

As Nebraska's rural comprehensive university, UNK must meet a broad set of needs to support the business, workforce, healthcare, and education priorities of the region. We know that students educated in rural settings are more likely to return to rural communities. Myriad state and national factors only amplify a challenging budget climate for UNK and the NU system.

Guided by the UNK mission, the Deans of the University of Nebraska at Kearney have recommended to Senior Vice Chancellor Julie Shaffer and Interim Chancellor Charlie Bicak a thorough reevaluation and proposed reorganization of the university's colleges. We collaborated in the development of draft mission, vision, and values statements. The process was guided by two overarching goals: 1) seek synergies to strengthen programs and stakeholder impact and 2) bolster operational efficiencies.

We do not bring forward these proposed changes lightly. These proposals are guided by the 2021 and 2023 Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) recommendations that the "UNK Administration consider the educational needs of Nebraska over the next 5-10-20 years and consider all programs, not based on current strength, but what may be needed to ensure success of the rural health initiatives, the success of state workforce initiatives, and to position greater Nebraska into a stance of strength." We believe that this proposal for redevelopment will serve the needs of greater Nebraska into the future and place UNK on solid ground.

This announcement is the first element of a consultative process that will include university stakeholders, insights from third party consultants, and the development of an academic master plan that will include the reallocation of financial resources to meet our needs. This process will be guided by Senior Vice Chancellor Julie Shaffer and is expected to be finalized by August 2026.

The three academic colleges that have been proposed are the: 1) College of Business, Technology, and Professional Studies 2) College of Education and Humanities, and 3) College of Health and Science. A description of each college, along with the library and the graduate studies and academic innovation, is provided at the end of this document. We seek to collaborate with the faculty to inform this process going forward.

# College of Business, Technology, and Professional Studies

## Vision Statement

To advance our region through economic, social, and academic progress by empowering students, engaging industry, and creating community.

## Mission Statement

To provide transformative career-focused programs dedicated to exceptional student experiences and regional economic development in Nebraska.

## Core Values

- Growth--We are lifelong learners who strive for continuous improvement through impactful research and meaningful practice.
- Respect--We put people first by valuing each individual.
- Excellence--We strive to surpass expectations and provide high quality programs.
- Authenticity--Our foundation rests on genuine experiences, a strong work ethic and the highest levels of integrity.
- Transformation--We are motivated to equip students for personal and professional success and to advance our region.

## Societal Impact Statement

CBT is committed to fostering economic growth in our region through transformational career-focused programs emphasizing exceptional student experiences. Our wide-ranging and accessible programs collaborate closely with industry partners, creating entry-level employment opportunities for graduates, who contribute to regional economic development as skilled employees and entrepreneurs. Our teaching, research, and outreach efforts not only equip students with essential career skills; it supports other stakeholders and helps fuel our region's economy ([UN SDG 8](#)).

## Guidance as to other programs that might fit well in CBT

While our programs range from general to very specific, they all have clear pathways to careers. The overarching professional studies approach is designed to scaffold technical skills and more advanced soft skills on the broad, basic skills our students develop through the UNK general education program. Programs that provide a well-rounded education, blending specialized knowledge with other elements, from a broad area of disciplines.

# College of Education and Humanities

## Vision Statement

To be the premier institution for programs in teaching, learning, and interpreting the human experience that ensures the advancement of rural communities.

## Mission Statement

To advance education in our region by fostering intellectual growth, inspiring creativity, and equipping students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

## Core Values

- **Talent** – Our programs nurture the innate talents of our students through teaching and mentoring by our highly qualified, gifted, and accomplished faculty.
- **Education** – Our graduates fill crucial workforce needs in rural communities that transform lives through education.
- **Accessible** – Our personalized approach makes education accessible to students from all backgrounds.
- **Community** – Our students and programs are embedded in schools, clinics, museums, recital halls, galleries, and other venues that empower excellence in experiential learning.
- **Humanities** – We are the home of critical thinking, empathy, the pursuit of knowledge and creativity.

