
MINUTES

**Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
Southeast Community College
Conference Room 206-208
8800 O Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
Friday, October 3, 2025
9:15 a.m. (CT)**

Public notice of meeting

Public notice of this meeting was given by posting notice on the Commission's website; posting notice on the State of Nebraska's online public meeting calendar; e-mailing news media; and keeping a current copy of the agenda in the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's office, listing the date, time, and location of the meeting. A copy of the current Open Meetings Act was posted beside the table containing the documents for the meeting.

NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION WILL HOLD A MEETING ON OCTOBER 3, 2025. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 9:15 A.M. AND ADJOURN AT APPROXIMATELY 12:00 P.M.

AN AGENDA IS MAINTAINED IN THE COMMISSION OFFICE, 140 N. 8TH STREET, SUITE 300, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA.

TIM DANIELS, CHAIR

Meeting called to order at 9:15 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and asked for introductions.

Commissioners Present

Tim Daniels
Dr. LeDonna Griffin
Dr. Dennis Headrick
Dannika Nelson

Dr. Paul Von Behren
Tami Weber
W. Scott Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Dr. Deborah Frison
Molly O'Holleran

Mary Lauritzen

Commission Staff Present

Dr. Michael Baumgartner
Dr. Kathleen Fimple
Jill Heese
Kadi Lukesh

J. Ritchie Morrow
Helen Pope
Matthew Roque
Gary Timm

Dr. Paul Illich, Southeast Community College

WELCOME

Dr. Paul Illich, President of Southeast Community College, provided a tour of the new Welding Technology Center before the meeting and welcomed the Commissioners.

Minutes of July 24, 2025, Work Session approved

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 24, 2025, WORK SESSION

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the July 24, 2025, Work Session minutes as written. Commissioner Headrick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Minutes of July 25, Commission Meeting approved

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 25, 2025, COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Headrick made a motion to approve the July 25, 2025, Commission meeting minutes as written. Commissioner Von Behren seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Chair's Report

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Daniels presented the 2026 CCPE Meeting Calendar for Approval.

2026 CCPE Meeting Calendar approved

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the proposed 2026 CCPE Meeting Calendar. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Executive Director's Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The following out-of-service area application requests were approved by the executive director:

Out-of-Service-Area Requests

Offered by Northeast Community College
Classroom-based, from Northeast Community College, Norfolk, NE, to North Ben High School, North Bend, NE

- ENGL 1050 – Workplace Communication - 3 credits
August 4, 2025 – May 6, 2026

Offered by Mid-Plains Community College
In person from Mid-Plains Community College, North Platte, NE to Gering High School, Gering, NE

- BLDC 1005 NP 020 – Safety – 1 credit
08/19/2025

-
- BLDC 1170 NP 020 – Framing Construction – 8.5 credits
8/15/2025 – 03/02/2026

Dr. Baumgartner introduced Kadi Lukesh, Budget Coordinator, to present the First Quarter Budget Report.

Kadi Lukesh presented the First Quarter Budget Report

Ms. Lukesh provided information on Administrative Funds, noting during the first quarter large annual dues are paid. She gave brief overviews of the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program (NOG), Higher Education Financial Aid, the Access College Early Scholarship (ACE), and the Community College ARPA Funds (Agency 83) - Dual Enrollment report.

Dr. Baumgartner reported on recent staff activities and meetings

Dr. Baumgartner reported that the staff have been active participants in several organizations and recent and upcoming events.

Dr. Baumgartner has been meeting once a month, starting at the end of June, with a small group of education sector representatives to look at ways to increase credential attainment, improve workforce readiness, and increase efficiency and accountability. The group includes President Gold, Chancellor Turman, President Illich, Commissioner Maher, Dr. Walter Gilliam of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, and Labor Commissioner Katie Thurber. They have jointly contracted through Dec. 31 with Foresight Law and Policy, led by Reg Liechty, to coordinate meetings, conduct interviews, and write a report on potential areas of cooperation. Some topics have been credit transfer, credential transparency, work-based learning opportunities through high school and postsecondary education, dual credit expansion requirements, and others. Dr. Baumgartner noted that the meetings have been very fruitful thus far.

Dr. Baumgartner went to England in August with the National Governors Association and the National Center for Grow Your Own for a study trip on degree apprenticeships. They conducted site visits to learn about models of teacher apprenticeships, engineering apprenticeships, and health care apprenticeships. Nebraska is about to ramp up its apprenticeship work substantially. He noted that the Nebraska Department of Education's teacher apprenticeships are already highly successful.

Dr. Baumgartner also attended the Education Commission of the States Steering Committee retreat early last week in Jackson, WY. Governor Mark Gordon is the new chairman of ECS, and they met to discuss how to implement his chair's initiative in other states, essentially making work-based learning possible for all high school students.

Dr. Baumgartner and J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Officer, attended the National NCAN (National College Access and Attainment network) meeting, along with around 15 other Nebraskans, in New Orleans last month as part of the NE CAN planning committee. They will meet next Tuesday in Omaha to continue planning discussions. The NECAN group also met with the MOCAN leadership (Missouri) via videoconference.

Dr. Kathleen Fimple attended the National SARA meeting in September and will be attending the Higher Learning Commission state partners meeting next month. It should be a very interesting meeting given national attention on accreditation and short-term credentials.

