles, proactive advising, and student success surveys. The efforts below demonstrate university-wide strategies to increase retention and degree completion, with a focus on holistic and proactive outreach based on continuous review of data to identify students in need of tailored and point-in-time support.

- In 2019, the POWER survey was launched to identify new students facing issues with academic, social, emotional, and financial wellbeing. Campus teams conduct outreach and academic leaders monitor overall trends by college and population.
- In 2022, a new staff team, the Academic Navigators, was created to use data to identify and conduct outreach to students. In Fall 2023, 14,791 text messages were sent, and the team met with 1,136 students. In 2026, outreach to undergraduates was enhanced by use of AI, and a chatbot dashboard. Additionally, the team partnered with the math department to host study sessions facilitated by math faculty for students who failed their first exam; students who attended passed courses at double the rate of those who did not attend one or more study sessions.
- In 2021, Student Advocacy & Support was formalized as an office to support students.
- In 2023, Student Success Hub was implemented to enable undergraduates to schedule advising appointments and advisors to record notes on engagement across 20+ campus units. In AY 25-26, 42,000 appointments were recorded.
- In Fall 2025, Cornelius, an AI-powered chatbot tool, was launched with a grant provided to University of Nebraska undergraduate campuses. In May 2026, 85% of undergraduates opted-into Cornelius. In Fall 2026, custom Cornelius campaigns have been developed for first-generation, commuters, and transfer students to better support their success.
- In AY 25-26, the campus implemented Stellic Explore, a degree audit and planning system for undergraduates to track progress and academic leaders to plan for enrollment. Since December 2025, 6,168 undergraduates have logged in, 1,000+ have planned courses and all will use it for spring 2027 registration. A transfer student module is being implemented.
- In 2025, New Student Enrollment piloted a new math placement exam system to reduce enrollment barriers. The pilot groups completed advising significantly faster with no statistically significant differences in math outcomes in Fall 2025. The pilot expanded in Summer 2026 to include Calculus II placement.
- In 2025, Graduate Studies extensively revised the welcoming and onboarding process for new online and on campus graduate students, including virtual webinars and a Welcome Fair. A 2026 survey of graduate students who started in Fall 2025 indicated

high satisfaction with the onboarding process.

- In 2026, Career Services piloted 12twenty to collect and report first destination and internship outcomes to better demonstrate student success and institutional impact. In its first semester of use, the tool collected outcomes for 74.48% of graduating undergraduates. Efforts include integrating Nebraska's Department of Labor data with the first destination survey results to provide a clearer understanding of alumni impact on Nebraska's workforce.

TRIO/student Support Services offers tutoring and study groups, while the William H. Thompson Scholars' Learning Community runs a "study cafe" with learning consultants in a residence hall. Academic colleges and departments also provide academic support outside the classroom:

- The College of Business's Teaching and Learning Center and the Nebraska Engineering Support and Tutoring Center provide tutoring and peer mentor support specific to their respective courses.
- The College of Arts and Sciences supports the Math Resource Center, the University Writing Center, the Chemistry Resource Center, the Language Lab, and the Center for Communication Excellence.
- The Explore Center supports pre-health students with a seminar on pre-health program options, trips to the Medical Center campus, and a visitors' program to meet with representatives from professional health programs.

Teaching Resources and Infrastructure for Student Success

Resources and infrastructure to support teaching are also extensive. To support effective teaching and learning, University Libraries provide instructor access to research and education consultants, learning spaces and millions of volumes, journals, and digital resources. Learning resources and facilities include renovated classrooms, active learning spaces, research laboratories, performance venues, galleries, museums, libraries, makerspaces, teaching laboratories, clinical and practicum sites, and technology-rich student spaces. Since 2021, several new facilities have been opened to support teaching and learning:

- The Dinsdale Family Learning Commons, opened in 2021, transformed the former C.Y. Thompson Library into a technology-rich, collaborative learning space that houses interactive classrooms, study pods, the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program, a makerspace, and other facilities.
- Carolyn Pope Edwards Hall, opened in 2022, is a 126,590 square foot facility that features classrooms, meeting spaces, offices, labs, and a 400-seat auditorium for the College of Education and Human Sciences. The building's theme is "Making Learning Visible," a direct reflection of Nebraska's investment in teacher preparation and helping young children thrive.
- Kiewit Hall, opened in 2024, is the academic hub for engineering education. It connects five engineering facilities and is home to the construction management program. It offers a mix of multi-purpose classrooms, instructional labs, engineering

student services and “The Garage” maker spaces for student organizations including the college’s Society of Automotive Engineers Baja and Formula teams.

- Westbrook Music Building, opened in 2025, is a 103,000 square foot home to the Glenn Korff School of Music with an immersive performance hall, a recording studio, two large rehearsal rooms for band and choir, 41 practice rooms, a music library, and classroom and office spaces.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC enhance their relationship under the University of Nebraska, both campuses will continue their campus-based support services. The Medical Center also offers comprehensive support services for its students, which have greatly increased over the last several years in response to student needs. Expansions of academic success and counseling and psychological services have taken place, along with updates for many learning spaces. The Medical Center’s “Quick Check Program” is a unique introductory opt-out program for all incoming health profession students introducing them in a one-on-one meet and greet sessions with the campus counseling staff. The newest addition is the first UNMC housing unit, a 300-bed space constructed in response to long-time student requests. In addition to campus-based resources, there are numerous avenues to explore efficiencies and enhanced access to support student learning and teaching. One early example is the integration of UNMC Academic Technology under the NU System ITS, which serves all other campuses. This group will support Academic Technologies for all faculty and students; already they have completed a convergence to a single Canvas LMS instance so faculty and students can teach/take classes on both campuses in a streamlined way.

Additionally, the Medical Center has long had a footprint on the Lincoln campus with buildings, students, staff, and faculty in the Colleges of Nursing and Dentistry. These buildings have MultiTaction I-Walls for real-time connection and interaction with other campuses, and Nursing shares a building, intentionally, with the UNL student health center. UNMC’s clinical partner, Nebraska Medicine, operates the student health center on both campuses and is the official health care partner of Husker athletics. There are opportunities to explore new ways to support all students, as well as better ways to support students who already cross both campuses. Further opportunities to explore could include work study positions for students across campuses, and easier access to specialized equipment, high-fidelity simulation units, virtual reality, and other tools for teaching and learning.

Sources

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- Dinsdale Family Learning Commons-LIBR-2026
- Kiewit Hall 3-COE-2026
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- 12Twenty System-UGED-2026
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- Math Placement Exam Pilot-UGED-2026
- Navigating Campus Resources-UGED-2026
- Stellic Explore-UGED-2026
- Student Success Hub-UGED-2026
- Student Support Units Usage-UGED-2026
- Canvas Convergence-NU Admin-2026
- Student Advocacy and Support-Student Life-2026
- Lincoln Campus Partners-UNMC-2026
- Quick Check Program-UNMC-2026
- Residence Hall-UNMC-2026
- Student Support Services-UNMC-2026

3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Argument

The University of Nebraska maintains comprehensive assessment systems that evaluate student learning and academic performance at the course, program, college, and institutional levels. Assessment occurs through course-based measures, academic program reviews, biennial undergraduate program assessment, ACE assessment, graduate program evaluation, graduating senior and first destination surveys, licensure examinations, portfolios, comprehensive examinations, capstone projects, and competency-based assessments.

Assessment Processes and Outcomes

Student and program assessment is integrated into academic planning, curriculum development, accreditation processes, and continuous improvement efforts. Faculty maintain primary responsibility for establishing learning outcomes, selecting assessment methods, interpreting results, and implementing improvements designed to strengthen student learning.