## Justification

The College of Education and Humanities builds on our legacy as a premiere teacher education institution with roots extending back to the beginning of UNK in 1905. The focus of producing teachers has always been a pillar of this university, and the newly formed CEH will provide the infrastructure for the formation of departments and programs that excel in producing educators and provide teachers with high quality learning experiences in our graduate programs. This reorganization will concentrate resources for important areas such as the arts and humanities; counseling; school psychology; and teacher and school administrator production. This heritage also includes strong programs that promote and ensure critical thinking, analysis, writing, and problem-solving skills that produce teachers for every level of Nebraska education and venue. Bringing those programs together in one college emphasizes that broad impact and reinforces our identity as the hub for rural education, outreach, engagement, and the humanities in Nebraska. As the landscape of higher education

and its funding change, it is ever more important to demonstrate to our system, state, and federal leadership and advocates the importance of strong, well-prepared Nebraska teachers, communicators, and citizens. Bringing these faculty together emphasizes our shared mission and ensures our vitality and purpose well into the future. All of the programs within this college graduate a majority of educators in both conventional and less conventional senses such as in outreach, exhibition, and performance. We also bring together excellent graduate education programs throughout the college in Teacher Education, Educational Administration, Counseling and School Psychology, and throughout the arts and humanities. This continues to emphasize our identity and importance to the state while ensuring the vitality of the arts and humanities for generations of students to come.

Draft

# College of Health and Science

## Vision Statement

To transform our region through scientific exploration and human innovation fueled by collaboration with students and community partners.

## Mission Statement

To foster vibrant rural communities by providing extraordinary student-centered programs in the health, environmental, quantitative, and human sciences.

## Core Values

- **High impact** – Our students enter the workforce in fields with opportunities that are highly sought after and valued in rural communities in Nebraska and beyond.
- **Excellence** – We are the home of excellence in experiential learning and scholarly activity that ensures that our students, faculty, and programs stand out.
- **Achievement** – Our students achieve more because we invest in their success from day one.
- **Leadership** – Our programs lead the way at UNK, in the NU System, and in partnerships with our community.
- **Teamwork** – Our success is based on a strong foundation of collaboration, synergy, and shared vision.
- **Hardworking** – We embrace the Nebraska values of hard work, persistence, resilience, and grit.

## Justification

The College of Health and Science brings together the resources to support their future growth as a pillar of the future of UNK. We create space for innovation and synergy of our programs and faculty by removing barriers and emphasizing collaboration not competition. This will put our focus on what students need to be successful in the high value, high impact, and high need fields of health and human, environmental, and quantitative sciences. The resources available in our Health Sciences office will be able to more effectively advise and advocate for all of the health science programs currently positioned in competing colleges. Working more closely will create more opportunities for programmatic innovation and synergy between faculty and programs to create opportunities for the decades ahead. The programs benefit from increased collaboration. The faculty benefit from a focus of resources and enhanced opportunities to collaborate programmatically and in scholarly activity. The students benefit from an increased emphasis on what they need to be successful through partnerships with UNMC, other members of the NU system, governmental entities, and other organizations that enhance their growth opportunities and job prospects.

# College of Graduate Studies and Academic Innovation

## Vision Statement

To be the leader in graduate and online education, expanding access to transformative learning opportunities that drive workforce development, lifelong learning, and educational excellence in Nebraska and beyond.

## Mission Statement

To foster academic excellence, accessibility, and innovation through personalized learning experiences, faculty excellence, strategic partnerships, and forward-thinking initiatives that empower students and communities.

## Core Values: IMPACT

- **Innovation:** Advancing education through cutting-edge technology, dynamic course design, and forward-thinking academic strategies.
- **Mentorship:** Guiding students, faculty, and staff toward success with meaningful support, professional development, and career growth opportunities.
- **Personalization:** Tailoring educational experiences to meet diverse student needs through flexible programs, individualized support, and student-centered learning.
- **Access:** Expanding pathways to education by removing barriers, enhancing outreach, and fostering opportunities for all learners.
- **Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships across campuses, industries, and communities to create impactful learning and workforce opportunities.
- **Technology:** Leveraging digital tools and innovative solutions to enhance learning, research, and student engagement.

# Calvin T. Ryan Library

## Vision Statement

To be recognized as an essential destination and catalyst for transformative learning experiences.

## Mission Statement

To empower users in learning and research literacy through discovery, critical assessment, and the development process through relevant collections, welcoming spaces, one-on-one assistance and transformative programming.

## Core Values

- **Lifelong:** We build skills in researchers that last beyond their time at UNK and support the needs of rural Nebraskans
- **Excellence:** We are the University's most trusted source for research assistance
- **Advocacy:** We strive to maintain, build, and reshape our services to advocate for student success
- **Respect:** We respect the mission of each researcher, helping them achieve their individual needs
- **Nurture:** As a student-focused division of the university, we work to nurture media literacy skills to instill critical thinking in all learners