

University of Nebraska at Kearney

Strategic Plan 2021 Update

Mission

The University of Nebraska at Kearney is a public, residential university committed to be one of the nation's premier undergraduate institutions with excellent graduate education, scholarship, and public service.

Vision

UNK will achieve national distinction for a high quality, multidimensional learning environment, engagement with community and public interests, and preparation of students to lead responsible and productive lives in an increasingly diverse, interconnected, interdependent, and technological society.

Values

- Learning Matters: UNK is an academic community that pledges to protect and foster a climate of rigorous intellectual inquiry, unfettered exchange of ideas, and mutual respect—inside and outside the classroom—that is grounded in the principles of academic freedom and academic responsibility. The academic community designs and continuously reviews programs to ensure that students develop broad intellectual capabilities and an awareness of diverse cultures and civilizations in addition to specific academic and career-related knowledge and skills.
- Learning Environment Matters: UNK is committed to a student-centered learning environment that:
 - is inclusive and explicitly values diversity of individuals, cultures, thought, and expression.
 - centers on student success through personalized teaching and mentoring relationships.
 - extends broad access to a quality education to all qualified students in the region, especially Nebraska, emphasizing diversity and quality.
 - prepares students for lifelong learning with the ability to think critically, exposure to global perspectives, and competence with technology.
 - embraces leading-edge technology to enhance pedagogy and access to traditional and online programs.
 - integrates experiential learning.
 - fosters ethical behavior and decision-making and responsibility.
 - promotes emotional, social, and physical wellness in addition to intellectual development.
 - serves, engages, and enriches the Kearney community, area, and region.
 - provides a regional focal point for intellectual, artistic, cultural, and recreational activity and competitive NCAA Division II intercollegiate sports.
- People Matter: UNK promotes an inclusive environment that affords equitable access and opportunity to every individual.

- Responsible Stewardship Matters: UNK is committed to efficient and effective administration of resources—human, financial, and physical/infrastructure—to ensure long-term institutional fiscal stability and environmental sustainability.

Mission Imperatives

UNK is an exemplary public university that serves Nebraska by:

- meeting citizens' educational needs.
- adhering to policies of accrediting and governing agencies.
- being accountable to stakeholders for the quality of its work and for good stewardship of its resources.
- engaging in research, service, and outreach activities that apply university expertise to public needs.
- renewing curriculum, pedagogy, and activities with advice from internal and external constituencies.
- recruiting, challenging, nurturing, and retaining a diverse student body.
- recruiting and mentoring qualified diverse faculty and staff.
- building bridges to the community and state through athletic, cultural, and educational events.

UNK is an exemplary residential university that provides:

- a holistic approach to student development manifested in a progressive academic curriculum and a wide array of personal growth opportunities outside the classroom.
- residence halls and academic buildings that are well suited to student success and achievement.
- modern, well-maintained and secure living and dining accommodations, sports and recreational facilities, and campus grounds.
- programs and services designed to involve those who live on or off campus in campus life.
- deliberate interaction with the surrounding community, capitalizing on location advantages to enhance learning opportunities for students.

UNK provides quality undergraduate education by means of:

- a curriculum that provides solid grounding for students in the liberal arts and sciences while also enabling them to specialize and prepare for careers.
- high quality academic programs that attract top students and draw faculty from centers of scholarship nationwide and worldwide.
- a well-qualified faculty/staff/student community whose diversity is itself an educational resource.
- student services that foster academic success, involvement in campus life, and progress toward graduation.
- a culture that supports opportunities for international experiences and studies.
- a commitment to learning with plentiful opportunities for students to engage in research with professors.
- a modern instructional and information technology infrastructure.
- expanding affordable access through quality online courses and degree programs.
- processes to assess student learning and to adjust programs in light of that appraisal.