Gary Timm, Chief Finance Officer, and Matthew Roque, Capital Project & Financial Analyst, visited South Sioux City and Norfolk in August to tour facilities and conduct monitoring for the Community College ARPA grants. They also visited UNMC last week to see Clarkson Tower and other hospital and medical school facilities relevant to Project Health.

Jill Heese, Research Director, attended the UNO Center for Public Affairs Research Data and Research Series for Community Impact and Joe Velasquez, Database Manager, participated in the Nebraska Cyber Security Conference.

Public Hearing on Matters of General Concern

PUBLIC HEARING ON MATTERS OF GENERAL CONCERN

There was no testimony on Matters of General Concern.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Matters of General Concern.

Public Hearing on Academic Programs Committee Items

PUBLIC HEARING ON ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE ITEMS

Dr. Kendra Schmid, Interim Vice Provost at the University of Nebraska System, came forward to state that the University System had several proposals on the agenda and individuals representing each proposal were present to speak and answer questions on those proposals.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Academic Programs Committee Items.

Dr. Kendra Schmid, University of Nebraska

Academic Programs Committee

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Commissioner Nelson, Committee Chair, noted the items that were on the Academic Programs agenda. She introduced Dr. Fimple to present the proposals.

Commission Nelson

University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Dual Track Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence

University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for New Instructional Program – Dual Track Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence

Dr. Fimple presented the program proposal, noting the proposal's unusual structure with Track A being administered by the Department of Computer Science in the College of Information Science and Technology at UNO, and Track B administered by the School of Computing in the College of Engineering at UNL. The two approaches are designed to attract different audiences but would meet workforce needs by providing options for traditional and non-traditional students. The need and demand for the program is high due to the rapid expanding field of AI.

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal

Dr. Martha Garcia-Murillo, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Dr. Martha Garcia-Murillo, Dean, UNO College of Information Science and Technology provided additional information on the program proposal and answered Commissioner's questions.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Master of Science degree in Artificial Intelligence at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Dual Track Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence approved

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha's – Proposal for New Instructional Program –Dual Track Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Studio Art and Art History, BA

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for New Instructional Program – Studio Art and Art History, BA

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal

Dr. Fimple presented the program proposal, stating the program is designed for students who seek both creating art and art's formal and contextual properties. The benefit of combining art and history would allow students to get expertise in both without having to double major. Dr. Fimple noted the Committee had questions regarding the proposal and received the requested information from UNO, but not before the agenda was to be printed. Therefore, the proposal is forwarded to the full Commission without a recommendation.

Dr. Amy Morris, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Dr. Amy Morris, Director, School of the Arts, Professor of Art History, came forward to provide additional information on the proposal.

Committee action

Committee action: To forward the proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art and Art History at the University of Nebraska at Omaha to the full Commission without a recommendation.

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Studio Art and Art History, BA approved

Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Studio Art and Art History, BA. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

University of Nebraska at Kearney – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE

University of Nebraska at Kearney – Proposal for New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal

Dr. Fimple presented the program proposal, noting this program would be a collaborative effort between UNK and UNO with UNK housing and facilitating the program. The program is designed for those holding a physical education teaching degree and wanting to add an endorsement in health science education, and people working in the health sector that teach health education. Dr. Fimple stated the Committee requested additional information and did get responses from the University.

Dr. Erin Sweeney, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Dr. Erin Sweeney, Associate Professor, Kinesiology & Sport Sciences, provided additional information on the proposal and answered Commissioners' questions.

Committee action

Committee action: That the proposal for a Master of Arts in Education in Health Education at UNK be forwarded to the full Commission without a recommendation.

University of Nebraska at Kearney – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE motion failed

Commissioner Von Behren made a motion to approve the University of Nebraska at Kearney's Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE. Commissioner Weber seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. Voting no: Griffin and Headrick. By statute six affirmative votes are required to approve the proposal. The motion failed.

Dr. Baumgartner presented options regarding the proposal

Dr. Baumgartner stated that since a majority of Commissioners did not vote to approve, a vote to disapprove the program proposal is needed, the University of Nebraska at Kearney can withdraw the proposal, or the Commission can vote to hold a special meeting to gather more information, discuss, and vote on the proposal. If a meeting is voted on it must be held within 90 days from when the proposal was received by the Commission.

University of Nebraska at Kearney – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE approved to hold a special meeting regarding the proposal

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to hold a special meeting to address additional questions and information regarding the University of Nebraska at Kearney's Proposal for a New Instructional Program - Health Education, MAE. Commissioner Headrick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Organizational Unit – Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Organizational Unit – Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal

Dr. Fimple presented the program proposal, stating the goal of this Center is to connect academic learning with workforce demands. Dr. Fimple stated statistics verify a lack of qualified employees in several fields and support the collaborative approach the center would provide. Many letters of support were received from several UNO departments, colleges, and outside businesses.

Dr. Erin Bass, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Dr. Erin Bass, Professor, UNO College of Business; Executive Director Competencies, Skills and Workforce Development, Innovative and Learning-Centric Initiatives answered questions and provided additional information on the proposal.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

*University of Nebraska at Omaha –
Proposal for a New Organizational
Unit – Center for Competencies, Skills,
and Workforce Development approved*

*Annual Reports from Out-of-State and
Private Institutions*

*Dr. Fimple discussed the annual
reports*

*Reports on Institutional Activities
Related to Existing Programs*

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

Program Name Changes

Discontinued Programs

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the University of Nebraska at Omaha's – Proposal for New Organizational Unit – Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Annual Reports from Institutions Holding a Recurrent Authorization to Operate in Nebraska

Dr. Fimple discussed Institutions that provided annual reports.