All undergraduate degree programs/majors publish learning outcomes in the catalog, and undergraduate programs submit assessment reports biennially that identify learning outcomes, assessment methods, results, and actions taken. A sample of 2025 assessment reports noted these improvements based on assessment results:

- Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication reported assessment results have been used to strengthen student learning by refining instruction and assessment design to better support written, visual, and oral communication skills. Major projects now include additional scaffolding. Weekly modules have been revised to add more hands-on demonstrations in photography, videography, and Canva to build essential technical skills.
- Economics analyzed responses in exams across three courses that focus on data analysis and interpretation, finding that students displayed high aptitude on calculating basic statistics and interpreting regression coefficient estimates. Assessment improvements included incorporating more training into ECON 315 and assigning newer tenure-track faculty to teach ECON 215 to help standardize and ensure high-quality instruction for this foundational course.
- English faculty analyzed students' capstone portfolios, noting opportunities to support students' breadth in demonstration of all student learning outcomes. Portfolios reflected more attention to creative work than literary or rhetorical analysis. Of research skills demonstrated in portfolios submitted for ENGL 487, 6% were below adequate, 32% were adequate, 39% were strong, and 26% represented the highest

level. Faculty who teach ENGL 487 are engaged in discussions on how to better support students' synthesis of outside research.

- To respond to feedback from practicum supervisors when students were performing well in their studies but experienced challenges of application in the classroom, elementary education faculty developed shared structures for tracking and supporting students through the creation of the "Loop," an infrastructure investment aimed at improving program coherence and early intervention. They developed an elementary-specific Students Rights and Responsibility document that was integrated into program orientation and course syllabi to emphasize professional responsibilities and ethics and to address situations like medical clearances, injuries in the workplace, social media expectations and others. They also refined the sequencing of structured literacy practices in TEAC 302, TEAC 311/313, and SPED 415/415A.

Graduate-level Assessment of Student Learning

At the graduate program level, all master's and doctoral students are required to pass a comprehensive examination. For master's programs, "(t)he comprehensive examination is required to cover the student's approved program of study, as specified by the major and minor (if applicable) departments. For doctoral programs, (t)he written comprehensive examination is an investigation of the student's breadth of knowledge in their specialty area. It is not a repetition of course examinations". Faculty evaluation of the comprehensive exam is documented through milestone paperwork managed by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Programs may tailor their comprehensive examination requirements to meet specific needs of their discipline and students. For example, the non-thesis option B Master's degree in Agronomy has a capstone project that can focus on education, extension/outreach or research, depending on the student's professional goals. The Doctorate in Musical Arts requires a portfolio that integrates scholarly work with performance, conducting, or composition that would be suitable for peer-reviewed publication. The Integrated Media Communication specialization in the MA in the College of Journalism and Mass media includes a professional project with a flexible topic and format, depending on student's interests and goals. Faculty evaluation for each of these three examples is documented through grades in an associated required course.

Graduate Committees, led by Graduate Chairs in each program, are responsible for continually evaluating courses and other degree requirements to improve student learning. Many of these changes are handled at the program level, such as reordering the sequence of quantitative methods courses if it appears students need certain courses earlier to support their research. The DMA portfolio referenced above was developed after an assessment that the traditional dissertation was not serving students well and did not reflect current best practices for the discipline. The Civil and Environmental Engineering graduate faculty proposed revisions to their program offerings, including elimination of the MS in Environmental Engineering and renaming the Civil Engineering graduate degrees (MS and PhD) to Civil and Environmental Engineering. The revised approach aligned offerings with broader academic and industry trends to support student outcomes as interdisciplinary and holistic engineering education has become increasingly valued.

Assessment results have been used to improve educational quality and student achievement through curriculum redesign, instructional improvements, enhanced advising,

student support interventions, faculty development, accreditation compliance, and strategic planning.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC enhance their integration as the University of Nebraska, there is no short-term anticipated change in the assessment of student learning. Given the wide range of degree programs offered, assessment processes vary considerably within and between campuses, colleges, and programs. Each college approaches assessment in ways that honor its own discipline yet address essential questions related to assessment. Many of the Medical Center programs' assessment practices are directed by specialized accreditors, and it does not offer general education. All such programs are fully accredited by their respective accrediting body without any conditional, warning or probationary status. The graduate programs assess student learning as described in the previous section, as the Graduate College spans both campuses. However, as the two institutions become more closely aligned, there may be opportunities to share best practices, and develop some common procedures. Determining methods of assessment for any programs shared across campuses will be a joint effort and proposed at the development phase, reviewed by the joint curriculum committee previously described.

Sources

- Civil and Environmental Engineering-COE-2026
- DMA Portfolio Assessment-FPA-2026
- Graduate Comprehensive Exams-OGS-2026
- Biennial Program Assessment and Schedule-UGED-2026
- Biennial Program Assessment and Schedule-UGED-2026 (page number 7)
- Biennial Program Assessment and Schedule-UGED-2026 (page number 16)
- Biennial Program Assessment and Schedule-UGED-2026 (page number 21)
- Biennial Program Assessment and Schedule-UGED-2026 (page number 33)
- Specialized Accreditors-UNMC-2026

3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

Argument

The University of Nebraska maintains systematic program review processes that ensure academic programs remain current, effective, mission-aligned, and responsive to evolving disciplinary, professional, and workforce needs. Program review is a central component of institutional quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Program Review Processes

All academic programs participate in regular academic program review cycles, typically every seven years, as required by University of Nebraska Board of Regents policy and the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, or sooner as required by specialized accrediting agencies. Academic Program Reviews include internal self-studies, external peer review, final reports, and formal responses from academic leadership.

Specialized accreditors evaluate 56 programs based on the Lincoln campus and 39 programs based on the Medical Center campus. These specialized accreditation reviews may substitute for the locally required academic program review when appropriate. The components of the review are dictated by the accrediting agency and are often more detailed than the academic program review process.

Recommendations for both APR and specialized accreditation reviews are cycled back into departmental decision making, strategic planning, and continuous improvement efforts.

- The 2021 History APR recommended strengthening coherence in the undergraduate curriculum and sustaining momentum in program development. In response, the department conducted a comprehensive review of its course offerings, inactivating more than 35 courses that had not been taught in over five years. Faculty developed a series of new undergraduate courses, including *Villains and Heroes in Premodern World History*, *America by Disaster*, *Coming to America*, *Human Rights in Modern World History*, *The Vikings*, *Empire and Resistance in the Modern World*, *Graphic Novels as History*, and *The Music of Protest*. The department also created new graduate courses focused on career diversity, leadership development, research communication and funding, and historical theory to better prepare graduate students for a variety of professional pathways.
- Recommendations from the Agronomy and Horticulture APR prompted the department to strengthen undergraduate advising, student success, and program coordination efforts. The department reconstituted a college-approved steering committee to guide the future of the Plant Biology program, implemented plans to transition from a single-advisor model to a distributed advising structure, and developed coordinated approaches to recruitment, retention, student success planning, and ongoing curriculum review.

- The Department of Biochemistry used recommendations from its APR to guide implementation of an accelerated BS/MS degree program intended to strengthen workforce preparation in the biotechnology sector. Faculty incorporated feedback from the review team in expanding recruitment efforts, strengthening partnerships with industry and alumni, developing additional internship opportunities, and evaluating future graduate program offerings in plant biotechnology and biomedical sciences.
- The Department of Biological Systems Engineering used recommendations from its APR to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of its undergraduate degree portfolio. Faculty reviewed the alignment of degree pathways, student learning outcomes, and workforce needs, resulting in continued efforts to streamline and harmonize degree programs, strengthen connections among design courses across the Biological Systems Engineering and Agricultural Engineering curricula. This resulted in a revised undergraduate curriculum and new course development that will be offered in Fall 2026.

General Education Program Review

The ACE general education program uses a structured review cycle, and each course is reviewed for recertification every five years. ACE assessment data have led to focused review of outcome criteria, reporting practices, communication of policies, and alignment with *N2025* priorities such as experiential learning.

The most recent review of the overall ACE program began in AY 2021-22 with two distinct areas of focus. First, the prior years' review had revealed a lack of clear articulation of how these outcomes, individually or collectively, foster engaged citizenship and lifelong learning. This review resulted in a revision of the ACE certification questions and the initiation of an effort to encourage active reflection on the impact of the outcome in each ACE-certified course. Second, institution-wide efforts aligned with the *N2025* strategic plan emphasizing that "...every person and every interaction matters" brought focused consideration to the two ACE outcomes related to ethics and human diversity. This review resulted in a proposal to significantly modify two ACE outcomes, however, this proposal failed to achieve the unanimous approval of all eight undergraduate colleges required by the ACE governing structure.