UNK provides high quality graduate programs that:

- build on areas of undergraduate strength.
- respond to public need and demand and serve the people of Nebraska and beyond.
- familiarize students with trends and developments in their disciplines.
- mentor students to contribute to their disciplines and apply knowledge to issues in society.
- help students develop research skills.

UNK values and supports faculty research and creative activity that:

- advances academic disciplines and addresses public needs.
- enhances teaching and professional development.
- involves mentoring and collaboration with students.

Envisioned Outcomes

- UNK will graduate persons who know the accomplishments of civilizations, who value disciplined thought, and who are prepared for productive careers, further education, and responsible citizenship.
- UNK will advance state and community interests by applying university educational programs and other expertise to meet public needs.

Strategic Goals, Strategies and Implementation Priorities

Four strategic goals were derived directly from each of UNK's four core institutional values. Strategies and implementation priorities provide the means for achieving and evaluating progress toward the four strategic goals.

UNK Value—Learning Matters. UNK is an academic community that pledges to protect and foster a climate of rigorous intellectual inquiry, unfettered exchange of ideas, and mutual respect—inside and outside the classroom—that is grounded in the principles of academic freedom and academic responsibility. The academic community designs and continuously reviews programs to ensure that students develop broad intellectual capabilities and an awareness of diverse cultures and civilizations in addition to specific academic and career-related knowledge and skills.

Goal 1: Academic Quality. Faculty and staff will ensure ongoing review and continuous improvement of the curriculum across all academic programs on campus.

Strategies and Implementation Priorities:

- 1A. All academic programs and units on campus will undergo continuous review characterized by systematic planning, collection and analysis of data, and evaluation.
 - Continue Academic Program Review process at the departmental and college levels.
 - Review and, as appropriate, restructure the academic alignments within academic affairs, colleges, and departments. This may include consolidation or separation of academic units and/or reapportionment of resources.
 - Engage academic units to identify themes that might connect curriculum across campus (STEM/STEAM, Great Works, e.g.)
 - Evaluate pursuing formal accreditation for quality academic programs that are not currently accredited.
- 1B. Require completion of an extended, substantive, and independent— yet faculty or staff guided— Experiential Learning activity within the major field of study for graduation in all academic programs and degrees.
 - Charge the campus-wide Assessment Committee to develop a structure for organizing the EL activities that have been approved by the academic departments and colleges. This clearinghouse (source for information) and repository (central storage location) will serve as a common link for the Mission Imperatives across campus.
- 1C. Embrace the NU-system priority of collaboration and engage in collaborative opportunities with other campuses, government agencies, and the private sector.
 - Survey all existing collaborations across campus and identify and prioritize future opportunities that benefit students and regional needs, building upon existing and emerging system-wide collaborative models (e.g., Food for Health, Health Sciences, Engineering).
 - Expand innovative curricular initiatives (e.g., stackable credentials, certificate programs, 2 + 2 articulation agreements, and internships) in collaboration with other NU campuses, colleges and universities, community colleges, and the corporate sector.
 - Capitalize on expanded scope of academic opportunities while developing University Village, e.g. public and private academic and workforce-related ventures, maker spaces, incubator initiatives, collaborations with government, city, and civic agencies.

- 1D. Evaluate existing on-site and on-line graduate programs, investigate new degree and credential options in areas of strength and demand—notably those that form stronger partnerships with other NU campuses.
- 1E. Expand undergraduate and graduate online offerings in areas of strength and demand to provide greater access to quality UNK programs and market aggressively.

UNK Value—Learning Environment Matters. UNK is a community that is: inclusive and explicitly values diversity; extends broad access; promotes emotional, social, and physical wellness; embraces technology; centers on personalized teaching and mentoring relationships; enriches the Kearney community; provides a regional focal point for intellectual, artistic, cultural, recreational activity; and is competitive in NCAA Division II intercollegiate sports.

Goal 2: Access and Success. Increase recruitment and enhance support for student success.