- Crown College, St. Bonifacius, MN (at Christ Community Church, Omaha)
- CHI Health School of Radiologic Technology, Omaha
- Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL (at Brookside Church, Omaha)

Report on Institutional Activities Related to Existing Programs

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

- UNK – Science 7-12 Teaching Endorsement for the BSE degree
- UNK – Expedited Graduate Certificate in Mathematics
- UNL – PhD in Computer Engineering

Program Name Changes

- UNO – Information Assurance Graduate Certificate to *Information Security Management Graduate Certificate*
- UNL – BFA in Theatre to *BFA in Entertainment Design and Production*
- UNL – Civil Engineering, MS & PhD to *Civil and Environmental Engineering, MS & PhD*
- UNO – BS in General Science to *BS in Physical and Natural Sciences*
- UNO – MS in IT Innovation to *MS in Human Centered Computing*

Discontinued Programs

- UNMC – Perioperative Nursing Certificate (No enrollments)
- UNL – Environmental Engineering, MS (Aligns with the renaming of Civil Engineering program)
- UNO – Economics, MA (No enrollments)
- UNL – Natural Resources and Environment Economics, BS (will become specialization within Ag. Economics)
- NECC – Administrative Professional, AAS & AA
- NECC – Drafting Mechanical, AAS
- NECC – Administrative Professional Office Management, Certificate
- NECC – Broadcast Production, Certificate
- NECC – Recording Studio Production, Certificate
- NECC – Theater Musical Performance, Certificate
- NECC – Video Production, Certificate

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- NECC – Dairy Technician, Diploma
 - NECC – Drafting Mechanical, Certificate & Diploma
 - NECC – Machining and Manufacturing Automation – Certificate & Diploma

*Dr. Charlene Widener, Northeast
Community College*

Dr. Charlene Widener, Vice President of Educational Services at Northeast Community College, stated that the discontinued programs from NECC had low enrollments or had previously been discontinued.

*Public Hearing on Budget,
Construction, and Financial Aid
Committee Items*

*Dr. Joel Michaelis, Southeast
Community College*

**PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET, CONSTRUCTION, AND FINANCIAL
AID COMMITTEE ITEMS**

Dr. Joel Michaelis, Vice President of Instruction at Southeast Community College, welcomed the Commissioners, thanked them for their work approving programs and facilities at SCC, and noted that several representatives from Southeast Community College were present to speak about or answer questions regarding the Ag Technology Center proposal.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee Items.

Chair Daniels called for a break at 10:23 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:34 a.m.

*Budget, Construction, and Financial
Aid Committee*

Commissioner Von Behren

BUDGET, CONSTRUCTION, AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE

Commissioner Von Behren, standing in for Commissioner O'Holleran, Committee Chair, presented the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee agenda items.

*University of Nebraska Medical Center
– Project Health*

*Matthew Roque presented the project
proposal*

University of Nebraska Medical Center – Project Health

Mr. Roque presented the proposal, stating the University of Nebraska Medical center is proposing the full replacement of Clarkson Hospital Tower, replacing some space located in the Hixson-Lied Center as well as constructing a new parking garage. The new building would be 1,270,000 square feet with an estimated cost of \$2.19 billion. The new hospital would provide the highest specialized levels of medical treatment, clinical care, research in the clinical setting and allied health education.

The following individuals came forward to provide information on the UNMC proposal:

- Dr. Chad Vokoun, MD, Project Health Physician Executive; Chief of Hospital Medicine, UNMC; Medical Director for Hospital Medicine, Nebraska Medicine
- Dr. Amy Duhachek-Stapelman, Vice President of Education, Nebraska Medicine; Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, UNMC

*Dr. Chad Vokoun, UNMC, Nebraska
Medicine*

*Dr. Amy Duhachek-Stapelman, UNMC,
Nebraska Medicine*

Andy Balus, UNMC

Lindsay Neeman, UNMC

- Andy Balus, Executive Director of Utilities and Engineering; Project Manager, Project Health
- Lindsay Neemann, Director, Campus Planning.

Project Health proposal continued

They presented a slideshow of the proposed project along with video clips from President Dr. Jeffery Gold, University of Nebraska, and Dr. H. Dele Davies, Interim Chancellor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and answered questions from the Commissioners.

Mr. Roque provided a handout with information on the funding sources for the project that the Budget Committee had requested following their committee call.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: Pursuant to the Nebr. Rev. Stat. § 85-1414, the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education voted to forward the proposal to the full Commission without a recommendation pending further details about cost and funding.

*University of Nebraska Medical Center
– Project Health approved*

Commissioner Headrick made a motion to approve the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Project Health. Commissioner Weber seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Griffin, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Southeast Community College –
Beatrice Campus – Ag Technology
Center*

*Mr. Roque presented the project
proposal*

Southeast Community College – Beatrice Campus – Ag Technology Center

Matthew Roque presented the proposal, noting that Southeast Community College proposes the construction of a new Ag Technology Center. The building would be a single-story 19,325 GSF building that would provide space for Agriculture Programs. The estimated cost of the project is \$12.3 million, with construction to begin in March of 2026. The building will feature dedicated labs for agronomy, soils, precision agriculture, ag mechanics, and simulation and shared learning spaces.

