



Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

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Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

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INTRODUCTION

One hundred fifty-eight years into its statehood, the knowledge, skills, and discoveries that result from postsecondary education are more critical than ever to Nebraska's well-being as it faces forces such as global competition, technological innovation, and social change. To their great credit, Nebraskans have valued postsecondary education since before statehood, and they have created and supported a comprehensive network of colleges and universities that has continuously developed to meet the needs of students, communities, and the state.

The constitution and statutes of Nebraska assign the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education the responsibility for comprehensive planning for postsecondary education in Nebraska. The purpose of the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education* is to provide direction for the future of postsecondary education in Nebraska. It identifies goals that will lead to an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated higher education network throughout the state. It is used by the Coordinating Commission to facilitate most of its statutory decision-making processes.

For the state and its students to receive maximum benefits, the *Comprehensive Plan* must be accepted and supported by the educational community, the governor, the Legislature, businesses, and citizens within our state. Most importantly, it must reflect and project the values and aspirations of the people of Nebraska.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is built upon the foundation of existing postsecondary educational institutions within our state, the current and projected demographics of the state, the economic and political realities of the state, and the state's constitution and statutes. By statute, the *Comprehensive Plan* must include the role and mission assignments for each public postsecondary education institution, as well as the Commission's recommended guidelines on issues such as tuition and fee levels, admission standards, dual credit, and articulation. It is the shared vision and statewide goals, however, that most influence the design of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

As the environment for postsecondary education changes, the *Comprehensive Plan* must continually evolve and adjust. The Commission approved the state's first *Comprehensive Plan* in June 1992. In 1999, the state Legislature passed LB 816, calling for review and revision of the *Comprehensive Plan* by the Commission, in collaboration with higher education governing boards. As the Commission noted in its 2000 revision, it is the responsibility of those who are interested in education and care about Nebraska's future to review regularly this vital document to assure it meets the state's changing needs.

Since 2000, the Commission has updated the *Comprehensive Plan* from time to time to meet the challenges of the changing educational environment, incorporate evolving best practices into the recommended guidelines, modify institutional roles and missions based on legislative action, maintain up-to-date institutional peer groups, and add national and institutional comparative metrics. In 2022, changes to Peru State College's role and mission and the state educational attainment goal set by the 107th Legislature, Second Session, in LR 335 were incorporated into the *Comprehensive Plan* along with updates to several guidelines.

Postsecondary Education Institutions and Structure: An Overview

Nebraskans benefit from a comprehensive network of diverse two- and four-year, public and private postsecondary educational institutions that provide an array of programs and services (see Table 1 on page iii). This network of institutions is comprised of:

- **Public sector institutions**, which include: the University of Nebraska's four campuses and the two-year College of Technical Agriculture; three state colleges; and six area community colleges, which have a total of 14 campuses and numerous centers.
- **Independent, nonprofit colleges and universities**, which are comprised of four-year colleges and universities and two federally funded tribal colleges.
- **Private career schools**, which encompass more than 50 institutions offering programs in areas such as cosmetology, business, allied health, real estate, and skilled crafts.

The University of Nebraska is governed by a constitutionally established, eight-member, elected Board of Regents. There also are four non-voting student regents, each representing a University of Nebraska campus.

The state colleges are governed by a constitutionally established, seven-member Board of Trustees comprised of six members appointed by the governor and approved by the Legislature, and the Nebraska Commissioner of Education, as well as three non-voting student trustees representing each of the colleges.

Each of the six community college areas is governed by a separate 11-member governing board elected from within the college's geographic service area. Five of the area boards are assisted and coordinated by the constitutionally referenced Nebraska Community College Association.

Most of the independent colleges and universities have their own governing boards that select their own members.

Most of the private career schools are licensed through the state Department of Education and, most often, are managed by their owners.

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education is a constitutional agency with responsibilities for higher education planning and coordination. Its 11 Commissioners are appointed by the governor with approval by the Legislature. The Commission's role is that of a coordinating entity, not that of a governing board. The Commission's primary purposes include promoting cooperation and collaboration among all sectors of higher education in the state and eliminating unnecessary duplication among the public sector institutions.

TABLE 1 (A)

NEBRASKA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

SECTOR	INSTITUTION
THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES	<p>Central Community College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Columbus Campus - Grand Island Campus - Hastings Campus <p>Metropolitan Community College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elkhorn Valley Campus - Fort Omaha Campus - South Omaha Campus - Sarpy County Campus <p>Mid-Plains Community College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McCook Community College - North Platte Community College <p>Northeast Community College</p> <p>Southeast Community College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice Campus - Lincoln Campus - Milford Campus <p>Western Nebraska Community College</p>
THE STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM	<p>Chadron State College</p> <p>Peru State College</p> <p>Wayne State College</p>
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA	<p>University of Nebraska at Kearney</p> <p>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</p> <p>University of Nebraska Medical Center</p> <p>University of Nebraska at Omaha</p> <p>Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture</p>
TRIBAL COLLEGES	<p>Little Priest Tribal College</p> <p>Nebraska Indian Community College</p>

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE PLAN FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

<p>INDEPENDENT NOT-FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES</p>	<p>Bellevue University Bryan College of Health Sciences CHI Health School of Radiologic Technology Clarkson College College of Saint Mary Concordia University-Nebraska Creighton University Doane University Hastings College Life Chiropractic College West Midland University Nebraska Methodist College Nebraska Wesleyan University Osiri University* Pillar Seminary* Ricketts Great Books College St. Gregory the Great Seminary Summit Christian College Union Adventist University York University</p> <p>*Administrative office only</p>
<p>PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS</p> <p>(Regulated by the Nebraska Department of Education and other agencies)</p>	<p><u>Categories</u> Business Schools Barber & Cosmetology Schools Driver Training Schools Hospitals offering Nursing & Allied Health Programs Pilot Schools Real Estate Schools Trade & Technical Schools Modeling Schools Miscellaneous Schools</p>

TABLE 1 (B)
**OUT-OF-STATE INSTITUTIONS AUTHORIZED
TO OPERATE IN NEBRASKA**

INSTITUTION	CITY / STATE
Andrews University	Berrien Springs, MI
Crown College	St. Bonifacius, MN
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Daytona Beach, FL
La Sierra University	Riverside, CA
North Park Theological Seminary	Chicago, IL
University of Missouri	Columbia, MO
University of South Dakota	Vermillion, SD
Western Governors University	Salt Lake City, UT

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Chapter 1

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR NEBRASKA'S FUTURE

Vision for Nebraska Postsecondary Education

Nebraskans will reap many benefits from affordable, accessible, and high-quality postsecondary education. Nebraska's people will value and support postsecondary institutions that are vital, vigorous, and visionary. Each postsecondary institution will fulfill its role and mission with distinction by being responsive to changing academic, workforce, societal, economic, cultural, and community development needs. Together, Nebraska's postsecondary institutions will provide access to educational opportunities that meet the diverse needs of students and citizens; create environments that foster student success; position Nebraska to excel in the global economy; and exercise careful, creative, and cooperative stewardship of available resources.

State Educational Attainment Goal

It is the goal of the State of Nebraska that at least seventy percent of 25- to 34-year-old Nebraskans have a degree, certificate, diploma, or other postsecondary or industry-recognized credential with economic value by 2030. (*Legislative Resolution 335, 107th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2022*)

The Evolving Environment

Nebraska is known as the home of the "good life," made possible by good K-12 schools, high quality of life, low unemployment, a strong work ethic, rich cultural offerings, and an array of postsecondary education opportunities. Given the demographic and economic realities within the state and rapid changes in the global economy, this *Plan* charts a course for creative and proactive leadership in postsecondary education that can position Nebraska to maintain the good life far into the future.

Nebraska is a geographically large state with a widely dispersed population. Minority populations are the only segment of the population projected to show any long-term growth, and that growth will be gradual compared to the rest of the nation. Nebraska's working-age population is projected to grow by only 3% between 2010 and 2030. The only significant population growth is expected to occur in the 13 metropolitan counties located primarily in the southeastern quarter of the state. These demographic projections, combined with Nebraska's traditionally low unemployment rates, its aging population, and its relative lack of net in-migration, will exacerbate existing workforce shortages and threaten the state's future economic growth.