Transfer and Equivalencies Review

The University of Nebraska maintains authority over transcribed credit, transfer credit, prerequisites, course rigor, and student learning expectations. Transfer credit policies are published in catalogs and online, faculty establish equivalencies for selected exams, and specialists apply faculty-developed rubrics to standardize evaluation of transfer courses. Faculty determine course prerequisites, which are enforced through student portals (e.g., MyRED), and curriculum committees review course proposals for learning outcomes, rigor, prerequisites, and degree applicability.

Since 2020, improving transfer credit processes has been prioritized to ensure more seamless transfer and to support student transition through alignment of curricular programs with Nebraska community colleges. Enhancements from these curricular reviews include:

- Implemented reverse transfer process for students from Nebraska community or tribal colleges to receive an associate degree once they fulfill their remaining requirements

from UNL courses.

- Changed process for students admitted with an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or bachelor's degree to award fulfillment of UNL's lower-division ACE requirements.
- Expanded military credit awarding to 15 total credit hours for all undergraduate majors.
- Changed rule to allow all but six transfer credit hours to count toward a UNL minor.

In AY 25-26, the "Building Futures" initiative launched, a collaboration between UNL and Southeast Community College (the largest provider of transfer students to the Lincoln campus) with two retreats and four work groups focused on shared academic advising and professional development, alignment of curricular pathways and dual credit opportunities, enhanced marketing and communications, and the development of data sharing agreements. An institutional agreement to enhance facilitation of transfer is scheduled to be signed at a public event on October 30, 2026.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC enhance their integration as the University of Nebraska, there is no anticipated change in program review processes. At the highest level (CCPE and BOR), both campuses follow the same directives regarding program review. As noted in 3.E, many of the Medical Center's programs are routinely reviewed by specialized accreditors, and like the Lincoln campus, the Medical Center allows these to substitute for the campus process when appropriate. Graduate programs that do not have an accreditor undergo an external program review every five to seven years. Both campuses' commitment to rigorous and systematic program review and quality improvement serves as a strong foundation for exploring potential collaborations to leverage existing program expertise and potentially build future cross-campus programs with equally rigorous review processes.

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- Transfer Initiatives-UGED-2026
- Transfer Partnership Retreat-UGED-2026
- Program Review-UNMC-2026
- History Curriculum Modifications-CAS-2026
- Biochemistry Accelerated Program-IANR-2026
- Biological Systems Engineering-IANR-2026
- Plant Biology Steering Committee-IANR-2026
- Specialized Accreditors-UNMC-2026

3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Argument

The University of Nebraska has established ambitious goals for retention, persistence, completion, professional placement, and post-graduate achievement and has made significant investments in resources and capacity to improve educational outcomes and reduce barriers to student success.

Retention, Persistence, Completion

UNL publicly articulated its student success goals in the *N2025* strategic plan and, more recently, in the *Our Bold Path Forward* campus strategic plan. These goals include increasing overall retention and degree completion rates, with particular attention to reducing gaps for Pell eligible students in graduation rates and are intended to be in alignment with the AAU metrics.

Online dashboards enable leaders to monitor trends by year, college, demographic group, and student cohort. Multi-year retention, persistence, completion, student engagement, advising appointments, DFW outcomes and post-graduate outcomes are tracked to understand student progress and make outcome data accessible to campus and unit leaders for awareness and decision-making.

The Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Education regularly update campus leadership, faculty, staff and shared governance partners such as the Faculty Senate about undergraduate performance. In Spring 2026, a Student Success Showcase featured updates on 20 initiatives designed to reduce institutional barriers to support retention and degree completion.

One means of monitoring undergraduates' overall educational experience is by using a graduating senior survey. All undergraduates complete an anonymous survey in the semester that they file for graduation in which they rate how their education prepared them in practical and intellectual skills, research and information resource methods, writing, disciplinary theories and methods, understanding other people and societal issues, etc. Students also rate overall quality of course instruction, academic advising, support resources, and educational experience. Of the spring 2026 graduates, 90.6% rated their overall educational experience as excellent (45.4%) or good (45.2%).

Use of Data for Action

Several councils comprised of faculty, staff, and college leaders meet regularly to review data and make recommendations to improve undergraduates' academic performance and overall experiences. For instance, in AY 25-26, the Academic Solutions Council

recommended changes to transfer course policy, academic dismissal appeal deadlines, and course component definitions. In AY 24-25, the Retention Leaders Council made recommendations for how campus units could collaborate to improve data collection and support transfer student experiences.

In addition to academic programs' use of data, Student Life departments review reports that view outcomes related to student participation in and engagement with Student Life offices. Recognizing the continued potential of this area, additional analysis will assess the impact of student leadership and employment opportunities across Student Life to further improve student outcomes.

Since 2020, institutional data shows improvements in first-year retention, four-year and six-year graduation rates, grade point averages, earned credit hours, and academic warning rates.

- Over the past decade, four-year graduation rates have increased by 13.6%, from the 2012 cohort of 38.3% to the 2021 cohort of 51.9%. The five-year graduation rate for the 2011-2020 cohorts increased from 58.1% to 61.4% and the six-year rate for cohorts 2010-2019 increased from 60.3% to 67.0% respectively. The six-year rate of 67% is a historical high.
- First-year retention for the Fall 2023 and 2024 cohorts were 86.0% and 85.7% respectively, and fall to spring retention for the Fall 2024 cohort was 95.0%.
- 84.5% of the 2025 first-time freshmen cohort earned at least 15 credits by term 2, reflecting being "on track" for a four-year graduation.
- In the last decade, undergraduates attempted and earned credits have increased. In Fall 2016, the average attempted hours were 13.834 and average earned hours were 12.514. In Fall 2025, the average attempted was 14.102 and the average earned was 13.065.
- In Fall 2025, course withdrawals were 2.80%, their lowest fall term level since tracking began in 2016.

UNL has prioritized closing gaps in retention and graduation rates for students from first-generation and Pell-eligible low-income populations. In the past decade, gains have been modest, with first-generation four-year graduation rates increasing by 9% and six-year rates by 3.5%. In 2025, first-year retention rates for first-generation students were 11% below their continuing generation peers and the overall gaps for first generation and Pell-eligible students in graduation rates, while slightly narrower than a decade ago, remains about 15%. Continued efforts to address these gaps include the First-Generation Nebraska initiative, custom chatbot campaigns, and proactive and coordinated outreach (see 3.D for additional examples).

Successes in increasing retention and graduation rates are due, in part, to investments in analytics and data-informed collaborations across campus units that enable academic leaders and individual faculty to understand trends in their students' performance:

- Course Insights dashboards, created in 2023, enable instructors to view success outcomes for courses down to the assignment level and disaggregate by student

populations (first-gen, resident, transfer, etc.). Campus symposia showcased how instructors use these tools to improve their courses for student success.

- DFW Tableau dashboards are available for courses in every college over a five-year period. These include student demographics, high school preparation and other parameters to facilitate departmental focus on enhancing academic success.
- Student Performance and Click Engagement dashboards from Canvas data enable the Academic Navigators to identify students falling below their peers across their courses.
- Advising Inventory results are used to identify new students with concerns in areas of housing, food security, financial wellbeing, and academic preparation.
- Housing, Student Advocacy and Support, and the Academic Navigators meet each semester to review students with housing contracts who are unenrolled and triage support.

College leaders can monitor attrition, transfers, completion, graduation, time to completion, and dismissals via Tableau dashboards and can request custom reports to support their efforts. For instance, the College of Education and Human Sciences requested a custom report to document course outcomes to map onto 14 dimensions used by one of its accrediting bodies.

To measure success beyond graduation, Career Services surveys, graduate exit surveys, graduating senior surveys, college-level placement data, licensure and certification results, teacher employment tracking, national fellowship outcomes, and other indicators are monitored. For instance, the First Destination Survey provides data on graduates who have secured employment, are pursuing graduate or professional programs, have joined the military, are volunteering, or are still seeking employment and this data is shared publicly on the University Career Services website.