*Bev Cummins, Southeast Community
College*

Bev Cummins, Program Development and Lincoln Campus Director for Southeast Community College, spoke and answered questions from the Commissioners.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: Pursuant to the Nebr. Rev. Stat. § 85-1414, the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education recommends approval of Southeast Community College’s proposal to utilize Capital Improvement funds to construct and equip the Ag Technology Center project as outlined in the governing board’s program statement approved on August 26, 2025, along with supplemental information provided.

*Southeast Community College –
Beatrice Campus – Ag Technology
Center approved*

Commissioner Von Behren, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve Southeast

Community College's – Beatrice Campus – Ag Technology Center. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship
2024-25 Year-End Report*

J. Ritchie Morrow presented the report

Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship 2024-25 Year- End Report

Mr. Morrow presented the report stating that ACE scholarships pay tuition and mandatory fees of qualified low-income Nebraska high school students taking dual-enrollment and early-admit college courses at participating Nebraska colleges and universities. For 2024-2025, the ACE program was funded with \$1.5 million General Funds appropriated by the Legislature. There were 2,727 students from 196 high schools that received 5,919 ACE scholarships. The total awarded was \$1,178,803.23 with the average award per scholarship equaling \$199.15.

Mr. Morrow reviewed graphs on scholarships awarded, credit hours taken, eligibility, and sex and race/ethnicity of recipients. He spoke on college continuation rates, noting ACE students are doing very well going on to college. The ACE report includes each college, the amount awarded, number of students, scholarships, and average amount of each scholarship per college.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the 2024-25 Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Year-End Report.

*Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship
2024-25 Year-End Report*

Commissioner Von Behren, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship 2024-25 Year- End Report. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Nebraska Opportunity Grant (NOG)
2024-25 Year-End Report*

Mr. Morrow presented the report

Nebraska Opportunity Grant (NOG) 2024-25 Year-End Report

Mr. Morrow presented the report, commenting that in 2022-23 Nebraska ranked 31st in the country for need-based undergraduate grant dollars per undergraduate enrollment, the same as our ranking from 2021-22. In the 2024-25 NOG program award year, \$24,405,784 was awarded to 13,386 students with the average award being \$1,823.23. He gave an overview of the NOG awarding by source, sector, and family income over the past 10 years.

*Public Hearing on Planning and
Consumer Information Committee
Items*

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PLANNING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION
COMMITTEE ITEMS**

There was no testimony on Planning and Consumer Information Committee Items.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Planning and Consumer Information Items.

*Planning and Consumer Information
Committee*

Commissioner Wilson

*2025 Factual Look at Higher
Education in Nebraska – Enrollment*

Jill Hesse presented the report

*Next Commission meeting will be
December 5, 2025*

*Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting
at 12:13 p.m.*

PLANNING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Commissioner Wilson filled in for the Planning Committee as a chair will be voted upon at the next Committee call.

2025 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska – Enrollment

Ms. Heese delivered a presentation summarizing the Enrollment section of the *2025 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska*. The Coordinating Commission is required by statute to report Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data. Total fall enrollment was up 2.0 percent over the last year and up 3.2 percent over the 10-year period. The report includes graphs and details regarding enrollment for students by sector, student level, full-time/part-time classification, sex, race/ethnicity, age, and distance education status. Ms. Heese also discussed the enrollment data dashboard and answered questions.

FUTURE MEETING

The next Commission meeting will be Friday, December 5, 2025, 9:30 a.m. at the Apothecary/Ridnour Building, 5th Floor, North Loft, Lincoln, Nebraska, following a breakfast meeting with the Nebraska Board of Education at 7:30 a.m. at the Nebraska Department of Education Building, 500 South 84th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting at 12:13 p.m.



NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Institution:	University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) with the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO)
Program:	Health Education
Award:	Master of Arts in Education (MAE)
Institution's Existing Degree(s) in Same or Similar Discipline:	PK-12 Health and Physical Education BAE, Health Education 7-12 BAE, Minor in Adolescent Health
Mode of Delivery:	Online
Proposal Received by Commission:	August 15, 2025
Proposed Start Date:	Fall 2025

Background

The proposed program is designed to be a collaborative effort between UNK and UNO. UNK's department of Kinesiology and Sport Sciences will house and facilitate the program. UNO's School of Health and Kinesiology would provide three of the 10 required courses and be consulted regarding any class or programmatic changes.

Description

The proposed degree program is primarily designed for those who hold a physical education teaching degree who want to add an endorsement in health education. The program would also be attractive to those who work in the health sector where they must provide health programming to young people, e.g., school nurses and community health workers.

The curriculum was chosen to help provide students with health pedagogy skills, the ability to communicate effectively, and the skills to be a leader in the field. It would consist of 30 semester credit hours (see page 4), culminating with a thesis or non-thesis project (a comprehensive portfolio presentation). It would also include a practicum for hands-on experience in a health education classroom. Students already employed in a health education classroom would be able to substitute another course for the practicum with approval. The core courses would come from Kinesiology and Sport Sciences at UNK, Health and Kinesiology at UNO, and Public Health at UNO. No new courses would be needed.