While the state's population is projected to grow slowly, the costs of needed local, state, and federal government services and infrastructures, including those of public postsecondary education, will likely continue to grow. This places an increasing burden on the taxpayers of the state. Nebraska traditionally has one of the highest participation rates in postsecondary education in the country. It also ranks among the top 10 states in the nation in per capita state and local appropriations for public postsecondary education. Nebraska average annual wages rank about average, making the tax burden to support state services, including public postsecondary education, relatively high.

This *Plan* builds on the educational strengths of the state. The state and its postsecondary institutions can work together to effectively address the challenges facing Nebraska and prepare the state and its citizens to be successful. The economic base in Nebraska may have limitations, but Nebraska's educational base is strong and provides an opportunity to significantly impact the state's destiny.

The following section highlights some of the major forces for change in the future, along with their potential impacts on postsecondary education and the state.

DEMOGRAPHIC FORCES

- The state as a whole will experience modest population growth, with metropolitan and other urban areas experiencing most of the growth. In contrast, many rural counties will continue to lose population. As an illustration, the percentage of the state's population residing in Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster counties has increased from 43.1% in 1980 and 48.9% in 2000 to 56.0% in 2020.
- Statewide, total numbers of high school graduates are projected to continue to increase slightly before leveling off by 2027. The proportion of high school graduates from minority groups is expected to increase consistently as over a third of the 2020 population from birth to age 14 was persons of color.
- The population will become more diverse as numbers of Hispanics and other minorities grow faster than the White, non-Hispanic population, which declined between 2000 and 2020.
- Nebraska's postsecondary education attainment gap between minority populations and the White, non-Hispanic population is among the largest in the country at 25.7%.
- Migrants to Nebraska from other states tend to have lower incomes, lower educational attainment, and be from minority groups. In contrast, Nebraska continues to see significant out migration of persons with at least a bachelor's degree.
- About 46% of PK-12 students qualified for free and reduced lunches in 2020-21.
- The proportion of Nebraskans aged 65 and older is projected to increase from 13.5% in 2010 to 20.4% in 2030. The proportion of Nebraskans aged 20 to 64 is projected to decline from 58.4% to 53.6%.
- High proportions of Nebraskans aged 55 and older are employed compared to most states and the nation.

Potential Impacts:

- Overall, institutions of postsecondary education will see increased competition for traditional-age students, both in-state and out-of-state.
- More of these students than in the past will come to postsecondary education with substantial financial need.
- Institutions will develop new strategies and support programs for attracting, retaining, and graduating students from underrepresented populations.
- Nebraska institutions will intensify efforts to recruit out-of-state students, including international students, and will work harder to retain Nebraska students.
- As more adults remain in the workforce, there will be a continuing need for access to lifelong learning and retraining opportunities to keep skills current to workplace needs. Institutions will continue to develop stackable credentials to meet the upskilling needs of adults in the workforce.
- Many adults will require some form of adult basic education, including English Language Learner (ELL) instruction.
- Institutions will develop new strategies and support programs for attracting and retaining adult students who need new skills and training, some of whom will enroll part-time and take courses via distance education technology.
- As the population becomes more diverse, educational attainment will decrease unless educational participation and credential completion among underrepresented populations increases.

ECONOMIC FORCES

- Employers are demanding a skilled workforce that can keep pace with an explosion of knowledge and rapid technological change – locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.
- It is estimated that 72% of Nebraska jobs will require at least some postsecondary education by 2031. This includes everything from vocational certificates through graduate and professional degrees.
- Nebraska consistently has one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates.
- Economic growth in Nebraska is limited by shortages of workers, especially those with science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and design training.
- Nebraska ranks low in comparison with other states in private and federal research funds, limiting opportunities for new business growth and innovation within the state.
- Agriculture remains a foundation of Nebraska's economy and is becoming more technical and diversified, with increasing emphasis on precision production, value-added processing, and niche marketing.
- Economic development is constrained by the out-migration of Nebraskans with at least a bachelor's degree who do not find employment opportunities in Nebraska that match their skills and interests.

Potential Impacts:

- Postsecondary institutions will need to respond rapidly to employer needs and become increasingly flexible in course content and in the use of technology in delivery of instruction.
- Institutions will see a growing demand from business and from students for specialized knowledge and skill certifications (in professional, vocational, and technical areas such as information technology) to meet workforce needs.
- Businesses will become more involved in assisting students/future employees with the costs of their education as a way to meet workforce needs.
- The state will expand incentives for recruiting and educating students in targeted workforce shortage areas such as the Nebraska Career Scholarship, increased funding for internships, and expanded apprenticeships.
- Efforts to raise student awareness of workforce shortage areas and career opportunities will begin as early as middle school.
- Businesses will expect increased levels of assistance from postsecondary education in the areas of technology transfer, applied research, and technical assistance.
- Advances in information technologies will create expanded opportunities for businesses to locate production facilities at sites remote from central offices.
- It will become increasingly important for the state's primary research institutions to compete effectively for federal and private research funding.
- Postsecondary institutions will continue to encourage and reward innovation and entrepreneurship, not only among their faculty and their students but Nebraska businesses, as well.
- Innovation and expansions sparked by postsecondary institutions will lead to more employment opportunities that are attractive to recent graduates, creating a virtuous circle of economic growth.

POLITICAL FORCES

- Competition for state funding continues to grow, as does the motivation to lower the state and local tax burdens on businesses and individuals given other states' actions to reduce taxes.
- Provision of services for an aging population requires more attention and resources from state policymakers.
- Support remains strong for public institutions that demonstrate responsiveness to local, regional, and state needs.
- There is growing pressure on both K-12 and postsecondary education that students be adequately prepared for college and careers.
- The significant increase in the cost of education and student indebtedness has led to increasing recognition among lawmakers that postsecondary education must be made more affordable.

- State and national policymakers are increasingly interested in understanding employment outcomes and providing that information to students in an easily accessible and transparent manner.
- State and national policymakers and accrediting bodies increasingly expect measures of accountability and performance from postsecondary education institutions.

Potential Impacts:

- Restrictions on property taxes for K-12 education and community colleges, as well as other state and local taxes, may result in heightened competition for state tax funds and increased tuition.
- Students, parents, and state and federal policymakers will demand creative solutions to reduce college cost and student debt and mitigate its effects on career, family, and consumption opportunities.
- Postsecondary educational institutions will have a strong, vested interest in the welfare of Nebraska's economy and in the employment outcomes of their students.
- Reporting on employment outcomes for graduates, both in terms of location and earnings, will become more prevalent in the state through the Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) and at the federal level.
- The accountability expectations of governing boards, legislators, consumers, and accrediting agencies will result in improved institutional accountability measures and clearer reporting.

EDUCATIONAL FORCES

- Nebraska maintains one of the higher high school graduation rates in the country. However, there are significant differences in graduation rates by race, ethnicity, sex, and family income.
- Nebraska has traditionally had a high rate of participation in postsecondary education, though other states are closing the gap in terms of the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education.
- As in other states, too many Nebraska high school graduates are assessed as needing remediation when they enroll in college.
- The effects of learning loss from the COVID-19 pandemic will be a challenge for K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions for some time.
- High schools and colleges are facing increasing demands to provide a challenging curriculum that allows appropriately prepared high school students to take college-level courses for high school and college credit.
- Career academies are increasing in popularity as postsecondary education, K-12, and the business community partner to address workforce needs.
- The number of postsecondary students preparing for, entering, and staying in the teaching profession is declining.
- “Nontraditional” students – including students older than 22, students with children, veterans, and students who work full time – make up a significant proportion of

postsecondary enrollments, particularly at community colleges, which serve large numbers of students in non-credit as well as credit-bearing courses.