Students continue to achieve strong outcomes in admission to professional schools across both pre-law and pre-health pathways. From 2020–2025, 81.9% of pre-law applicants were admitted to at least one law school, with an average annual acceptance rate more than 13 percentage points above the national average. During the same period, pre-health students consistently met or exceeded national acceptance rates across multiple health professions, including pharmacy (88–97% acceptance), physical therapy (76–88%), dentistry (54–74%), and optometry (84–100% in five of the six years). Even in highly selective allopathic medical school admissions, UNL applicants remained competitive, with acceptance rates comparable to national averages, demonstrating strong preparation across a broad range of professional pathways.

Reflective of its national reputation for innovative contributions and ongoing commitment to improving student success, the campus is frequently selected to contribute to higher education initiatives and collaborations with other U.S. institutions:

- UNL was a founding member of Unizin, a multi-institution consortium focused on learner success, access, and affordability via digital teaching and learning ecosystems. Unizin data is used to power reports and participates in cross-institutional teaching and learning groups.
- From AY 2018-2023 the campus participated in the APLU Powered by Publics Big Ten

cluster to examine equity in course performance to increase degree completion and worked with peers to analyze DFW rates across 25 high enrollment courses and provided a national webinar on campus efforts to use data to eliminate equity gaps.

- From 2019 to 2025, the campus participated in the HHMI3 Inclusive Excellence 3 Grant Initiative (\$8.5 million) designed to increase institutional capacity to support undergraduates from under-represented backgrounds in STEM courses/majors.
- In 2025 UNL was named one of 32 “Network Champions” by FirstGen Forward for leadership in advancing first-generation student success and for serving as a national model for other universities.
- In 2026, faculty teams from Math, Physics, and Biology are engaging with 10 other institutions to pilot revised assessments in STEM courses and evaluate their efficacy in increasing student success, being chosen for SEISMIC, a multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary STEM higher education collaboration focused on access and opportunity.
- In 2026, the campus was one of 25 institutions selected for the APLU “Analyzing Student Success in Introductory Courses” initiative focused on mathematics courses and to contribute a case study based on prior reforms in introductory math courses that have increased students’ pass rates.

Change of Structure

As the colleges from UNL and UNMC are strengthened as the University of Nebraska, there will be opportunities for collaboration across the two on student success outcomes, particularly for students who wish to pursue a path in the health sciences. The Medical Center’s 4-year completion rate among all programs is 85% and overall completion rate is 91%. The completion rate for undergraduate programs is 93%. One commonly cited advantage of a single accredited institution is that students can begin their academic journey at the Lincoln campus and complete some undergraduate programs, such as nursing, more seamlessly at one of the Medical Center locations. Previously, Lincoln students with pre-nursing interests (about 250-300 annually) counted as non-completers for UNL after they completed their coursework and were admitted into the Medical Center’s nursing program. These students also would not qualify as first-time freshmen at UNMC. With the combined institutions and combined reporting, the graduation rate for the University of Nebraska will increase, both by incorporating the higher completion rate of the Medical Center, and by being able to count students who complete their degrees at the Medical Center. This change aligns with the University’s *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* strategic indicators to increase first-year retention and six-year graduation rates and close the Pell grant recipient graduation rate gap. There may also be opportunities to leverage best practices or extend the work originating from the Lincoln campus with first-generation and Pell-eligible students and incorporate the more robust analytic tools at the Medical Center campus.

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Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

Argument

The University of Nebraska's educational programs are mission-aligned, rigorous, appropriate to the credentials awarded, and supported by clearly articulated learning outcomes. This is evidenced by published undergraduate and graduate program learning outcomes, course numbering that differentiates undergraduate, professional, and graduate expectations, and syllabus policies that require consistent communication of course expectations and ACE outcomes. Faculty governance structures oversee the development and revision of courses, certificates, minors, degree programs, and the Achievement-Centered Education general education program. The institution maintains educational quality across locations and delivery methods.

The University of Nebraska provides substantial opportunities for students to engage in intellectual inquiry, creative work, research, experiential learning, and applied problem solving. The ACE program requires all undergraduates to complete 30 credit hours across 10 student learning outcomes, including communication, inquiry and analysis, quantitative reasoning, ethics, civic responsibility, and global and diverse perspectives. The experiential learning graduation requirement further supports student engagement in applied learning, and many specific examples demonstrating that students practice inquiry and creative work across disciplines provide evidence. The University of Nebraska further prepares students for changing environments through curriculum revision, industry engagement, undergraduate research, and applied learning.

The University of Nebraska has sufficient, qualified faculty and staff to support effective, high-quality programs and student services. Faculty evaluation occurs through student course evaluations, annual review, tenure and promotion processes, post-tenure review, and related review processes for non-tenure line faculty and graduate teaching assistants. The institution provides appropriate professional development and instructional support for faculty and graduate instructors. Evidence includes the Center for Transformative Teaching, new faculty orientation, Teaching@UNL Canvas resources, graduate teaching assistant orientation, international teaching assistant preparation, Preparing Future Faculty, and the Faculty-Led Inquiry and Research into Scholarly Teaching program, which has engaged more than 500 faculty across more than 50 departments.

The institution ensures that student support staff are qualified, trained, and supported. Examples include Organizational Development and Training, the Bridge training library, advisor training through the New Advisor Series and Shadowing Program, an academic advising career ladder, PASS Forums for faculty and staff, motivational interviewing workshops for student success staff, and an external program review of University Career

Services that informed changes in career support responsibilities across colleges and the central office.

The University of Nebraska provides student support services and teaching resources appropriate to its student populations. The Husker Student POWER framework, the HLC Quality Initiative, Academic Navigators, Student Success Hub, Cornelius chatbot, Stellic Explore degree planning, Student Advocacy and Support, Counseling and Psychological Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, Husker Hub, TRIO, International Student Support Services, Career Services, and the Digital Learning Commons provide academic, financial, social, emotional, career, and technology support. Usage data shows that students use these services at meaningful levels, with thousands of interactions for many of the services. The institution provides significant teaching and learning infrastructure. Since 2021, there are many new or renovated facilities that provide classrooms, laboratories, collaborative spaces, maker spaces, performance spaces, student services, and technology-rich environments that support student learning and faculty teaching.

The University of Nebraska demonstrates use of assessment of student learning to improve educational programs. Undergraduate programs publish learning outcomes and submit biennial assessment reports identifying outcomes, methods, results, and actions taken. Examples of assessment-informed improvements include revised communication instruction in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication; instructional and staffing changes in Economics; capstone portfolio discussions in English; and program coherence and early intervention structures in elementary education. Graduate assessment processes are appropriate to degree level and discipline. Graduate committees use assessment results to modify course sequencing, culminating project expectations, and curriculum requirements.

Systematic program review and curriculum improvement take place on a continuous cycle. Academic programs undergo review typically every seven years, consistent with policy. Reviews include self-studies, external peer review, final reports, and leadership responses. Specialized accreditation reviews cover 56 Lincoln-based programs and 39 Medical Center-based programs and may substitute for local academic program reviews when appropriate. Specific examples demonstrate that program review leads to improvement.

The University of Nebraska maintains authority over transfer credit, prerequisites, course rigor, and learning expectations. Transfer credit policies are published, faculty establish equivalencies, specialists apply faculty-developed rubrics, and curriculum committees review proposals for outcomes, rigor, prerequisites, and degree applicability.

The institution provides evidence of continuous improvement in student success outcomes. The *N2025* strategic plan and *Our Bold Path Forward* identify goals for retention, completion, and reducing equity gaps. Dashboards allow leaders to monitor retention, persistence, completion, DFW outcomes, advising appointments, engagement, and post-graduate outcomes. Student outcome data demonstrates progress in four-year graduation rates, six-year graduation rates, first-year retention, and Fall-to-Spring retention. In Fall 2025, course withdrawals reached their lowest fall level since tracking began in 2016.

The institution also identifies areas requiring continued attention, particularly equity gaps for first-generation and Pell-eligible students. The institution is addressing these gaps through First-Generation Nebraska, chatbot campaigns, proactive outreach, Course Insights

dashboards, Canvas engagement dashboards, advising inventories, and coordinated support among Housing, Student Advocacy and Support, and Academic Navigators.