Consistent with Institutional Role and Mission? ✓ YES NO

Consistent with Statewide Comprehensive Plan? ✓ YES NO

REVIEW CRITERIA

A. Need for the Program

High-----Low
☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

UNK cites the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that indicates employment in health education careers is expected to grow by 12% from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the national average.

UNK reports that many teachers in Nebraska have obtained a degree/certification in physical education, but many secondary physical education teachers must also teach health education. By completing this degree, students would be eligible for an additional teaching endorsement in Health grades 7-12. There are no programs in Nebraska designed to help teachers earn an additional health education endorsement.

Rules for the Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 24) require a person seeking the 7-12 health education endorsement to complete a minimum of 30 hours in health courses. In order to receive a 10-year professional certificate in Nebraska, you must have completed a master's degree within ten years, so teachers looking to obtain this certificate would be drawn to a master's degree program in education.

Support letters came from SHAPE Nebraska (Society of Health and Physical Educators) and Lincoln Public Schools.

The proposal doesn't provide specific figures for the number of health educators in the state or number of vacancies in schools.

B. Demand for the Program

High-----Low
☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

UNK reports that their Health and Physical Education program offers a Master's in physical education that currently has about 30 students. The proposed program is expected to have similar enrollments. The budget uses five students in year one, increasing by five each subsequent year.

There is no evidence that students would select the proposed program over the existing master's in physical education program or that student interest is great enough to support two similar master's programs. The online availability, however, could provide sufficient enrollments.

C. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

High-----Low
☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

There are no other MAE in Health Education programs in Nebraska. UNMC offers a Master of Health Professions Teaching and Technology program, but it targets only those preparing to teach medical courses.

According to the proposal, there are 31 institutions in the United States that offer a health education master's program, many located in the northeast United States or Texas.

D. Resources: Faculty/Staff

High-----Low
☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

UNK reports that no new faculty would be needed. The current Graduate Program Chair has a PhD in health education and would be the main contact person for the program. In addition, the Health and Physical Education program recently hired a lecturer who also has a background and PhD in

health promotion, so they can contribute to the proposed program as well as the physical education program in the department.

E. Resources: Physical Facilities/Equipment

Acceptable				
yes	√		no	

UNK states that the program is offered entirely online, so it would require no additional facilities. It would be housed in an existing campus location.

F. Resources: Library/Information Access

High-----Low				
	√			

The proposal states that UNK Online has online training and tutorials available for new online students seeking guidance for success in online education and help navigating all the software used at UNK. UNK also provides 24-hour assistance with technical issues. The Calvin T. Ryan Library has training services for online students, a large number of electronic resources, and dedicated library staff for digital databases which are utilized by both campus and online students. UNK Online also provides training and designers for any faculty and courses as needed.

G. Budget

PROJECTED COSTS AND ANTICIPATED REVENUES FOR THE FIRST FIVE YEARS As reported by UNK

PROJECTED COSTS		ANTICIPATED REVENUES	
Faculty and Staff		Reallocated Funds	
General Operating	\$15,000	New State Funds	
Library		New Local Funds	
Facilities		Tuition and Fees ²	\$501,188
Five-Year TOTAL	\$15,000	Five-Year TOTAL	\$501,188

¹ Marketing for the first three years

² Based on five students in year one, increasing by five each subsequent year, taking 18 credit hours at \$371.25 online graduate tuition and fees per year.

Committee Comment: The proposal doesn't provide figures for the current number of teachers with physical education endorsements who are teaching health classes without being endorsed or how many vacancies exist in schools because an endorsed teacher isn't available for health education classes. Additionally, there is no support for the projection of 30 students enrolled other than that it is the current enrollment in the MAE in physical education. There is also no discussion of what impact the proposed degree would have on the existing MAE.

Committee Action: That the proposal for the Master of Arts in Education in Health Education at UNK be forwarded to the full Commission without a recommendation.

First Program Review Date: Due June 30, 2029

Health Education, MAE Curriculum

Required Courses	Credit Hours	New or Existing Course
KSS 840 – Essentials of Sports Nutrition	3	Existing UNK
KSS 850 – Research Method in Kinesiology and Sport Sciences	3	Existing UNK
KSS 855P – Promoting Healthy Youth Behaviors	3	Existing UNK
KSS 861 – Applied Physiology of Exercise	3	Existing UNK
KSS 864P – School Health Methods	3	Existing UNK
KSS 874 – Seminar and Practicum in Health or Physical Education	3	Existing UNK
KSS 875 – Advocacy and Leadership in Health and Physical Education	3	Existing UNK
PHHB 8206 – A Public Health Approach to Mental Health	3	Existing UNO
PHHB 8360 – Community Health	3	Existing UNO
PHHB 8600 – Health Behavior	3	Existing UNO
TOTAL	30	

University of Nebraska at Kearney – Proposal for New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE

Dr. Fimple presented the program proposal, noting this program would be a collaborative effort between UNK and UNO with UNK housing and facilitating the program. The program is designed for those holding a physical education teaching degree and wanting to add an endorsement in health science education, and people working in the health sector that teach health education. Dr. Fimple stated the Committee requested additional information and did get responses from the University.

Dr. Erin Sweeney, Associate Professor, Kinesiology & Sport Sciences, provided additional information on the proposal and answered Commissioners' questions.

Committee action: That the proposal for a Master of Arts in Education in Health Education at UNK be forwarded to the full Commission without a recommendation.