- Changes in the Federal Pell Grant Program will open up educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals.
- Nebraska's college students are mobile. Each fall, over 25% of new-to-campus students at public institutions are transfer students, and Nebraska students complete their undergraduate degrees after transferring at a higher percentage than the national average.
- Some postsecondary institutions increasingly rely on part-time faculty to teach courses.
- While Nebraska institutions have maintained comparatively low tuition, net price of attendance remains very significant to most families and is a barrier to attendance and completion. It may also influence students' choice of majors.
- In spite of significant progress in addressing deferred maintenance needs, facilities on the campuses are aging and in need of repair, replacement, renovation, adaptation to new technologies, and upgrades to safety and security measures.
- Information technology is ubiquitous in all aspects of K-12 and postsecondary education, from communications to media access to student services. There are no areas of postsecondary education untouched by the need for up-to-date software, hardware, and high-speed broadband capacity and availability.
- Information technologies have vastly expanded access to postsecondary education. Distance is less relevant to off-campus postsecondary instruction for more learners, and many on-campus students enroll in a mix of face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses.
- Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic only magnified the impact of the ongoing digital divide in high-speed broadband capacity and availability.
- As information technology has grown in importance, so has the threat of cyber attacks and the cost of defending and insuring against them.
- Nationally, corporations, for-profit postsecondary institutions, and new training entities such as coding academies and massive open online course platforms are responding rapidly to the open market environment, greatly expanding opportunities for in-house corporate training, online courses, and training programs that are valued by employers but do not award traditional credentials.
- As new providers enter the market, competency-based credentials such as badges are vying for credibility alongside traditional credit-hour based credentials.

Potential Impacts:

- High schools and colleges will concur on what constitutes college and career readiness and align testing and curricula to mitigate the need for remediation at the postsecondary level.
- Postsecondary institutions and high schools will increasingly offer dual enrollment programs for high school students to enrich the high school curriculum and provide a transition to college, including in some cases the award of associate degrees.
- Growing student mobility and affordability concerns will require that postsecondary institutions continue to strengthen transfer and articulation agreements.
- More students will borrow and/or borrow more to fund their education.

- Many students will be employed while in college, typically adding to the time it takes them to complete their education. Some may not graduate or may enroll intermittently for long periods of time.
- The State of Nebraska and the institutions will continue to direct funds toward maintenance, repair, replacement, and renovation of existing facilities, as well as adapting facilities to new technologies.
- As costs of education continue to escalate, institutions increasingly will look toward methods of collaboration with other institutions to become more efficient.
- Efforts must be made to ensure that inadequate internet access and/or speed or excessive costs do not limit the ability of communities and students to take advantage of the full range of course offerings now available online.
- Nebraska institutions will engage with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services to find new opportunities to serve incarcerated individuals.
- The postsecondary environment will remain highly competitive as new education and training providers enter Nebraska either physically or online. Quality and consumer protection standards will need to adapt to the changing environment nationally and in states.

Shared Values and Beliefs

Focusing on this *Plan's* vision for postsecondary education will help ensure that Nebraskans now and in the future benefit from the “good life” for which the state is known. The vision is based on the following values and beliefs that the Coordinating Commission shares with the leaders of Nebraska postsecondary education institutions and their governing board members:

- All Nebraska citizens deserve reasonable and affordable access to postsecondary education opportunities appropriate to their individual needs and abilities, free of discrimination or harassment.
- While access to postsecondary education is paramount, it is not an end in itself. Student success is the ultimate goal of postsecondary education and is the shared responsibility of students and institutions.
- Nebraska's citizens benefit from a comprehensive network of varied and high-quality postsecondary education institutions that maintain distinct, but complementary, roles and missions.
- The state benefits when Nebraska institutions focus resources on unique areas of excellence in which they can bring major benefits to the state and to students.
- A cooperative relationship between postsecondary education and K-12 education is needed to ensure students enter postsecondary education prepared to succeed.
- Postsecondary education has an important role in supporting the state's economic development goals by contributing to a competent and competitive workforce for our state, by ensuring lifelong learning and training opportunities for our citizens, and by promoting an innovative and entrepreneurial culture that rises to the challenge of globalization.
- Nebraska's postsecondary institutions fill a vital role in many communities by serving as a cultural hub, not only educating their students in the arts and humanities but sharing those learning opportunities with the public whenever possible.
- Postsecondary education's ability to apply information technology effectively to respond rapidly to changing student, employer, and state needs is critical to its success.
- Nebraska's public institutions rely on State of Nebraska funding policies that are fair and predictable and offer appropriate levels of support to enable the institutions to meet the educational needs of students and the state.
- Nebraska public institutions are accountable to the taxpayers for making wise use of resources for programs, services, and facilities, as well as for avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- Nebraska strives to perform at the highest levels nationally in terms of postsecondary access, success, affordability, efficiency, and impact and will measure its performance and progress in these areas.

Major Statewide Goals

The following major statewide goals are critical to the achievement of this *Plan*'s vision for postsecondary education in Nebraska. Accomplishing these goals will require substantial cooperative effort on the part of all persons involved with higher education in the state. Further discussion of each major statewide goal and strategies for the accomplishment of each major goal form the framework for Chapters 2 through 6 of this *Plan*:

Meeting the Needs of Students (Chapter 2)

- Nebraska's institutions and policymakers will increase participation and success in postsecondary education, particularly for low-income populations, and ensure that all Nebraskans are able to access and successfully complete postsecondary education appropriate to their individual needs and abilities.
- Nebraska postsecondary institutions and policymakers will collaborate to ensure that lack of financial resources will not prevent students from accessing and completing postsecondary education in a timely manner without unreasonable student debt.
- Nebraska's postsecondary institutions will cooperate to increase effectiveness, reduce students' costs, and shorten time to degree through innovations in course transfer such as reverse transfer and seamless transfer agreements.
- Nebraska's postsecondary institutions will be student-centered, create environments that foster student success for all students, and offer lifelong learning opportunities that are responsive to students' and workforce needs.
- Nebraska colleges and universities will foster critical thinking skills and provide their graduates with the knowledge and workplace skills needed to be successful employees, innovative entrepreneurs, and responsible citizens on a global stage.

Meeting the Needs of the State (Chapter 3)

- Nebraska will close educational attainment gaps and be among the leading states in overall educational attainment.
- Postsecondary education in Nebraska will be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers and industries to build and sustain a knowledgeable, trained, and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state.
- Postsecondary institutions will contribute to the health and prosperity of the people and to the vitality of the state through research and development efforts, technology transfer and technical assistance, and by attracting external funds to support these activities.

- Postsecondary education institutions will assess evolving needs and priorities of the students and people of Nebraska in a timely manner and will adopt new methods and technologies to address them.
- Postsecondary education will serve the state by preparing individuals for productive, fulfilling lives and by developing and nurturing the citizens and future leaders of Nebraska.
- Postsecondary education institutions will maintain their distinctive role as providers of cultural and artistic opportunities to students and their communities through study, research, and programming.

Meeting Needs by Building Exemplary Institutions (Chapter 4)

- Each Nebraska institution will fulfill its role and mission in an exemplary manner and will compare favorably with peer institutions.
- Nebraska will value postsecondary education and support its investment in public postsecondary education through fair and reliable funding policies that provide appropriate levels of support to enable institutions to excel and meet the educational needs of the state and its students.
- Postsecondary education in Nebraska will be effective in meeting the needs of students and the state, will be efficient in its expenditure of the state's resources, and will be accountable for developing, sustaining, and demonstrating exemplary teaching, learning, research, and public service.

Meeting Educational Needs through Partnerships and Collaboration (Chapter 5)

- Postsecondary education institutions will work as partners with one another and with other entities, including those in the private sector, whenever appropriate to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively to enhance learning opportunities for Nebraska residents.
- Postsecondary education will work effectively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels of education, provide opportunities for early college enrollment, and ensure the college and career readiness of all high school graduates.

Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs (Chapter 6)

- Nebraska will promote a physical environment at each of its public postsecondary institutions that is supportive of role and mission; is well utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; is safe, accessible, cost effective, and well maintained; and is flexible to adapt to future changes in programs and technologies.

