

Chancellor Final Budget Reduction Report – Dec. 22, 2025

Substantive feedback and departmental collaborations have adjusted my final recommendations. (1) The Bachelor’s in Family Science will not be discontinued based on program realignment, a move to online delivery, and high workforce demand in Nebraska for our graduates. Program faculty reduction will be 1 rather than 2. (2) UNK’s unique high-quality master’s degree in public history is delivered online. Expanded online marketing is anticipated to increase program demand. Program faculty reduction will be 0 rather than 1. UNK will support all impacted faculty and students. Faculty will be contacted by their dean and the HR director. Students will be contacted by their chair to develop a personalized plan to complete their degree or program at UNK.

Chancellor Draft Budget Reduction Report – Dec. 8, 2025

Over the past decade the environment for higher education in the United States – and in Nebraska – has grown significantly more challenging. Inflationary costs, measured by the Consumer Price Index, have steadily increased while state appropriations have not kept pace. As President Gold has noted, that gap has now reached the equivalent of \$250 million annually. Tuition increases have also lagged inflation, leaving the university to absorb an additional \$59 million in expenses.

During the same span of time, with fewer students pursuing college degrees, UNK has experienced a 16% decline in headcount enrollment and 15.4% reduction in credit hour production. These trends continue to require budget adjustments.

Since arriving in July, I conducted a fiscal review that identified a \$4.5 million structural budget deficit. To provide context, approximately 80% of UNK’s operating budget supports personnel. Health insurance costs alone have risen 37.8% since 2023. Although recent salary increases have been relatively modest, state appropriations did not cover the 7% faculty salary increase approved for the current biennium. In addition, while overall enrollment has declined, student scholarship remissions have continued to rise and costs for goods, services, and travel have also climbed in line with inflation.

Because this deficit follows multiple previous reductions, our current challenge is particularly difficult. Nevertheless, sound fiscal stewardship is a core responsibility, and acting now is essential to UNK’s long-term success. Throughout this process we have emphasized shared governance and the serious, informed contributions of faculty and staff across our community. We are committed to collaboration and innovation, to preserving our mission as a comprehensive university, expanding student access and opportunity, and meeting the workforce and educational needs of Nebraska and beyond.

Our shared governance process followed a strict timeline and included regular communication with campus stakeholders. I am especially grateful to our Faculty Academic Committee and Budget Advisory Committee for their diligence. They spent many hours requesting and reviewing data, engaging with deans, directors, units, faculty, staff and students across the university, and providing thoughtful analysis. The recommendations of both committees informed my draft recommendations and have been communicated along with mine.

I am truly grateful for their time, effort, and personal investment, and the resilience of our campus community through this extremely difficult process.

Timeline/Process

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| July 1 | Began complete fiscal review |
| July 23 | Informed campus of need to resolve \$4.5M structural deficit |
| Aug 11 | Notified UNKEA & Faculty Senate of RIF and requested FAC representative |
| Aug/Sept | Chancellor, SVCAA/Deans/Chairs & VCBF/Unit Leaders developed initial concepts |
| Oct/Nov | FAC reviews academic/instruction & BAC reviews academic/instruction |
| Nov 26 | Final FAC/BAC recommendations emailed to Chancellor (also presented verbally) |
| Dec 9 | Chancellor presents draft recommendations & emails with FAC and BAC reports |
| Dec 11 | Chancellor, SVCAA, VCBF hold public feedback session |
| Dec 17 | Final day to provide feedback via chancellor@unk.edu |
| Dec 22 | Chancellor emails final recommendations to campus and begins Board of Regents approval process |

Proposed Degree Elimination

- Higher Education Student Affairs, Master of Science in Education
- Modern Languages, Bachelor of Arts, German Emphasis
- Modern Languages 7–12 Teaching Endorsement, Bachelor of Arts in Education – German Emphasis
- Music Comprehensive, Bachelor of Music, Music Business Emphasis

Align Instructional Staffing with Enrollment

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Voluntary Separation Incentive (9) | \$1,089,180 |
| 2 – Communication 2 – Marketing | |
| 1 – Art and Design 1 – Counseling and School Psychology | |
| 1 – Cybersecurity 1 – English | |
| 1 – Teacher Education | |
| Reduction in Force (3) | \$385,702 |
| 2 – Music | |
| 1 – Family Science | |
| Open and Captured Lines (7) | \$709,784 |
| 2 – Family Science | |
| 1 – Biology | |
| 1 – Chemistry | |
| 1 – Communication | |
| 1 – English | |
| 1 – History | |
| Sub-Total | \$2,184,666 |

Non-Academic Reductions

| Strategy | Estimated Savings |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Open staff lines (7) and part-time custodial line (1) | \$559,993 |
| • Student remissions/fundraise Includes Athletics, Kearney Health & Law Opportunities programs, and others | \$400,000 |
| • Operating fund rebalance (5%) | \$350,000 |
| • Graduate assistants (20) | \$250,000 |
| • Summer salary budget (underutilized) | \$200,000 |
| • Athletics operations | \$200,000 |
| • Chancellor: VC Enrollment/Marketing restructure, Office Associate (1) | \$153,983 |
| • Vacating Student Affairs Building & Thomas Hall | \$85,047 |
| • Office for Intercultural Engagement and Leadership restructure (1) | \$66,630 |
| • Museum of Nebraska Art MOU support (beginning FY28) | \$35,649 |
| • College of Business & Technology - Marketing & Institutional Engagement | \$18,737 |
| Sub-Total | \$2,320,039 |
| Total | \$4,504,705 |