Commissioner Von Behren made a motion to approve the University of Nebraska at Kearney's Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Health Education, MAE. Commissioner Weber seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. Voting no: Griffin and Headrick. By statute six affirmative votes are required to approve the proposal. The motion failed.

Dr. Baumgartner stated that since a majority of Commissioners did not vote to approve, a vote to disapprove the program proposal is needed, the University of Nebraska at Kearney can withdraw the proposal, or the Commission can vote to hold a special meeting to gather more information, discuss, and vote on the proposal. If a meeting is voted on it must be held within 90 days from when the proposal was received by the Commission.

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to hold a special meeting to address additional questions and information regarding the University of Nebraska at Kearney's Proposal for a New Instructional Program - Health Education, MAE. Commissioner Headrick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Organizational Unit – Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development

Dr. Fimple presented the program proposal, stating the goal of this Center is to connect academic learning with workforce demands. Dr. Fimple stated statistics verify a lack of qualified employees in several fields and support the collaborative approach the center would provide. Many letters of support were received from several UNO departments, colleges, and outside businesses.

Dr. Erin Bass, Professor, UNO College of Business; Executive Director Competencies, Skills and Workforce Development, Innovative and Learning-Centric Initiatives answered questions and provided additional information on the proposal.

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the University of Nebraska at Omaha's – Proposal for New Organizational Unit – Center for Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Griffin, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Annual Reports from Out-of-state and Private Institutions

Dr. Fimple discussed Institutions that provided annual reports.

- Crown College, St. Bonifacius, MN (at Christ Community Church, Omaha)

Proposal to Create the Master of Arts in Education in Health Education at UNK

Summary of Actions

Proposal received, August 15, 2025

Committee meeting, September 22, 2025

Staff Recommendation: That the Committee approve the Master of Arts in Education in Health Education at UNK.

Committee Discussion: The committee expressed several concerns (see Appendix 3).

Committee Recommendation: That the proposal be forwarded to the full Commission without a recommendation (see Appendix 3).

September 22: Staff presented the concerns to the university.

September 26: UNK responded via email (see Appendix 4).

Commission meeting, October 3, 2025,

Commission Action: It was moved and seconded to approve the proposal for the MAE in Health Education. Seven Commissioners were present. Five voted aye and two voted nay. The program was not approved.

Commission Voting Rules: For a new program to be approved (or disapproved) it must receive aye votes from the majority of Commissioners. There are currently ten sitting Commissioners, so six aye votes would be needed for a proposal to be approved or disapproved. If the Commission does not approve or disapprove a program within 90 days of receipt of the proposal, it stands approved at the 90-day mark (see statutes and rules below).

Additional Commission Action: A motion was made and seconded that a special meeting be held to reconsider the proposal. Seven Commissioners voted aye.

October 6-8,

Subsequent: Commissioner Comments Clarifying Voting: One concern was lack of evidence of need and demand for the program. A second issue was an unrealistic budget. Last was the possible overlapping of two endorsements, something that the commentator thought might be addressed by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Relevant Statutes

Nebraska Revised Statutes §85-1409.

(2) Commission action on any item shall require a majority of those present at meetings in which there is a quorum, except... approval or disapproval of a new program or disapproval of an existing program pursuant to section 85-1414 shall require the concurrence of a majority of the members.

Nebraska Revised Statutes §85-1414.

(1)...the commission shall establish an ongoing process to review, monitor, and approve or disapprove the new and existing programs of public institutions...in order to provide compliance and consistency with the comprehensive statewide plan and to prevent unnecessary duplication.

(2)(a)...the commission shall have ninety days from the date the program was submitted to take action to approve or disapprove a program or it shall stand approved.

(7) The commission shall establish criteria for the review, monitoring, and approval or disapproval of programs. The governing boards of the public institutions shall be responsible for assuring the quality and effectiveness of programs offered by their institutions. The commission's criteria shall be designed to (a) meet educational needs and (b) assure efficiency and avoid unnecessary duplication. Criteria shall include:

- (i) Centrality to the role and mission of the public institution;*
- (ii) Consistency with the comprehensive statewide plan;*
- (iii) Evidence of need and demand; and*
- (iv) Adequacy of resources to support proposed new programs.*

The criteria shall not infringe on the prerogative of the governing boards to make decisions on the quality of staff and the design of curriculum.

Relevant Administrative Rules

TITLE 281 CHAPTER 4 - RULES AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING REVIEW OF PROGRAMS OF PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

004 REVIEW OF NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

004.02 Review Process

004.02.A. Governing boards of public institutions shall submit to the Commission all proposals for new programs after the governing board has approved the program and prior to implementation.

004.02.B. The format for the proposal shall be prescribed by the Commission.

004.02.C. The Commission shall have ninety days from the date a complete final proposal is submitted to the Commission to disapprove a program or it shall stand approved.

004.02.D. Following consultation with the governing board, the Commission may require, as a condition of approval, and as evidence of need and demand, that a new program not constitute unnecessary duplication and that it meet minimum performance

standards established by the Commission. The Commission may require an institution to submit a periodic status report until the conditions are satisfied. If the program does not meet the performance standards, the Commission shall review the program and may continue or withdraw the approval of the program.