Measuring Accomplishments

Nebraska is committed to measuring its progress toward achieving the 70 percent attainment goal for 25- to 34-year-olds and other major statewide goals through national comparisons and institutional peer comparisons. It is the aim of this *Plan* that, when rank order is appropriate, Nebraska will rank among the 10 best states in national comparisons and individual public institutions will rank among the five best institutions in peer comparisons.

National Comparisons

1. Educational attainment by race/ethnicity and age (25 to 34 and 25 to 64), including non-degree credentials with industry-recognized value when data are available
2. Public high school graduation rates
3. Percentage of high school graduates who met or exceeded college readiness benchmarks as measured by the state's eleventh-grade assessment
4. Percentage of high school graduates going directly to college
5. Percentage of population enrolled in college: persons 25-49 without an associate's degree or higher
6. Percentage of first-time, full-time baccalaureate-seeking students who graduated within four years at public four-year institutions
7. Six-year completion rates at any campus for students who started at public four-year campuses
8. Six-year completion rates at any campus for students who started at public two-year campuses
9. State and local appropriations per FTE student
10. Net tuition revenue per FTE student
11. State need-based grant aid per FTE student
12. Percentage of family income needed to pay net price for full-time enrollment at public two-and four-year institutions: families with median incomes
13. Percentage of family income needed to pay net price for full-time enrollment at public two-and four-year institutions: families in lowest income quintile

Peer Comparisons

1. Enrollment percentages by race/ethnicity and low-income status (Pell and loan recipients)
2. Graduation and enrollment status at six and eight years
3. Graduation rates – 150% of normal time by race/ethnicity and low-income status (Pell and loan recipients)
4. Four-year graduation rates – four-year campuses
5. Persistence/attainment outcomes by end of year two – community colleges
6. Remedial student course taking and success – community colleges
7. State and local appropriations per FTE student
8. Tuition and fees per FTE student
9. Education and general spending per FTE student and degree
10. Average net price of attendance for students receiving grant or scholarship aid
11. Average net price of attendance for students receiving federal financial aid from the two lowest income quintiles
12. Percentage of undergraduates with federal loans and median federal loan debt of graduates
13. Research and development expenditures – all sources, University of Nebraska campuses
14. Research and development expenditures – federal sources, University of Nebraska campuses

Non-Comparative Measures

1. Percentage of high school graduates going directly to college by race/ethnicity, sex, and income – state
2. Dual credit, AP, and other early college enrollments – state
3. Number of recent high school graduates enrolled in remedial education – state

4. Number of degrees and credentials awarded in identified high-need areas – institutional and state
5. Number of students completing adult basic education and continuing into postsecondary education – institutional and state
6. Enrollment in non-credit, continuing education – institutional and state
7. Employment outcomes of graduates – institutional and state
8. Educational attainment by county

These national, institutional peer, and non-comparative measures may be updated or adapted to incorporate the best available data as state and national data sources improve or change.

Chapter 2

MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

The heart of any great higher education system is the student, the learner. Education that is vital, vigorous, and visionary begins by identifying and addressing the current and future needs and aspirations of its students.

Goals and Strategies

Major Statewide Goal: Participation and Success

Nebraska institutions and policymakers will seek methods to increase participation and success in higher education and to ensure that access to higher education institutions' programs and services is not restricted by geographic location, economic status, age, culture, disability, color, national origin, or sex.

Access to postsecondary education is vitally important to the people of Nebraska. Its citizens strongly believe that postsecondary education opportunities should be readily available to them. For the most part, Nebraskans enjoy reasonable access to postsecondary education. The sectors of postsecondary education provide Nebraskans with many educational choices and, as a network of institutions, offer access for students of all ability levels.

PARTICIPATION

Nebraskans attend college at a higher rate than the national average, and the great majority choose to remain in Nebraska for their education. Other states have exceeded Nebraska's participation rates in recent years, however, dropping Nebraska's national ranking. Improving participation rates is still an important goal.

- **Strive for the highest participation rate in postsecondary education among the states.**

AFFORDABILITY

Family income levels should not determine whether an individual has access to higher education. Ensuring financial access to higher education is a shared responsibility of state and federal government, higher education institutions, and the students and their families. They

must combine to provide sufficient support to ensure that qualified financially needy students have the opportunity to attend postsecondary education institutions that best match their needs, aspirations, and abilities.

- **Keep the net price of higher education affordable for students.**

Financial Aid

One means of keeping higher education affordable is to provide sufficient amounts of financial aid to needy students. Nebraska does not currently provide adequate financial support to financially needy students.

- **Increase state support for state-administered, need-based financial aid programs to improve Nebraska's competitive position to above the national average.**
- **Ensure that financially needy adult students who are enrolled on a part-time basis have access to the state's financial aid programs.**
- **Explore the potential of deferred tuition payments or installment plans in helping to eliminate financial barriers to higher education.**
- **Encourage employers to provide tuition reimbursement programs for their employees who are taking relevant education and training courses to improve their job skills. Programs that reimburse the employees at the time they pay tuition instead of at the completion of the course further eliminate financial barriers to higher education.**

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are another factor in the affordability of higher education. The rising cost of postsecondary education throughout the country has raised concerns that some students may be priced out of opportunities. While tuition and fees at Nebraska's public institutions are generally less than national averages, paying for a college education is a barrier to higher education for many students and their families.

- **Continue the existing state policy of maintaining moderate tuition rates at public postsecondary education institutions to promote access.**
- **Tuition rates will be moderate in comparison to each institution's peers and will be consistent with these recommended guidelines.**

**Coordinating Commission's
Recommended Tuition & Fee Guidelines:**

1. Tuition and fee rates are set at a level within each sector that is appropriate to that sector's role and mission.

- Community colleges, which offer students career training and lower division academic transfer programs, will have the lowest tuition of the three sectors to ensure they remain the sector with the broadest access. To keep community college tuition at a level that encourages public access, it will be necessary to maintain appropriate levels of state and local support for community colleges.
- State colleges, which have a role and mission focusing on undergraduate and limited graduate-degree education, will have a mid-range level of tuition and fees. Tuition at these regional institutions will be maintained at levels that continue to encourage access by citizens of their regions.
- The University of Nebraska's campuses, which have more comprehensive and differentiated missions that encompass research and extensive professional and graduate-level programming, will have the highest and most differentiated tuition rates of the three public sectors, based on the role and mission of each campus.

2. The state's taxpayers continue to bear the majority of the cost of education for students at public postsecondary institutions, on a per student basis. The students' share of the cost of education, as measured by student payment share, should be appropriate to the role and mission of each sector.

Student payment share, defined as the total revenue from tuition and mandatory fees compared to the total of tuition, mandatory fees, state support, and local support, should adhere to the following differentiations within each sector:

- The student payment share at the community colleges should be the lowest of the three public sectors.
- The student payment share at the state colleges should be greater than the student share at community colleges but less than that at a University of Nebraska campus.
- The student payment share at the University of Nebraska should be greater than either the state colleges or the community colleges.

3. Institutions set comparatively low non-resident tuition and fee rates to attract out-of-state students to the state, which may help to meet the state's needs for additional workers and enhance the academic experience.

4. Tuition for graduate-level and professional courses reflect the higher costs of these programs.

As part of its statutory responsibility to provide the governor and Legislature with a biennial report on tuition and fee rates at Nebraska public postsecondary education institutions, the Commission compares the tuition and fee rates of Nebraska institutions with those of their peer institutions identified in the *Comprehensive Plan*. The Commission also provides data to help measure the affordability of higher education in Nebraska in terms of tuition and net price as a proportion of family income.