The change of structure combining UNL and UNMC under the University of Nebraska will continue to demonstrate compliance with Criterion 3 through continued academic quality and expanded collaboration. Both campuses will continue their current academic programming, assessment, program review, faculty and staff support, and student services while identifying opportunities for cross-campus curriculum, research, advising, professional development, technology integration, and student pathways. Examples toward this integration include discussions related to College of Nursing transitions, dual degree pathways, nutrition program accreditation, a proposed joint curriculum committee, and a shared Canvas infrastructure.

The University of Nebraska educational programs are mission-aligned, rigorous, and faculty-directed; students engage in inquiry, creative work, experiential learning, and research; faculty and staff are sufficient and appropriately supported; student services and teaching infrastructure are substantial; assessment and program review are used for improvement; and student success outcomes demonstrate progress while identifying areas for continued institutional attention.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

4.A Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

Argument

The University of Nebraska has administrative structures that include shared governance and collaborative processes for decision making, engaging with constituents as appropriate. The use of data for decision making is extensive, facilitated by both local and System-level supports.

Effective Administrative Structures

The Lincoln and Medical Center campuses, as administrative units, operate within the governance framework of the University of Nebraska System, under the authority of the elected Board of Regents (BOR) and in accordance with state statutes, Board Bylaws, and Policies. The Chief Executive Officer of both campuses/administrative units is the President of the University of Nebraska, with a campus-specific Chancellor as the Chief Administrative Officer. This framework provides clear lines of authority while also supporting campus-level leadership, faculty governance, student participation, and data-informed decision-making. Structures such as the University of Nebraska Consortium of Libraries facilitate the sharing of collections, expertise, and programs. Together, the University of Nebraska's campuses demonstrate administrative structures that are sufficient to support mission fulfillment, accountability, institutional integrity, and continuous improvement.

Shared Governance

Shared governance is embedded in institutional decision-making. The Board of Regents establishes broad policy, strategic direction, budget authority, and accountability expectations. Leaders provide regular updates to the Board through public meetings and committee structures focused on executive matters, academic affairs, audit, risk and compliance, and business and finance. The University of Nebraska System also engages in campus governance through system-level committees, including the President's Council, Council of Academic Officers, Council of Senior Research Officers, Chief Business Officers, Chief Communications Officers, and many other structures. Lincoln campus leadership is

organized through the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor, vice chancellors, deans, directors, and executive leadership team. Faculty participate in governance through Faculty Senate, college and departmental governance structures, the Academic Planning Committee, university-wide curriculum committees, and academic review processes. Academic requirements and standards begin at the departmental level and proceed through college, campus, and system governance structures. A system-wide Executive Graduate Council integrates the wisdom of the Graduate Studies Deans and elected graduate faculty under the leadership of the Executive Vice President and Provost/Dean of the Graduate College. On the Lincoln campus, the Academic Planning Committee provides faculty, staff, student, and administrative review of academic program proposals, facilities plans, budget allocations and reductions, and other major institutional matters.

Students participate in governance through the Association of Students at the University of Nebraska (ASUN), including the student body president's role as a non-voting member of the Board of Regents. The Student Body President advocates on behalf of students in that setting. As one example of ASUN participation in governance, the Committee for Fee Allocations works with auxiliaries on campus who are funded through student fees to develop and approve requests. The requests are then voted on by ASUN's Senate and forwarded on to either the Chancellor or the CEO/President for final approval.

The UNL Staff Senate was established in 2021. The effort began with an exploratory committee in response to the *N2025* strategic plan's aim of creating a university-sponsored staff council to formalize pathways for providing input to university leadership on relevant issues. The Staff Senate is organized by representative districts, holds public meetings with published minutes, and is governed by Staff Senate bylaws. A recent annual report highlights its impact and activities.

Engaging with Constituents

The Lincoln campus engages, as appropriate, with internal and external constituents on important matters related to resources and sustainability, as demonstrated in the recent budget reduction process. The university's executive leadership team engages with numerous internal and external stakeholders to develop a long-term strategy that protects the core mission while positioning the campus for sustainable success. This planning process includes extensive consultation with college leadership teams, Faculty and Staff Senate Executive Committees, ASUN Student Government, Graduate Student Assembly, the Academic Planning Committee, and alumni and community stakeholders. Interactions with constituents may also include public hearings and comment periods.

Even in times of difficult budgetary decision-making, regular, comprehensive communications are provided, including, but not limited to, email correspondence and in-person meetings with college leadership, shared governance partners, transition coordinators, and affected faculty, staff, and students. Templates for Dean's Offices and Admissions were used to ensure uniform and accurate communication with affected faculty, staff, and students. Regular updates and resources are provided on a dedicated budget process website.

Data-informed Decision Making

Administrative decisions are informed by institutional data. A comprehensive, data-informed

framework has been developed to support academic strategy, goal setting, and performance evaluation across instructional and research missions. The Lincoln campus and the University of Nebraska System have invested in Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, enterprise reporting tools, Tableau dashboards, data warehouses, salary studies, enrollment analytics, and student success metrics. These data support decisions related to enrollment management, program and course offerings, staffing and compensation, housing, operational efficiency, and more. Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics collaboratively and actively engages with partners across the campus to co-design and develop reporting solutions, decision-support tools, and advanced analytics, while attending to the business processes that generate source data and their continuous improvement.

One of the most visible examples of data-informed decision-making occurred through recent budget reduction exercises that included use of Program Indicators. The Lincoln Chancellor asked leadership to address future planning strategically, with the intent to establish a foundation for future decision-making. Stakeholders, including shared governance partners such as the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Academic Planning Committee, indicated support for a tool for strategic insight and evidence-based decision-making. Thus, the Program Indicators initiative was introduced, originating with the Chancellor's Executive Leadership Team. This framework integrated standardized program indicators with contextual qualitative insights to ensure that decision-making is aligned with institutional priorities.

A series of reports using data extracted from existing institutional sources was developed and results were distributed for leadership review and analysis. As the initiative matured, efforts shifted toward increasing automation, secure distribution, interactivity, and data literacy. Reporting was migrated to Tableau, providing a more sustainable and scalable solution for data visualization and stakeholder access. Stakeholders have highlighted that the initiative's long-term success depends on transparent governance, clear methodological documentation, appropriate use of comparative metrics, and the incorporation of institutional context that reflects the missions and structures across the university.

The data from the Program Indicators, along with data regarding program strengths, state needs, and workforce alignment, were used in the 2025-26 process to assist in making recommendations for academic program reorganizations and eliminations. Such decisions are not made without controversy; those with concerns have used procedures as outlined in various policies, direct correspondence with the elected Regents, and testimony at public BOR meetings. The APC conducted 12 public hearings about the Chancellor's budget reduction plan and received 2,938 unique public comments. The initial plan was modified through the shared governance processes. The Board of Regents' meeting to consider and vote on the revised plan included over 100 unique public comments.

Change of Structure

As the colleges of UNL and UNMC continue their integration as the University of Nebraska, there is no anticipated short-term change in administrative structures. Both campuses are currently, and will continue to be, governed by the same board; the President is already CEO of all campuses. The newly designated Main Campus houses many of the shared administrative oversight structures, including the President, Provost, Dean of the Graduate College, Business and Finance, External Relations, General Counsel, and Internal Audit. The Enterprise Data Solutions team reports to the Provost and works with each campus to

assist with providing data for decision-making. The External Relations team engages with internal and external constituencies to communicate the importance of education, research, and outreach to government officials, key stakeholders, and all Nebraskans. While the President is the CEO of the University of Nebraska, each campus is led by a Chancellor/Chief Administrative Officer, who reports to the President. Each Unit has a further delineated organizational structure, in which the Chancellor delegates the operation of major areas (such as Academic Affairs, Research, External Relations, etc.) to Vice Chancellors, whose appointments are approved by the President and the Board of Regents. The Medical Center campus faculty and students also participate in campus governance through elected governance bodies, college-level committees, class officers, curriculum committees, and required student representation in certain disciplinary processes. In addition, Medical Center campus leaders use forums, town halls, listening sessions, and college-level meetings to engage faculty, staff, and students in regular updates and emerging issues.