004.04 Criteria for Review of New Instructional Programs

Review criteria for new instructional programs shall include the following:

004.04.A Centrality to the role and mission of the public institution. *The program shall be consistent with the institutional role and mission, as defined by law and in the Comprehensive Statewide Plan of the Commission. Except for new programs submitted for conditional approval under section 004.03, only those programs that are consistent with the institution's role and mission shall be approved.*

004.04.B Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan. *The program shall not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan as approved by the Commission.*

004.04.C Evidence of need and demand. *The program shall meet significant educational needs of the state or service area and shall not unnecessarily duplicate other programs, and the program shall serve reasonable and appropriate numbers of students and produce sufficient credit hours.*

004.04.C(1). Evidence of need and demand may include quantifiable data and/or qualitative information and may be tailored to be appropriate to the field of study.

004.04.C(2). The Commission may, as appropriate, evaluate the extent to which the program will contribute to the economic development of the state by providing skilled employees or services for businesses located in the state or by attracting high quality firms to the state.

004.04.C(3). The Commission may also consider societal needs. Some programs, such as those in selected liberal arts, humanities, or fine arts disciplines, may be justified because they offer individual and societal benefits that may be independent of labor force or market demand. Those programs may provide benefits to the state by instilling in citizens a capacity for advanced learning, by providing a source of new knowledge, by advancing understanding of the fundamentals of civilizations, by enhancing the quality of life through literature and the fine and performing arts, or by other similar outcomes.

004.04D. Adequacy of available resources. *The program shall have adequate resources to offer appropriate educational experiences for students and shall use its resources efficiently. The institution shall provide evidence that it has adequate resources to establish and sustain the program. The Commission strongly encourages the sharing of resources, such as telecommunications and instructional technologies, with other institutions of higher education. For each category of resources identified below, the*

institution shall identify the basis on which the conclusions about adequacy and efficiency were made.

004.04D(1) Faculty and Staff Resources. Faculty and staff resources shall be adequate for the program, given the institution's mission, and the nature of the program.

004.04D(2) Library/Information Resources. Library and information resources shall be adequate and appropriate for the program.

004.04D(3) Physical Facilities. Physical facilities shall be adequate to sustain the program.

004.04D(4) Instructional Equipment. Instructional equipment shall be adequate and appropriate for the program.

004.04E Avoid unnecessary duplication. Prevention or elimination of unnecessary program duplication shall be a high priority of the Commission. The Commission will consider whether instructional programs are unnecessarily duplicative of similar offerings in their geographic service area, in other areas of the state, or in the region. The Commission will consider the availability of student exchange programs offered by other educational entities, such as the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

The entire rule, which includes existing program review and review of new organizational units, is at https://ccpe.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/RR_281NAC4.pdf.

]University of Nebraska at Kearney - Health Education MAE Proposal

1. How many teachers in Nebraska hold Physical Education endorsements?

In Nebraska specifically, 97% of schools require the PE teacher to be certified, licensed, or endorsed by the state of Nebraska in physical education (Nebraska Adolescent Health Report, 2023).

Currently, there are limitations in publicly available data on the number of teachers who hold *only* a physical education endorsement. Some teachers may have a physical education endorsement in addition to other subject endorsements but are not actively teaching physical education classes. (e.g. elementary education/physical education; math/physical education).

2. How many Physical Education teachers in Nebraska have Physical Education endorsements that don't have Health endorsements?

According to the Nebraska Department of Education (2024-2025)

- Nearly one-third (30%) of endorsed Physical Education teachers in Nebraska lack a health endorsement (369 of 1,208 total), underscoring the need for additional health-specific preparation.

3. How many Nebraska Physical Education Teachers teach Health without a *degree* in Health?

The Nebraska Department of Education does not disaggregate Health and Physical Education degree areas, which limits precision in tracking. However, current data highlight significant preparation gaps

According to the NDE 2024-25 academic year directory:

A total of 1,284 educators who teach in the Health/PE curriculum in Nebraska public and private schools

- 402 (31%) hold only a bachelor's degree
- 159 (12%) hold a bachelor's plus hours (less than 30 hours).
- 4 teachers listed hold less than a bachelor's degree.

Initial teaching certificates, for endorsements obtained Sept. 2023-August 2024, show

- 36 physical education endorsements
- 4 health endorsements.

The most recent NDE data available for endorsements on current teaching certificates, published Sept. 2023 for the year 2022, shows since 2018, 13 physical education endorsements were added to current Nebraska certificates, with only 4 health

endorsements added. Only one PE endorsement and zero Health endorsements were added in 2022.

Overall, endorsements granted do not seem to be keeping up with workforce demands, as evident by NDE's Teacher Vacancy Survey (2024), meaning this degree could help satisfy the need for qualified health teachers.

4. How many Nebraska teachers are teaching Health education without an endorsement?

According to the Nebraska Adolescent Health Report (2023)

- 7 out of 10 health educators were certified, licensed, or endorsed by Nebraska to teach health.
- An estimated 30% of teachers are currently educating students in health who could benefit from earning the new Health Education MAE.

The number of lead health teachers whose professional preparation was concentrated in health education is declining. Currently, only 44% of Nebraska lead health teachers report that their primary professional preparation emphasized health education or health and physical education, a nearly 20% decrease since 2020 (Nebraska Adolescent Health Report, 2023).

5. Are there vacancies for teachers in Health education classes?

According to the Nebraska Department of Education's Teacher Vacancy Survey, (2024)

- 16.5 FTE health/PE positions in the state were left unfilled last year
- 11 left entirely vacant
- 5.5 filled by someone other than a fully qualified teacher

The Nebraska Department of Education earmarked Health and/or Physical Education as a designated shortage area in the state of Nebraska for the academic year 2024-2025.