NEST 529 College Savings Program

Encouraging families to prepare financially for the cost of postsecondary education is another means of making college more affordable. The Nebraska Educational Savings Trust (NEST) 529 program encourages families to prepare for the cost of a postsecondary education by saving money through tax-saving and investment opportunities. NEST 529 earnings are tax free if they are used for postsecondary expenses or payments on education loans. There are three incentive programs to encourage families to participate in the NEST 529 program:

1. **Meadowlark Savings Pledge:** offers any Nebraska child born on or after January 1, 2021, \$50 to the beneficiary's NEST 529
 2. **Low-Income Matching Scholarship:** provides matching scholarships to eligible low-income beneficiaries of the NEST 529
 3. **Employer Matching Contribution:** provides payments to an employer who matches contributions into an employee's NEST 529
- **Encourage Nebraska families to invest and save funds to offset the future costs of postsecondary education by participating in the NEST 529 program.**

DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

The demographics of Nebraska are changing each year. The number of residents who identify as Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Asian, or with more than one racial/ethnic category is growing. The changing demographics of the state are also reflected in the campuses, and issues and barriers to higher education—either real or perceived—still exist for many in these population groups. This is especially true for low-income and first-generation college students. Overcoming these barriers will benefit these students and their families as well as the state by increasing the numbers of Nebraska citizens who have the education and training needed to contribute to the state's economic and social well-being.

Campuses must also be aware of the special needs of students with disabilities and of returning and first-time adult students. As institutions have become more accessible and accommodating to special-needs students and more flexible in scheduling for non-traditional age students, these students' numbers have also increased, adding to the variety of perspectives and backgrounds reflected on the campuses.

- **Support existing programs and undertake new initiatives to support student success for all students.**
 - Assure that all students, of any age or experience, are welcomed and integrated into campus life and have opportunities to succeed.
 - Increase efforts to recruit and retain a student body that reflects all Nebraskans.
 - Implement programs and allocate resources toward the goal of increasing degree completion rates.

- Use NSWERS and existing databases and indicators to track the progress of all students in higher education in areas such as enrollment, retention, and completion.
- Maintain initiatives to eliminate discrimination and harassment within student bodies, faculty, and staff.
- Provide virtually universal access at community colleges, which will provide educational opportunities ranging from foundations course work to technical and academic transfer programs.
- Assure that campuses are accessible to students with disabilities.
- Provide flexible hours and daytime and evening classes to meet the scheduling needs of students, particularly of working adults enrolled on a part-time basis.
- Support activities, such as mentoring programs and peer counseling, that help students succeed in the campus environment.
- Provide campus resources or partner with community resources, such as childcare providers, that allow students who are parents to make timely progress toward program completion.
- Promote awareness and appreciation of the varied perspectives and backgrounds reflected in Nebraska and the world through curriculum and student campus activities.

USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TO BROADEN ACCESS

Expanded use of electronic distance learning and other instructional technologies is a key strategy in broadening access to postsecondary education and life-long learning for Nebraska citizens. Geographic boundaries and remote locations present few obstacles for most of these technologies. Courses may be delivered via two-way interactive video classrooms or individually to students through internet-based programs at times and places of choice.

Nebraskans are able to choose from a broad array of educational options offered through these various technologies by in-state and out-of-state institutions, businesses, and other entities. Increasingly, course work offered via technology is student-centered, self-paced, and flexible as to time and place.

- **Commit to the use of information technologies to expand educational opportunities; overcome geographic barriers; provide high quality, accessible education programs; and make higher education available at nearly any time or any place.**
 - Through expanded, coordinated, and well-planned use of instructional technologies throughout the state, institutions can:
 - ▶ Use instructional technology and connectivity, when appropriate, to share courses, faculty, and other resources among institutions to make the best use of state resources and to serve students by increasing access to programs and enabling students to enroll concurrently at two or more institutions.
 - ▶ Provide a reasonably efficient method of broadening and enhancing access to postsecondary educational opportunities, particularly to working and place-bound adults.

- ▶ Allow opportunities for innovative and coordinated educational projects among the K-12 schools, postsecondary education, and the communities they serve.
 - ▶ Tailor courses and programs to meet the needs of specific groups of people, regardless of their location.
 - ▶ Serve businesses and their employees through increased access to, and sharing of, educational and business-related expertise.
 - ▶ Share high quality courses and programs taught by outstanding faculty to broaden and enrich the educational experience of students at more institutions and provide greater efficiency in use of the state's resources.
 - ▶ Enable learners, including fully employed adult students, to gain or demonstrate competencies in a variety of ways and be certified by objective means.
 - ▶ Use competency-based learning models to meet the needs of adult learners by offering specific components of traditional courses that represent learning objectives and that are in demand by adult learners.
- Ensure that all distance learning programs available in Nebraska result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degrees/certificates awarded.
 - ▶ Inform citizens of the expectations and standards for educational programs delivered through instructional technologies and, to the extent possible, assure the quality of those educational programs and support services made available to students residing throughout the state.
 - ▶ Endorse best practices/requirements for online programs, such as those developed by the Higher Learning Commission (see Appendix 1), the Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions, and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, and take measures to ensure that courses offered in Nebraska via instructional technologies meet or exceed the standards. The Commission will utilize these best practices/requirements in fulfilling its constitutional and statutory duties to review new programs and to review applications for out-of-state programs and new private colleges.
 - Encourage and reward faculty for incorporating technology into courses and subjects.

Learning Centers

The rapidly expanding use of new distance learning technologies has not only greatly enhanced access but has also made possible cooperative ventures among institutions inside and outside the state that broaden the learning experience of students and expand learning opportunities. Cooperative educational projects, such as community-based learning centers, bring beneficial programs to different regions of the state while saving money for the state and its students.

- **Participate in learning centers and educational consortia that increase access to and participation in higher education throughout the state.**

- The development and operation of a learning center are dependent on the commitment of the community, the state, and the participating institutions for ongoing success. Responsibilities are shared as follows:
 - ▶ Communities are largely responsible for undertaking the initiative to create the learning center within the community, including providing the facility to house it.
 - ▶ The state has a major responsibility for providing statewide connectivity and technology that allows learning centers to import needed programming from higher education institutions.
 - ▶ The institutions that serve the community have primary responsibility for meeting the community's needs in providing appropriate courses and programs.

***Major Statewide Goal:
Student-Centered***

Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions will be student-centered and will offer learning opportunities that are responsive to students' needs.

Equally important to the opportunity to participate in higher education is the opportunity for students to succeed in higher education. Institutions that truly meet student needs provide programs, services, and campus environments that not only meet the current needs of students, but also are sufficiently flexible to meet the need of a changing student population.

PREPARATION AND ADMISSION STANDARDS

Clearly defined preparation and admission standards within a coordinated system of postsecondary education help ensure that students have access to institutions that meet their needs and provide the best opportunity for success. Neither the needs of the students nor the needs of the state are best served when academically unprepared students enroll in institutions.

- **Clearly define and communicate preparation and admission standards to students so that they enroll at institutions where they have the opportunity to succeed at achieving their educational and career goals.**
 - Identify appropriate admission standards reflective of each postsecondary education institution's role and mission and communicate these standards to the K-12 school systems and to adults who are considering enrolling in postsecondary education.
 - The content and expectations of freshman-year course work should be consistent with the admission and preparation standards set by the institutions to help ensure that a

gap does not exist between high school graduation competencies and freshman-year academic expectations.

- Continue articulation agreements between the community colleges and the four-year colleges and universities to ensure that students who do not meet admission standards at four-year institutions can achieve a baccalaureate degree by beginning course work at a community college.
- **Set preparation and admission standards at Nebraska’s postsecondary educational institutions that are comparable to those of their respective peers and that are consistent with the recommended preparation and admission standards guidelines on page 2-10.**

TIME TO DEGREE

Students, their parents, institutions, employers, and Nebraska taxpayers all share an interest in timely progression through postsecondary education into the workplace. For students and their parents, issues of financial burden and cost effectiveness come into play. Institutions benefit because students who are progressing quickly through their instructional programs are less likely to drop out and are more satisfied with their college experience. Given labor shortages in Nebraska, employers also see advantages to timely graduation. Taxpayers prefer students to progress smoothly and quickly through the postsecondary system so that state and local appropriations for public institutions are wisely used and not duplicated.

- **Institutions help students to graduate within a reasonable and predictable time frame.**
 - The benefits of timely degree completion are clearly communicated to students through degree maps for each program of study and quality advising.
 - Needed support services are available and clearly communicated to all students to increase the likelihood of timely graduation.
 - Programs are structured with consideration for time to degree as well as assuring competency in required knowledge and skills.
 - Flexibility in course scheduling, such as adapting to the schedules of working students, facilitates program completion.
 - Comparable and reliable measurements of retention rates and graduation rates are available and publicly accessible from all sectors of postsecondary education.