Strategies and Implementation Priorities:

- 2A. Increase recruitment of a quality, diverse student body through holistic enrollment management.
 - Every unit of campus will embrace the critical role that each person plays in recruiting and retaining students, emphasizing engagement, positive interactions, and mutual respect. The Strategic Enrollment Plan will provide a structure for maintaining accountability.
 - Evaluate and enhance all aspects of strategic enrollment (e.g. Admissions, tuition and fees, and Financial Aid strategies; campus tours and academic department visits, enrollment technology, marketing, and transfer processes).
 - Deploy targeted initiatives to increase enrollments of out-of-state, online, graduate, transfer, minority, first generation, military and veteran, and international students, while strategically increasing communication and recruitment in the UNK traditional home base and Nebraska.
 - Increase presence in specific Nebraska schools with strong academic programs and high number of quality graduates.
- 2B. Increase retention of a quality, diverse student body through holistic enrollment management.
 - Emphasize professional engagement with students and increased outreach and responsiveness and customer service in all offices and functions.
 - Enhance the effectiveness and quality of advising (faculty and staff) through improved formal training, by developing common measures of student satisfaction with advising, and by exploring recognition of advising performance as a component of evaluation.
 - Enhance Military and Veteran services and support.
 - Implement best practices and policies to facilitate student transitions, success, and timely degree completion.

- Implement and expand learning community and living and learning community opportunities for all students.
 - Increase career education, readiness, and networking opportunities and use experiential learning and alumni connections to promote completion and placement.
- 2C. Initiate, enhance, and support outreach and marketing for all types of pipeline opportunities that connect future students and families to enrollment and success.
- 2D. Enhance support for diverse University activities and events that enrich the community and cultural life of the Kearney area, state, region, and beyond.
- Increasingly integrate themes of global engagement and cultural competency in academic programs and across campus and promote cross-cultural interaction between students from different backgrounds.
 - Enhance students' global engagement by increasing Study Abroad participation.
 - Promote service learning, civic engagement, and community outreach opportunities as part of experiential learning efforts.
 - Develop and support a comprehensive vision for UNK as a cultural hub for the fine and performing arts, museums, festivals, symposia and conferences, civic engagement, and public discourse.
- 2E. Enhance success in intercollegiate athletics within a sustainable, comprehensive framework.
- Develop a strategic plan for intercollegiate athletics, to provide a sustainable framework for student-athletes' competitive and academic success, and enhance relationships/affinity with students, employees, alumni, and community.

UNK Value—People Matter. UNK respects diversity—of individuals, cultures, thought, and expression—and supports an inclusive environment that affords equitable access and opportunity to every individual.

Goal 3: Quality Faculty and Staff. Recruit, support, develop, and retain a high quality and diverse faculty and staff.

Strategies and Implementation Priorities:

3A. Evaluate processes of recruiting, retention, compensation, and explore alternate compensation approaches.

- Maintain effective job postings that accurately reflect position responsibilities and workload expectations.
- Create programming that promotes professional and personal development opportunities.
- Design and implement programs to recognize employee contributions, performance, and accomplishments.
- Develop management and supervisory skills training on goal-setting, and recognizing performance and accomplishments.

3B. Explore and implement ways to enhance diversity of faculty and staff.

- Utilize the Equity, Access, and Diversity Advisory (EAD) to assist the Chancellor in further nurturing an atmosphere of inclusion for faculty, staff, students, and visitors to campus.
- Evaluate current employee recruiting processes and procedures to attract larger and more diverse candidate pools.

3C. **Specific for Faculty:** Explore and implement approaches to managing workload expectations and teaching, scholarship, and service to enhance the workplace and productivity.