Note: As of September 24, 2025, 3 health education positions were listed as open, posted on NDE's website.

Although many districts assign teachers to cover both health and PE, there is a clear shortage of educators with specialized preparation in health.

This is particularly pressing given that 69% of 9th graders must take health education, and 92% of schools require students to complete two or more health courses (Nebraska Healthy Schools, 2020).

6. According to the proposal MAE in PE has 30 students, the proposal projects 30 students for the Health Education MAE, where are these students coming from? What supports the projection of 30 students?

The enrollment projection is 5 new students each year, with a projection of 30 students enrolled in six years. This projection target is feasible based on current demand, existing student pathways to the degree, and limited competition in the region.

Teachers already represent a strong potential audience. In the past two years, UNO recorded 19 students completing a physical education only teaching bachelor's program, many of whom may seek additional graduate-level coursework to broaden their expertise in health education and to advance on the pay scale.

Many courses offered in the proposed program also align with the most common professional development topics teachers have reported wanting additional knowledge about mental and emotional health (59%), teaching skills for behavior change (59%), and violence prevention (59%) (Nebraska Adolescent Health Report, 2023).

In addition to Physical Education teachers, family science majors, school nurses, and health educators outside of the school setting may have interest in the program.

According to the Nebraska Healthy Schools (2020)

- 16% of lead health teacher's professional preparation was taught in Family Science, which establishes a reasonable pipeline from this area of study to the proposed master's program.
- 1/3 of Family Science UNK undergraduate students continue to graduate programs, and roughly one third also minor in Behavioral Health. While many pursue counseling licensure, a notable share has historically chosen career paths in human development, public health, and service careers, all of which connect naturally to health education.

School nurses may also need education within this area to assist with enrollment. Recent research by Sweeney et al. (2024) found that

- more than 1/2 of elementary school nurses reported inadequate preparation for teaching menstrual health and hygiene, an example of the gaps in professional preparation that this degree could address.

Job posting demand for Health Educators is rated "high" in Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado. (Lightcast, Q3 2025).

Lightcast Data collected from 2022 to 2024 showed

- Nebraska added 62 jobs (a 18.6% increase)
- Kansas added 51 (13.3% increase)
- Colorado added 38 (4% increase).

Within these areas of demand, there also exists little to no competition in the region. Within Nebraska, only Hastings College offers a Health Education MAE, which is not fully online.

According to data from Lightcast Q3 2025 Data Set, Hastings College had 21 completions in the past five years of data points (with the most recent data available from 2023). Broadening out to the region, Lightcast data showed no programs available to complete a Health Education master's program in Kansas, Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, or South Dakota.

7. Can the demand support 2 programs in similar fields (30 in PE and 30 in HE? Who is the audience in which will provide such student enrollment for the Health Education MAE?

While there may be some overlap between the audience of prospective students for these two programs, they serve distinct benefits to learners. With the previously identified student pipelines and the demonstrated market demand, both programs are well positioned to sustain healthy enrollment.

Elementary PE teachers (who do not teach a health) or a strength and conditioning teacher may be more drawn to the Physical Education MAE. In contrast, secondary PE teacher who also teach health, a family science teacher, or a school nurse may find the Health Education MAE more due to its focused coursework. As rural communities increasingly require educators to teach across multiple subject areas, the Health Education MAE provides valuable knowledge and skills to support this expanded responsibility

The previously noted growing demand for Health educators, in addition, specifically aligns with the Health Education degree, not the Physical Education degree. The skills needed for these positions better align with the newly proposed degree.

8. Is there demand for both Physical Education and Health Education MAE?

Undergraduate teacher preparation programs, not specifically Health education, often provide limited training in the subject matter. Family consumer science, health and physical education teachers, or students who were endorsed only in physical education who are teaching health classes may seek a graduate program in health to strengthen their content knowledge. Earning a master's degree also enables educators to advance on their district's salary scale, providing both professional and financial incentives to pursue the Health Education MAE.

9. How much out of state enrollment is online?

University-wide

- 17.7% of currently enrolled online-only students are living out of state (385 students out of 2,172 total distance-only students).
- In the Physical Education MAE program from 2020-2025, 22% of applicants were out of state and 3% were international applications (74 applications from Nebraska residents, 21 from out of state, and 3 from international).

As a result, we'd estimate roughly 20% of total enrollment in the Health Education MAE would be from outside the state of Nebraska.

10. Is there demand from out of state students for a Health Education MAE program?

Nationwide, 458 students completed health education master's programs in 2023, (Lightcast, Q3 2025), reflecting strong demand beyond Nebraska. This national market further supports the feasibility of out-of-state enrollment.

The institution producing the highest number of Health education graduates, American College of Education, is a for-profit, online-only institution, and as a campus-based, private institution, UNK would provide a substantially different educational experience for students.

Several states require completion of a master's degree as part of their licensure process or for advancement in teaching status. For example, to maintain teacher licenses in New York, Maryland, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, they all require their teachers to earn a master's degree. Most US states also allow a teacher to move up the pay scale as an incentive to earning a master's degree.

11. Can someone be available to discuss the details of the curriculum?

Yes, program director Dr. Erin Sweeney.