ARTICULATION

Students do not come to postsecondary education with equivalent preparation levels, and many students earn college credits from more than one postsecondary institution. Each student deserves the opportunity to progress through higher education to the level that meets their educational and career goals. A truly coordinated system of postsecondary education

facilitates opportunities for individuals to move easily from one sector or institution to another as their abilities grow and/or their needs, interests, and educational goals shift.

- **Foster additional articulation agreements that ensure students enrolled in most programs will be able to transfer from one institution to another with ease and with minimal loss of credits or loss of time required to complete their degrees.**
 - A student's options for postsecondary education are not limited by his or her choice of where first to attend college. Provided the institution is properly accredited, learning achievements from the first institution will open doors to new opportunities at other institutions.
 - Articulation agreements at Nebraska postsecondary education institutions are consistent with the recommended guidelines on page 2-11.
- **High school students who participate in dual or concurrent enrollment courses and their parents should be informed of the potential of each course to meet general education and – to the extent possible – major course requirements at all other public colleges or university campuses prior to enrolling in the courses.**

Coordinating Commission's Recommended Preparation and Admission Standards Guidelines

Preparation and admission standards will help Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions demonstrate institutional effectiveness in areas such as retention and graduation rates through comparisons with each institution's peers.

1. Community College Guidelines:

- Community colleges continue their policy of open admissions, although not necessarily to all programs. Different preparation and admission standards that reflect the differences in programs within the community college system are acceptable.
- Community colleges inform prospective students of the recommended preparation level for their anticipated course of study. The entry-level skills of new students are assessed to guide students into courses and programs that facilitate progress to their education or career goals.
- The community colleges provide foundation education coursework in a manner that advances students as quickly as possible to credit-bearing courses for those who are unprepared for college-level work.

2. State College Guidelines:

- Students admitted to any of the state colleges will be prepared to succeed at the state college level upon admission.
- The Nebraska state colleges identify and recommend those high school courses that, if completed satisfactorily, will provide the skills and competencies needed for students to have reasonable probability for academic success at a Nebraska state college.
- The preparation standards recommended by the state colleges are communicated by the institutions to K-12 counselors, students, and their parents.
- The state colleges fund and implement programs to ensure that recommended preparation standards do not interfere with their access or student success goals.
- Ideally, the foundations education needs of students are provided for whenever possible through cooperative arrangements with community colleges.

3. University of Nebraska Guidelines:

- Students admitted to any of the University of Nebraska campuses will be prepared to succeed at the university level upon admission.
- The University's admission standards are communicated by the institutions to K-12 counselors, students, and their parents.
- The University funds and implements programs that promote admission standards consistent with the student success goals of the University.
- Ideally, the foundations education needs of students are provided for whenever possible through cooperative arrangements with community colleges.

Coordinating Commission's Recommended Articulation Guidelines

- 1. Academic credits for equivalent courses at Nebraska public institutions are appropriately recognized by the other public institutions, creating a seamless, coordinated public postsecondary educational network. This guideline applies to students transferring from one sector to another, as well as from one institution to another within the same sector.**
 - Credit earned with a satisfactory grade in an equivalent course at one accredited public college or university is accepted as credit at another accredited public college or university.
 - Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions are equal partners in providing the first two years of baccalaureate degree programs. Graduates of two-year Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs have met the lower division general education requirements for similar programs at all public postsecondary schools in Nebraska. Likewise, students who have satisfactorily completed all of the lower division general education requirements at a state college are admitted to a University institution without requiring additional lower division general education courses.
 - Students who have earned Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees in an accredited community college or completed the required courses for the first two years at an accredited state college and have achieved satisfactory grades in courses equivalent to those at the University are not required to repeat any course.
 - Students who began, but did not complete, the Associate of Arts or Associate in Science degree at an accredited institution are granted credit for satisfactorily completed courses that the accepting baccalaureate institution determines are equivalent to its own courses. State college students transferring to a University institution also are granted credit for satisfactorily completed, equivalent courses, as are University students granted credit for satisfactorily completed, equivalent courses when they transfer to state colleges and community colleges.
 - Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions work together to ensure that lower-division baccalaureate programs throughout the state are equivalent in scope and quality.
 - Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions work together to create seamless pathways from Associate of Applied Science degrees to baccalaureate degrees when feasible.
 - Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions cooperate to accommodate reverse transfer – i.e., the award of an associate degree by the associate-degree granting institution to a student who completes associate degree requirements after transferring to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution – for students who request it.
 - Postsecondary education institutions will facilitate and maintain articulation agreements and transfer policies that create “portable” education credits.

2. These articulation guidelines recognize the traditional role of faculty in determining course comparability between institutions and underscore the need for faculty to adjust to changes and to make fair and reasonable decisions when appropriate standards are attained.
3. Transfer students on campuses will have the same opportunities as non-transfer students to become integrated into the campus social, cultural, and academic activities.
4. The four-year institutions periodically provide feedback to the two-year institutions on the academic success of their students who have transferred into the four-year institution.
5. The Commission periodically prepares and distributes a status report on articulation in the state between institutions. The Commission may make further recommendations regarding articulation based on the results of this report.

SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE CAMPUSES

Parents and students rank personal safety as a priority. In recent years, many Nebraska institutions have undertaken measures to make their campuses even more secure through better lighting; technology-enabled emergency notification; emergency preparedness training for faculty, staff, and students; additional security personnel, etc.

Most facilities on Nebraska campuses are safe, accessible to the disabled, and fully ADA compliant. Fire safety is a concern on all campuses, but especially those with older residence halls. Accessibility also remains a challenge at some campuses.

Institutions continue efforts to provide safe and accessible campuses that are responsive to changing student needs and supportive of a learning environment.

- Campus facilities are well maintained to ensure the safety of students and accessibility to all building and spaces utilized by students.

Major Statewide Goal: Support Services

Postsecondary education institutions will provide appropriate support services to help all students reach their educational goals, regardless of where and how the instruction is delivered.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Students drop classes and leave institutions for a variety of reasons, many beyond the control of the institutions. However, a comprehensive mix of student support services can make the difference in retaining students and helping them to succeed and are fundamental to the students' overall college experiences. These support services include academic assistance, such as tutoring, career exploration, advising or mentoring programs; services that meet students' personal needs, such as health centers, personal counseling, and food pantries; organizations serving all students, and student activities such as student government, intramural sports, and campus cultural events that give all students opportunities to be involved with the campus.

Providing Preparation and Support

Many people enrolling in postsecondary education lack the preparation they will need in some academic areas to learn successfully. Students who are underprepared or lack learning skills come from a wide variety of situations, including recent high school graduates as well as people who haven't been in a classroom for decades. In addition, recent immigrants frequently need some foundations education to prepare them for further education in this country. For all of these individuals, enrollment in foundations education courses and support through counseling or mentoring programs may mean the difference between their educational success or failure.

- **Provide innovative foundational education that prepares traditional college-age and post-traditional learners to be successful in college-level courses.**
- **Foundation programs are provided by community colleges, which collaborate with local agencies and employers to identify basic educational needs of under-educated adults in order to enhance workforce capacities.**
- **Offer tutoring, mentoring, English language learning, and counseling programs that provide appropriate assistance for students.**

Providing Resources

Today's higher education environment is shifting from a focus on teaching to a focus on student learning. Students are becoming more actively engaged in their own learning process, utilizing a number of resources available to them through multiple sources such as faculty, libraries, classroom and lab experiences, instructional technologies, and the internet. Creating campus facilities and support services that nurture this learning environment and meet the needs of both on-campus and off-campus distance learning students is a growing challenge for institutions.

- **Provide learning support systems, including accessible libraries, well-equipped computer labs, learning management systems, and classrooms that are equipped for**

the newest technologies and support an enriched, flexible, and effective learning environment for all students.