Faculty Senate Presidents regularly participate in Board of Regents' meetings and meet with the President and Provost; Student Senate Presidents serve as non-voting members of the Board of Regents. The Graduate College, across all administrative units, has an Executive Graduate Council, an elected faculty governance component.

Through these administrative structures, both campuses maintain systems of shared governance, transparent leadership, data-informed planning and decision making, and constituent engagement that support institutional effectiveness and accountability.

Sources

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4.B Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

Argument

The University of Nebraska maintains financial, human, technological, physical, and informational resources sufficient to support its mission including educational offerings, research activities, public service responsibilities, and long-term institutional sustainability. The institution operates within a diversified University of Nebraska funding model that includes state appropriations, tuition and fees, grants and contracts, auxiliary revenues, gifts, endowments, and other sources of support. Resource allocation processes are designed to protect educational quality, advance institutional missions, and sustain core operations even during periods of financial constraint.

Financial Resources and Management

The institution's resource base supports a broad public, research-intensive, land-grant mission; it is state-assisted and relies on a diversified funding model. Its expenditures are aligned to teaching, research, service, outreach, and student success priorities. Biennial budgeting aligns with the state budgeting process; budgets are monitored through SAP, internal and external audits, Board review, and regular financial reporting to ensure responsible stewardship. When budget reductions are necessary, a participatory process is used to protect mission-centered activities and strategic priorities. Budget reduction processes have been enacted on the Lincoln campus in FY2017-18 and each year, FY2019-20 through FY2025-26, to address structural deficits; cash rescissions have been utilized in FY2016-17, FY2017-18, and FY2023-24. Hiring freezes and other temporary spending restrictions, such as travel, have also been put in place during this period. In 2019 and 2025, voluntary separation incentive programs (VSIPs) offered to faculty allowed the institution to meet budgetary shortfalls and reinvest resources in faculty positions in top-priority academic areas. These differing financial management strategies strive to carefully balance short-term needs with long-term commitments and priorities. They reflect comprehensive and conservative strategies aimed at meeting institutional requirements to maintain a balanced budget, even during periods of rapid change in the financial landscape of higher education.

Sustainability

The institution engages in forward-looking efforts to ensure its ongoing sustainability and to advance its highest priorities. As described in the 2021 Assurance Argument, the Lincoln campus initiated a comprehensive study to redesign the campus' budget and planning process to develop and implement an incentive-based resource allocation model. This multi-year budget and planning initiative represented an effort to shift from a historic, centrally driven, incremental funding model to an incentive-based budget model focused on

the academic units generating revenues and costs.

At the conclusion of the first phase of the effort, campus leaders determined that the budget model generated through this process did not provide sufficient transparency in how state appropriated funds were allocated and lacked the incentives necessary to drive entrepreneurship and operational efficiency. With changes among the executive leadership on the Lincoln campus, alongside significant state-aided funding challenges, campus leaders shifted to a process to meet the need for a transparent, comprehensive, and data-informed approach to budget planning versus designing a new budget model. These efforts are reflected in an Integrated Academic Planning initiative, and in the program indicators work detailed in 4.A.

Supporting the Future

On November 19, 2022, the University of Nebraska System announced the public launch of Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for Our University's Future. The campaign is a historic effort to encourage at least 150,000 benefactors to give a total of \$3 billion to support NU students, faculty, academic programs, and research to address the needs of the state. The three campaign priorities are:

- Student access and success (\$1.6 billion) – includes scholarships, support for first-generation students, community college transfer students and for areas of critical need, retention programs, and funds for modernizing,
- Enhancing faculty academic and clinical excellence (\$750 million) – includes endowed chairs and professorships, faculty programs, innovations for commercialization and new business startups,
- Transformational research and innovation (\$650 million) – includes support for research and innovation in strategic priority areas: health issues where Nebraskans have higher incident rates than the national average, agriculture, business, entrepreneurship, food and water security, STEM, and early childhood education.

The Lincoln campus' \$1.5 billion campaign goal was surpassed in April 2026. As of June 30, 2026, the amount raised for UNL is \$1.53 billion from 109,127 distinct donors.

Other examples of realigning and balancing resources include:

- In 2018, service delivery centers were initially created to improve efficiency of business processes and to generate resources to reinvest in other priorities. A steering committee partnered with a consulting firm to reengineer how accounting, payroll, research administration and human resource functions were supported on the Lincoln campus. As of 2021, the campus had fully implemented a business center model. Since then, efforts have focused on improving training and documentation, and on improving systems to achieve streamlined, uniform workflows, thereby generating additional resources for reinvestment. Governance has been an important aspect of the initiative, ensuring that stakeholder engagement informs priorities and future development.
- In 2023, UNL piloted outsourcing sponsorship for legal permanent residency processing for its faculty to a local law firm due to the increasing complexity of the immigration landscape. This included a negotiated reduced rate per case and redirecting internal staff resources to other faculty and student support services in

Global Affairs. The pilot was institutionalized, effective January 2026. While the overall cost per case is higher, the institution is better equipped to support faculty in the long term by reallocating central resources, with colleges covering their own costs as needed.

Human and Physical Resources

Human resources are sufficient to support institutional mission and operations. The University employs faculty, staff, extension educators, managers, professionals, student support personnel, and operational staff across its campuses and statewide locations. Investments in new faculty hires reflect the university's strategic intent to ensure an appropriate number of faculty members with a scope of expertise to lead existing and emerging academic programs, as well as to position the institution towards its goal of rejoining the AAU.

Physical infrastructure is extensive and mission specific. The physical footprint of the University of Nebraska includes both the large campus spaces in Lincoln and at the Medical Center, as well as other academic, research, agriculture, and extension spaces throughout the state. The Medical Center has had a footprint on the Lincoln campus for decades, including nursing and dentistry buildings. Both UNL and UNMC have presence at the University of Nebraska at Omaha with the College of Engineering and Munroe Meyer Institute locations on its Scott Campus. The University of Nebraska also maintains residence halls, athletics facilities, academic buildings, laboratories, libraries, museums, and outreach facilities, and reaches statewide through research, education, clinical, and extension centers.

Major recent or ongoing investments include academic buildings and classrooms, libraries, clinics, engineering facilities, research laboratories, health and student support facilities, and capital renewal projects supported through state bonding and philanthropic support. Enacted in 2021, the Nebraska State Legislature's LB384 extended the University of Nebraska Facilities Program through FY2061-62 and provides state funding that is matched dollar-for-dollar by the University to address deferred maintenance, renovation, renewal, and replacement needs across the five-campus system.

A major effort that began in 2015 to improve the space supporting academic programs in the Glenn Korff School of Music opened in 2026 through generous state and philanthropic support. An in-depth, comprehensive planning study was conducted in 2016 and provided leadership with various options for meeting the programmatic needs from renovation to replacement. In 2022, the university successfully secured \$75 million in state funding to support 96% of a full building replacement. The college formalized an advisory council with industry and community leaders, faculty, staff, and students to inform the planning and design of the new Westbrook building. Special efforts were made for discipline-specific needs such as sound isolation as well as spaces to better to support interdisciplinarity in the performing arts.

Beyond state funding, major facility projects have also been realized through donor-support, self-funded mechanisms, and public-private partnerships. The Global Education Center reflects the university's goals to expand experiential learning and global engagement and was fully funded by donor support. Opening in 2024, the center provides 20,000 square feet of renovated space in the heart of the Lincoln campus, consolidating the offices supporting

education abroad, international student and scholar services, and global partnerships and initiatives.

The Scarlet Hotel at Nebraska Innovation Campus, a public-private partnership, provides a hands-on learning lab, complete with a 3,000-square-foot commercial teaching kitchen for the Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism program. The classroom and offices were completed as an initial phase of construction, with funding through a grant from the Economic Development Administration and donor funds.

A \$160+ million investment in engineering facilities was completed in partnership with the state legislature and industry donors. Phase II - Kiewit Hall, was specifically designed to enable the institution to support enrollment growth and meet the workforce needs of the state and region. Kiewit Hall opened in 2024 and provides a state-of-the-art engineering building that enhances research and instruction through spaces like “the Garage,” a large, flexible, active-learning and teaching laboratory and workshop facility.