- Utilize a consistent, electronic system as the official repository for faculty activity (teaching, scholarship, service, and administrative responsibilities) and annual productivity goals.
- Examine faculty workload policy, clarify performance and evaluation expectations, and seek parity across units.
- Inaugurate and clarify performance and evaluation expectations for Professor of Practice (greater degree of focus on teaching/advising/service).
- Provide appropriate and reasonable support for faculty to pursue a meaningful agenda of scholarly activity; one of professional satisfaction and distinct benefit to students and society.
- Develop campus-wide program in grantsmanship to increase grant resources, and in seeking parity across units, work toward recognizing grantwriting as an option for faculty scholarly productivity in evaluations.

3C. **Specific for Staff:** Explore and implement approaches to managing workload/expectations to enhance the workplace and productivity.

- Benchmark staff compensation through established NU system pay bands.
- Clarify staff workload expectations within job descriptions or bands and seek parity across units.
- Create a formalized exit interview process that provides data to enhance retention.
- Develop management and supervisory skills training on succession planning and career path development.

UNK Value—Responsible Stewardship. UNK is committed to efficient and effective administration of resources—human, financial, and physical infrastructure—to ensure long-term institutional fiscal stability and environmental sustainability.

Goal 4: Stewardship of Resources. Secure, generate, and responsibly steward the resources necessary to carry out the mission of the campus and ensure long-term institutional fiscal stability and environmental sustainability.

Strategies:

4A. Annually generate revenue necessary to offer competitive compensation, maintain and replace facilities, and invest in technology and infrastructure, student services, and general institutional needs.

- Enhance recruitment and retention of students to increase credit-hour production and tuition net revenue.
- Optimize course offerings, scheduling, and enrollments to increase credit hour production and tuition net revenue.
- Match instructor capacity to curriculum demand and mission-related expectations.
- Enhance current—and develop new—on-campus and online programs in areas of strength and demand, and market and recruit aggressively.
- Prioritize funding to on-campus and online programs in areas of strength and demand that have a ready to serve market demand, but are underfunded based on enrollment potential.
- Study the economic status of the faculty to determine whether salary disparity trends exist for tenure track faculty when compared to the salaries of faculty at peer institutions.
- Increase internal support for and success in acquiring external grant funding, including indirect cost recovery.
- Build on increasingly successful Foundation efforts to increase private giving through purposeful support of the University of Nebraska Campaign.

- 4B. Administer resources in alignment with campus, unit, and operations priorities.
- Critically analyze—using appropriate metrics—the effectiveness, efficiency, and fiscal and environmental sustainability of every element of UNK’s operations.
 - Align resource allocations with priorities in all units/aspects of UNK’s operations.
 - Continue to invest wisely in technology and environmentally friendly infrastructure to support campus priorities while seeking efficiencies in purchasing and within current staffing resources.
 - Ensure fiscal responsibility when making technology investments through a combination of research, planning, foresight, acquisition, and replacement.
 - Increasingly execute environmental sustainability strategies identified in UNK’s sustainability master plan.
 - Continue convening Budget Advisory, with representation across campus units, to provide input relative to resource allocation and administration.
- 4C. Enhance UNK’s brand and reputational identity across the state, region, and nation.
- Operationalize plans for integrated marketing, branding, and communications unique to UNK while complimentary to the NU “One University Four Campuses” theme, to tell our University’s story and aggressively promote the strategic priorities outlined in this document.
 - Incorporate university research, innovative faculty work, and department-guided stories into content marketing efforts to help increase awareness and engagement to bring potential students to departments.
 - Identify and pursue mutually beneficial collaborations with the City of Kearney and Buffalo County, regional businesses and stakeholders, and other specific area communities (such as Lexington and Grand Island) to work together to solve community academic and business challenges.
 - Capitalize on unprecedented opportunities provided by the development of University Village to pursue new ventures and partnerships: public/private, academic/community, retail, office, residential, and recreational.
 - Build on increasingly successful alumni engagement initiatives and tracking of graduates to deepen alumni affinity and engagement with campus to enhance recruiting, fundraising, and experiential learning and internship opportunities.