- **Ensure that all distance learning programs available in Nebraska result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree/certificate programs awarded on campus, and that students enrolled in distance learning programs have access to support services comparable to those utilized by on-campus students.**

***Major Statewide Goal:
Skilled Graduates***

Nebraska colleges and universities will provide their graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as capable employees and responsible citizens.

The ultimate goal of any student-centered institution is to provide its graduates with the skills, knowledge, and critical thinking abilities they will need to meet their personal and career goals. To achieve this, students need exposure to courses that challenge their minds and motivate them to learn, while preparing them for the reality of today's workforce and society.

THE NEEDS OF GRADUATES

The skills and knowledge students will need to succeed are constantly changing as the world around them changes. Today's students need to be efficient, self-directed, and active learners who are prepared for a lifetime of learning in a global, technology-driven society. The process begins in the classrooms of the campuses, or wherever and whenever postsecondary education courses are being delivered to students, with high quality programs that actively engage students' minds.

- **Provide interesting, challenging, and rewarding classroom experiences that engage students as active participants in their learning process and motivate them to high achievement.**
 - Recognize and reward faculty members whose teaching methods produce student outcomes consistent with this goal.
 - Encourage faculty to use instructional technologies that enhance student learning.
 - Encourage faculty to use innovative teaching methods that allow students to actively participate in their own learning experience, both inside and outside of traditional classrooms.
 - Assess student learning outcomes and use the results to enhance the quality of student learning.

Too often a gap exists between what students learn in college and the skills and knowledge they will be expected to have mastered when they enter their careers or advance in their education. To close this gap, colleges and universities are increasingly incorporating work experience into course content and measuring accomplishment of competencies and skills appropriate to students' fields of study.

- **Incorporate “real world” experience into college curricula through internships, required work experience, volunteer service, exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities, and activities that increase cultural and international awareness.**
 - Institutions prepare students to work effectively within the context of the varying cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds found within communities, the state, region, and nation.
- **Ensure that graduates are competent in areas appropriate to their field of study, as determined through measures identified by the institutions.**
 - Institutions choose from a variety of assessment tools, such as competency testing, capstone project evaluation, or external certifications.
 - Employers have a role in identifying competencies needed for graduates to succeed in the workforce in their fields of study.

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Chapter 3

MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE STATE

The State of Nebraska and its public higher education institutions depend on each other and shape each other's future. The state needs a strong higher education network that prepares students for productive and fulfilling lives, enhances workforce development, and helps solve the state's problems. Postsecondary education, particularly public institutions, relies on the state's ability to expand its economic and population base to provide resources to support the institutions. The two must work together and grow together to address the future needs of both the state and the institutions.

Beyond the key economic importance of higher education to the state, institutions of higher education have a historic and continuing obligation to help students reach their maximum intellectual potential. Perhaps the greatest contribution any educational program can make is to enable individuals throughout their lives to be successful and contributing members of society who are able to think critically, gather and evaluate information, communicate effectively, understand and respect the physical environment, and participate actively in political decision-making. The future of our state continues to depend on higher education institutions that shape thoughtful and adaptive citizens who thrive in a period of rapid change and multiple careers.

Goals and Strategies

Major Statewide Goal: Workforce Development

Higher education in Nebraska will be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers and industries to help sustain a knowledgeable, trained, and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Employers in Nebraska face many critical issues and challenges. Shortages of skilled and trained workers exist throughout the state. Each day technology transforms how, when, and where business is conducted, creating an ongoing need for employee training and retraining to stay current and competitive in an increasingly competitive and global market. Finding ways to operate more productively and effectively is critical to businesses' growth and survival.

Central to this *Plan's* vision is the belief that postsecondary education has an important role in assisting businesses and contributing to the overall prosperity of Nebraska's economy. In today's global economy, the success of Nebraska's businesses and the future of the state's economy are dependent on a partnership among the state, its higher education institutions, and the employers to secure skilled and knowledgeable employees for innovative and progressive businesses, industries, and services throughout the state.

Prepared Graduates

Employers need college graduates and trained workers who have extensive and varied knowledge, skills, and demonstrated competencies that prepare them for entering and succeeding in the workforce. To advance in business and succeed in their careers, these graduates also need good oral and written communication skills, information technology competencies, teamwork abilities, general workplace skills, and, increasingly, conversancy in more than one language.

- **Improve the workforce readiness of graduates of public institutions.**
 - Review program content and, where needed, incorporate workforce readiness competencies into curricula.
 - Use employer advisory councils to identify needed changes in existing program content or to create new certificate or degree programs to meet evolving needs.
 - Increase opportunities for students to attain job experience while in school via internships, apprenticeships, service learning, etc.
 - Prepare graduates for employment in a global marketplace through required course work in foreign languages, international affairs and finance, and other courses that will expose them to other countries' cultures and economies.
 - Undertake measures to become eligible training providers, as authorized under Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regulations, and registered apprenticeship providers, as authorized/outlined by the US Department of Labor.
 - Equip classrooms with state-of-the art facilities and provide faculty opportunities to be appropriately trained in new technologies being utilized in industry.
 - Monitor and assess the success of job-seeking graduates in finding employment in their field of study.

Targeted Skills

Institutions in Nebraska are being asked to produce more graduates and trainees in workforce areas of high demand, such as healthcare, engineering, educator preparation, trades, and information technology. In addition, employers are stressing the need for broadly educated employees with key workplace skills.

- **Respond to workforce needs by developing, offering, and promoting degree or certificate programs in needed areas.**

- Provide specialized certification programs in professional, technical, and vocational fields that address regional and state needs. These certifications often will be provided through external entities.
- Create “portable programs” designed to meet specific needs and serve a specific area or cohort of individuals that, when the needs have been met, can be moved to another area of the state where there is similar need.
- Cooperate with state and local workforce and economic development agencies and employer advisory councils to project workforce needs and employers’ workforce demands. Respond to projections with appropriate adjustments in program availability and capacity.
- Work with the state and employers in Nebraska to target key industries for workforce development and use state incentive funds for grants or contracts with public or private institutions that can deliver needed instructional programs, technical assistance, and research/development in the area.
- Encourage and facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and work/study opportunities in high demand fields to encourage students to enter these fields and remain in Nebraska upon graduation.
- Align recruitment of students to disciplines and programs with the state’s workforce needs in specific industries and geographic locations across the state.
- Produce graduates with the skills to think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively as members of problem-solving teams in the workplace.
- Work with businesses to meet literacy needs of their under-educated adult employees.

Educator Training

Nebraska’s educators are one of the state’s greatest assets. By many measures, the achievements of Nebraska elementary and secondary students consistently rank among the highest in the nation. Educators exert a profound influence on students’ lives. Yet many school districts are finding it difficult to attract and retain qualified teaching staff given an aging educator workforce, salary levels that are marginally competitive with those in neighboring states and private industry, state-imposed property tax caps, and increased stress due to lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Encourage education leaders and policymakers to address workforce needs of preservice educators, new educators, and experienced educators who are seeking opportunities for professional growth and additional credentials, including the additional graduate courses often required of dual credit instructors.**

Lifelong Learning

With rapid technology, knowledge, and skill transformations occurring in most of the workforce, workers need constant retraining to remain productive and competitive. Higher education needs to be responsive to these changes and prepared to provide education and training to meet the needs of workers in Nebraska.

- **Provide lifelong learning and retraining opportunities to all Nebraskans, especially in the area of technology.**
 - Provide in-home and workplace distance learning opportunities of high quality and reasonable price that help workers keep current in their fields or move into new careers.
 - Enhance collaboration between colleges and industry to improve availability and value of in-service training to upgrade the skills of the existing workforce.
 - Respond to requests from students, employers, and communities for needed programs or training opportunities to address changing workforce needs.
 - Provide a means for students to demonstrate their continuing learning through badges, certifications, microcredentials, and electronic portfolios.

Expanded Workforce Representation

Racial/ethnic minority populations are a growing component of Nebraska's population and workforce. However, some students are underrepresented in postsecondary education. Encouraging more students to participate in higher education could help address the state's need for more trained workers.