Recent developments in physical infrastructure also include several major initiatives through Student Life. Student Life has worked diligently in facilities management to provide proactive maintenance and think innovatively when facing large-scale projects. In the Spring of 2025, Campus Recreation, a student fee funded auxiliary opened a renovated weight room, locker rooms, and pool access. The three projects came together as part of a maintenance and updating project to repurpose space to reflect student needs, provide improved ADA accessibility to the pool, and modernize locker rooms to provide enhanced privacy and reflect current use. Dining Services at UNL has also innovated to support the student experience, while simultaneously working to keep costs down. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, two dining centers were converted to mobile-ordering to allow students increased flexibility. Students have responded exponentially and now over 60% of the 2,042,965 meals served in dining halls are through mobile ordering. In addition to student benefits, the cost per meal of serving through mobile ordering is \$1.85 per meal less than traditional dining halls, allowing for Dining Services to keep cost increases as low as possible for students.

The Selleck Student Housing Redevelopment will bring approximately 1,700 beds for students to the center of campus while eliminating \$85.2 million in deferred maintenance. This project is being entirely funded without state dollars or student fees.

Technology resources also support sustainability and educational quality. NU's Information Technology Services organization provides enterprise technology, academic technologies, classroom support, Canvas, Zoom, VidGrid, Microsoft and Adobe access, student laptop checkout, network infrastructure, cybersecurity, Duo multi-factor authentication, and disaster recovery. Participation in Unizin and the STAR initiative has reduced textbook costs and supported access to learning resources.

Change of Structure

Both campuses maintain financial monitoring that supports responsible stewardship and operates under the same overall structure. The Lincoln and the Medical Center campuses use SAP, internal audit, annual external audits, Board financial review, procurement systems, budget transfer controls, and financial monitoring by Business and Finance. These processes ensure that fiscal allocations support institutional missions, educational quality, and long-term sustainability.

As the Lincoln and Medical Center's colleges enhance their integration and collaborations, there are no anticipated short-term changes in financial structures. Budget processes are governed by Board of Regents' expectations, Nebraska constitutional provisions, and campus guidance. Campuses are empowered to make budget decisions (consistent with the BOR's budget) aligned with their mission and priorities. The Budget Offices lead annual allocation processes, provide tools and guidance to colleges and units, and conduct financial reviews with major units. The University of Nebraska System Comprehensive Annual Financial Report provides financial details.

Both campuses' foundation activities are within the NU Foundation, and both are part of the ongoing Only in Nebraska campaign. The Medical Center's goal is \$1 billion, and it has commitments of over \$975 million from 30,849 distinct donors as of July 31, 2026. The NU System has broken its annual philanthropic record for the past two consecutive years. The President's Council prioritizes all major philanthropic projects across the University of Nebraska System, including those on the Medical Center and Lincoln campuses. As with the Lincoln campus, the Medical Center campus has also made new investments in student services and housing, and completed renovations of facilities to better serve employees' and students' needs and align with future goals. To provide a more predictable budgeting process, the President's office has proposed a formulaic method for budget requests and tuition increases, based on the Consumer Price Index.

Sources

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- Scarlet Hotel-CEHS-2026
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- Global Education Center-Global Affairs-2026
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- Biennial Budgeting-NU Admin-2026
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4.C Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

Argument

The University of Nebraska engages in systematic and integrated planning that links mission, strategic priorities, budgeting, assessment, institutional data, capital planning, operational improvement, and student outcomes. Planning processes are informed by University of Nebraska System priorities, state-level higher education planning, campus-specific strategic plans, constituent engagement, institutional capacity, external trends, and evidence of effectiveness. The University of Nebraska conducts an annual enterprise-wide risk assessment, using an established risk appetite and heat-map methodology to identify, evaluate, and prioritize significant institutional risks. The University of Nebraska maintains an active facility planning framework through the Office of Facilities, Planning & Capital Programs. Historically, the University has used campus-specific master plans and Facilities Development Plans to guide long-term physical development, capital investment, space utilization, and renewal priorities. Efforts are underway to develop system-wide plans to help prioritize projects between campuses.

Institutional Planning

Planning is guided by comprehensive strategic planning efforts and is informed by a variety of data sources, including student success metrics, assessment, program review findings, enrollment data, academic analytics, financial data, facilities information, and budgets. Tableau dashboards and other analytics tools support decisions related to retention, graduation, equity gaps, course demand, advising, and resource allocation. Additionally, internal and external constituent perspectives are considered through formal planning committees, academic governance, student government, external advisory boards, college boards, community relations structures, sustainability planning groups, campus planning committees, and public engagement through Board processes.

Launched in February 2020 the N2025 strategic plan, which grew out of the N150 Commission's broad engagement process, established aims, strategies, expectations, and measurable targets for student success, research, experiential learning, inclusive excellence, global engagement, community partnerships, and institutional innovation. The N2025 guided many campus efforts and initiatives during this period.

On completion of N2025, in Fall 2025, leaders launched a strategic planning process: Our Bold Path Forward, the Lincoln campus' three-year strategic framework, directly aligned with the pillars and the strategic performance indicators outlined in the University's The Odyssey to Extraordinary strategic plan. By Spring 2026, the strategic framework was informed by 85 roundtable discussions, which yielded 3,104 web-form submissions and engaged more than 3,719 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Those efforts generated

more than 6,823 interactions that directly informed revisions to the framework. A summer leadership retreat further refined the draft strategic framework; the final framework was shared with the campus community in Fall 2026. Colleges and divisions align annual planning efforts, targets, and strategic priorities with campus and system-levels plans.

Enrollment management is grounded in a sound understanding of current capacity and external conditions including enrollment trends, state appropriations, tuition revenue, high school graduation projections, demographic changes, instructional capacity, facilities utilization, technology needs, deferred maintenance, sustainability goals, and research infrastructure as demonstrated in the enrollment management plans. Based on the analysis of the data available and aligned with strategic institution goals, strategies are developed to respond to changing demographics, international enrollment trends, nonresident recruitment, online learning demand, workforce development needs, and student preferences.

All of the aforementioned items and processes inform resource allocation, budget development, academic planning, capital investments, and student success initiatives. Administrator cumulative reviews include an evaluation of strategic planning and outcomes and consider input from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders.

Planning for Quality Improvement

Consistent with the University of Nebraska's strategic goal of rejoining the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Office of Research and Innovation and the University of Nebraska Enterprise Data Solutions team conducted a comprehensive analysis to assess the institution's standing relative to current AAU member institutions. Using Phase I, Phase II, and Informational Indicators outlined in the AAU membership policy, the analysis identified areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, and strategic priorities necessary to enhance the university's competitiveness for future membership consideration. Over the past three years, presentations have been provided to the Executive Vice Chancellor Leadership Council, including deans and senior administrators, summarizing Nebraska's performance relative to AAU institutions, and quantifying the level of research productivity required to reach the 10th percentile among AAU members across the Phase I indicators. Many of these measures have been built into *Our Bold Path Forward, The Odyssey to Extraordinary* strategic framework and the system-wide metrics.

More recently, the analysis was expanded to evaluate the potential impact of a strategic faculty hiring initiative on AAU membership goals. This work included detailed examination of existing faculty productivity, reporting by both rank and Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) discipline to identify areas where targeted investments in faculty recruitment and retention could most effectively strengthen key AAU Phase I metrics. These analyses will continue to inform institutional planning and resource allocation decisions.

In 2021, a collaborative strategic planning effort to develop a comprehensive research data strategy was initiated by the Executive Vice Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, and the Dean of Libraries. They charged a task force of faculty, staff, and students with researching, planning, and authoring a comprehensive research data strategy. The comprehensive research data strategy was to be a holistic, university-wide approach to anticipating, managing, and supporting the increasingly complex set of challenges that contemporary researchers face as they create, use, and maintain research data. The

purpose of the comprehensive strategy was to enable and sustain groundbreaking research, scholarship, and creative activity; maintain and grow institutional competitiveness; mitigate a variety of risks; and avoid redundancy of resources and effort, while anticipating critical gaps and identifying strategic directions for resources and investment.

The task force began their work in late 2022 and engaged in staged assessment, identified institutional strengths and gaps, developed a long-term vision with measurable priorities, and translated those findings into implementation recommendations, governance structures, investment priorities, and new campus services. By late 2023, their efforts had already informed tangible institutional improvements, including centralized research data guidance, new decision-support tools, expanded research data services, and the launch of the SANDY research data repository. The final report presented a set of recommendations for investment priorities for senior leadership to consider.

The Research Identity Framework was developed through a faculty-engaged, evidence-informed process designed to identify and articulate the university's areas of research strength and distinction. The framework responds to the University of Nebraska System's *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* strategic plan and was informed by analysis of the Lincoln campus' sponsored-research portfolio and campus conversations about institutional strengths, priorities, and future opportunities. Following an introduction to more than 200 faculty members at a May 2025 Research and Innovation Convening, 30 faculty volunteers participated in a facilitated writing process to develop initial descriptions of six research identity areas. An additional 25 faculty volunteers reviewed the drafts of these descriptions before they were collated and released for university-wide feedback in late 2025. The campus feedback form was accessed 671 times and generated more than 200 comments, which were considered in preparing the final framework. The final *Research Identity Framework*, released in February 2026, provides a durable structure for aligning institutional investments, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, communicating UNL's distinctive contributions, and balancing emerging opportunities with long-term research capacity and societal impact.

Other recent examples of planning for quality improvement include:

- The creation of the School of Computing - exemplifies how strategic planning efforts at the state, university, and campus levels can shape an academic unit. The transformation sought to enhance core computing programs, create new interdisciplinary programs to better serve students and help the university meet the state and nation's workforce needs, and enhance the research enterprise. The campus made a \$3M investment in faculty and provided \$2M for one-time expenditures. A new undergraduate major in data science, MS in artificial intelligence, minors and graduate certificates have since been launched.
- Initiation of an RFP process to identify a new on-site bookstore vendor - demonstrates how aligning changing institutional and student needs can inform facility and resource planning. Informed by the evolving retail trends, changing course material delivery models, and increased digital adoption of materials, the RFP recognizes a footprint in the range of approximately 15,000–20,000 square feet compared to its existing 30,000 square feet may be more appropriate for future operations. To ensure broad stakeholder feedback is solicited, the RFP committee includes members from academic, student life, business and finance, athletics, libraries, and other units.
- Implementation of an enterprise Salesforce platform - reflects how institution-wide

planning can lead to modernized technology infrastructure and inform student success initiatives. In 2022, the University of Nebraska System purchased an enterprise Salesforce platform. The transition from legacy systems and decentralized processes to a unified enterprise platform facilitated the institution's use of CRM technology to support institutional strategic goals in recruitment, retention, and student success. A shared governance structure led by a steering committee of campus-wide stakeholders establishes annual priorities and ensures that resource decisions are transparent and optimal.

- The Successful Teaching with Affordable Resources initiative - illustrates the institution's commitment to improving educational quality and reducing student costs. This initiative prioritizes affordable, quality course material through open educational resources, library-licensed collections, and inclusive access models. This initiative has saved students over \$21 million dollars in course material costs since 2019.

Change of Structure

As the colleges of UNL and UNMC strategically align as the University of Nebraska, there are no short-term anticipated changes. Both campuses' strategic plans are designed to fold into President Gold's *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* strategic framework. Likewise, college plans link to the campus plan for a comprehensive system-level approach to planning and monitoring progress. Strategic indicators, workforce reports, admissions and enrollment data, health workforce needs, and financial information inform strategic and budget planning.

The Medical Center's implementation examples include campus expansion planning, classroom technology upgrades, and strategic investments in health workforce programs. All campuses now use VisionSync (formerly UNePlan) to monitor progress on strategic initiatives. These planning and implementation systems demonstrate that both institutions use evidence, constituent input, and strategic priorities to improve educational quality, operational effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Sources

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- Research Identity Framework-R&I-2026
- Strategic Planning-UNMC-2026
- College Strategic Plans-EVC-2026

Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Argument

The University of Nebraska administrative structures are effective and support shared governance, data-informed decision-making, and engagement with internal and external constituencies. The Lincoln and Medical Center campuses operate within the University of Nebraska System governance framework under the elected Board of Regents, state statutes, Board Bylaws, and Board Policies. The President serves as Chief Executive Officer, with campus-specific Chancellors serving as Chief Administrative Officers. This structure provides clear lines of authority while supporting campus-level leadership, faculty governance, student participation, and institutional accountability. Shared governance is embedded in institutional decision-making. Faculty and students participate through a variety of governance and committee structures. Staff participation is supported through the Staff Senate in Lincoln and the Staff Advisory Council at the Medical Center.

The institution's financial and personnel resources support current operations and long-term sustainability in accordance with its mission. It relies on a diversified funding model that includes state appropriations, tuition and fees, grants and contracts, auxiliary revenues, gifts, endowments, and other sources. Budget reductions, cash rescissions, hiring freezes, travel restrictions, and voluntary separation incentive programs have been used to balance short-term financial constraints with long-term mission commitments. The University of Nebraska provides specific evidence of meaningful constituent engagement during major institutional decisions, evidenced by the budgeting and planning processes. These efforts demonstrate institutional attention to transparency, data quality, strategic priorities, and sustainable resource allocation, and approaches continue to evolve over time. Program Indicators support planning related to enrollment, academic programs, staffing, compensation, housing, operational efficiency, and resource allocation. The institution uses many data sources to inform academic strategy, budget planning, and evidence-based decision-making.

The University of Nebraska has invested in business process improvement, human resources, facilities, technology, and student-facing infrastructure. Examples include the business center model and investments in faculty hiring aligned with strategic priorities and AAU goals. Physical infrastructure investments have included new facilities and renovated spaces. The institution provides technology resources to support educational quality and sustainability. Participation in Unizin and the Successful Teaching with Affordable Resources initiative have further supported access and affordability.

The University of Nebraska demonstrates that the institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement informed by student success metrics, program review, assessment, enrollment data, academic analytics, financial data, facilities information,

institutional capacity, and external trends. Planning also incorporates constituent input through formal committees, faculty governance, student government, external advisory boards, college boards, public engagement, and Board processes. The *N2025* strategic plan established aims and measurable targets related to student success, research, experiential learning, global engagement, community partnerships, and institutional innovation. After *N2025*, the Lincoln campus launched *Our Bold Path Forward*, aligned with the System's *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* strategic plan. Philanthropic support will help achieve long-term priorities. The Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for Our University's Future campaign seeks to raise \$3 billion across the University system for student access and success, faculty academic and clinical excellence, and transformational research and innovation.

Planning is grounded in institutional capacity and external conditions and linked to research strategy and institutional aspirations. Data analysis compared the institution's standing relative to AAU member institutions using AAU membership indicators. These analyses informed strategic faculty hiring, research productivity goals, resource allocation, and measures incorporated into *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* framework.

The institution provides further examples of planning linked to operational and academic improvement, including creation of the School of Computing, an RFP for a smaller and more future-oriented on-site bookstore, the systemwide Salesforce platform to support recruitment, retention, and student success, and shared governance structures for CRM priorities. These examples demonstrate that planning is used to respond to workforce needs, technology change, affordability, student success, and operational effectiveness.

The change of structure combining UNL and UNMC under the University of Nebraska accreditation structure will maintain compliance with Criterion 4 as existing administrative, financial, planning, governance, and data structures will continue. Both campuses are governed by the same Board of Regents, report through the President, and operate within system-level administrative, financial, audit, legal, data, and external relations structures. Both campuses' strategic plans are designed to align with *The Odyssey to Extraordinary* framework, and progress on strategic initiatives is rolled up to the System.

Administrative structures support shared governance, transparency, data-informed decision-making, and constituent engagement; financial, personnel, physical, technological, and philanthropic resources support current operations and long-term sustainability; and strategic planning is systematic, evidence-informed, mission-aligned with institutional priorities, and used to improve quality, effectiveness, and sustainability.

Sources

There are no sources.