- **Enhance educational and workforce development opportunities for populations who have been underrepresented in the workforce.**
 - Develop and implement programs, and partner with K-12 and community-based programs, to prepare all students for admission to and success in postsecondary education and the workforce.
 - Encourage and support efforts that support the recruitment and retention of students and create an open and supportive campus culture.
 - Work with middle schools and high schools to encourage all students to complete high school with courses, including dual credit, that prepare them to succeed in college and the workforce.
 - Explore methods of bringing educational and work experience opportunities to students in their own communities, such as dual enrollment and apprenticeship opportunities, that encourage enrollment in postsecondary education.

Attracting and Retaining Students

Nebraska faces labor shortages in a number of critical areas. Attracting more of Nebraska's top students and more students from other states to Nebraska postsecondary institutions and retaining them through graduation could help the state address workforce shortages, especially in targeted fields.

- **Effectively recruit and retain more Nebraska students and attract more out-of-state students to Nebraska higher education institutions, especially those students entering targeted career fields that address workforce needs in Nebraska.**

- Provide merit-based scholarships and grants, including the Nebraska Career Scholarship, to students with talents and achievement in targeted workforce areas.
- Support reduced out-of-state tuition levels to attract more students from other states.
- Encourage internships and work/study opportunities so that graduates of Nebraska colleges and universities are more likely to remain employed in the state.

***Major Statewide Goal:
Research and Technology Transfer***

Institutions will contribute to the health and prosperity of the people and to the vitality of the state through research and development efforts, technology transfer and technical assistance, and by attracting external funds to support these activities.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Research is an important role of higher education and a vital component of the state's economic competitiveness. Business and industry increasingly depend on higher education to develop and share new discoveries and technologies that can help them stay competitive in today's changing economy.

Nebraska's economic future is dependent on its ability to attract new businesses and industries and assist existing businesses to be competitive. Higher education has a critical role, generating and transferring knowledge that helps business and industry to compete and succeed. Equally important is higher education research that directly impacts the citizens of the state by contributing to their social, educational, and health needs.

- **Conduct basic and applied research focused on the economic, social, educational, and health needs of Nebraskans and our lands and water.**
- **Improve technology transfer and technical assistance to Nebraska employers to enhance the productivity of Nebraska industries.**
 - Provide ongoing assistance to Nebraska's agricultural industry through shared research, technical assistance, public services, and programming focused on areas such as value-added production and international marketing.
 - Participate in partnerships with industry, government, and private organizations that are responsive to current and projected future state needs.

- **Increase awareness of the contributions of research programs to the quality of life in Nebraska to improve the understanding of research activities and to attract increased support for research activities.**

ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE

Adequate health care, especially in underserved rural areas, is a critical issue that postsecondary education can help resolve through health education programs, research, and services. The University of Nebraska and community colleges, as well as some independent colleges and universities and private career schools, all have important roles in providing education and training in the many health-related fields. Most of these institutions incorporate training at rural hospital sites into their curriculum to expose students to rural health career opportunities.

- **Institutions with a role in health-care education identify and respond to the changing health-care needs of Nebraska's citizens, including those in underserved rural and high-poverty areas.**

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The growth and diversification of Nebraska's economy depends to a substantial degree on the success of small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures. Higher education can assist by providing education programs, technical assistance and advice, and accessible lifelong learning opportunities that will help these individuals and small businesses to succeed.

- **Incorporate an entrepreneurship focus into instruction and community outreach programs to facilitate the growth of entrepreneurship and Nebraska-based small businesses.**

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

Research is not always directly applicable to the economic development of the state. While often difficult to measure, scholarly research conducted at higher education institutions enhances the learning experience of students within the institution, the academic currency of the faculty, and the knowledge base of Nebraska citizens.

- **Provide a scholarly environment that will add to the intellectual accomplishments of the state, providing knowledge valuable to its citizens.**

**Major Statewide Goal:
Serving Citizens**

Higher education will serve the state by preparing individuals for productive, fulfilling lives and by developing and nurturing the citizens and future leaders of Nebraska.

Nebraska will need more than trained and skilled technicians and professionals in the future. It will need creative, intelligent citizens who can generate new ideas, adapt to new technologies, analyze issues, solve problems, and utilize lifelong learning opportunities. All sectors of higher education have vital roles in creating an environment for this learning community within the state.

EDUCATED CITIZENRY

Workers in Nebraska need not only the knowledge, expertise, and technical skills to do their jobs, but also the ability to think critically and creatively in order to advance and succeed in their careers. The abilities to communicate effectively, understand other cultures, speak another language, and think critically will be valued in an increasingly global and complex society.

- **Provide general education courses that prepare students to understand and contribute constructively to the nation's social, economic, and governmental frameworks.**
- **Prepare Nebraska's students and citizens for global opportunities and competition by integrating an international perspective into institutions, faculties, programs, and activities.**
- **Facilitate access to educational, technological, and cultural opportunities in urban and rural communities throughout the state.**
- **Inform citizens of the economic returns from participation in postsecondary education.**

THE NEEDS OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

In recent years, much of the growth in Nebraska's population has resulted from international immigration. For many immigrants, language is the first barrier they must overcome. Obtaining the education they need to enter the workforce is the second. Higher education, in particular the community colleges through English Language Learner (ELL, also known as

English as a Second Language) and basic literacy courses, can be the key to prosperity for these individuals and a source of skilled workers to mitigate the state's workforce shortage.

- **Provide accessible English Language Learner and basic literacy programs throughout the state, primarily through the community college system.**
- **Institutions collaborate with employers of individuals whose native language is not English to provide English Language Learner courses and other needed adult basic education courses on-site at the workplace.**

***Major Statewide Goal:
Technology***

Postsecondary education institutions will assess evolving needs and priorities in a timely manner and will be prepared to change and adopt new methods and technologies to address the evolving needs and priorities of the students and people of Nebraska.

USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TO MEET STATE NEEDS

Information technologies have transformed how, when, and where higher education is delivered, making it available virtually any time and any place. For example, efforts to keep students enrolled and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic pushed colleges and universities far beyond what they might have considered their previous limits to deliver quality education virtually overnight. However, the pandemic also exposed the technological, pedagogical, and psychological shortcomings of existing technologies and networks. Without universal access to high-bandwidth internet and technologically current connected devices, the potential for technology's many educational uses remains limited, particularly for under-resourced students.

- **Study carefully the implications of and potential uses for technology in addressing educational needs, including its:**
 - Potential for expanding access to higher education programming, particularly to place-bound and working adults.
 - Use for more efficient campus operations.
 - Effect on facilities planning and curriculum development, in particular the many opportunities for sharing of facilities, courseware, and other resources.
 - Effect on faculty issues, including professional development opportunities and inter-institutional sharing of talent.
 - Implications for lifelong learning opportunities for the whole citizenry.

- Implications for access and affordability, particularly for students who have difficulty obtaining, operating, and connecting the digital devices that are necessary to participate fully and effectively in fully online and hybrid courses.
- **Cooperate to provide statewide network connectivity to ensure that citizens in all regions of the state have access to higher education programming and services.**
- **Use instructional technologies as a way to increase learning productivity, including effective use of student-centered and self-paced learning activities.**
 - Develop and regularly update standards for instructional and other information technologies based on best practice guidelines or requirements such as those developed by the Higher Learning Commission (see Appendix 1), the Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions, and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements.
 - Set appropriate expectations and requirements for students and faculty regarding the use of information technologies.
 - Provide supportive environments and professional development opportunities that allow faculty and students to acquire the technical skills needed to use fully new learning and instructional technologies in the classroom and lab.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Higher education's role in Nebraska extends far beyond the walls of the classrooms and the buildings of the campuses. Each campus has a multi-county service area for which it shares responsibility with other institutions to meet the higher education needs of the citizens. Some campuses also have statewide programmatic or public service responsibilities, such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's responsibility for agricultural public service. Through outreach to communities throughout the state, higher education can support community development initiatives by providing needed educational programming, specialized technical assistance, leadership and human resources, and cultural awareness opportunities.

- **Postsecondary education institutions make concerted efforts to reach out to their communities and across the state to identify and meet educational, research, and public service needs and to be proactive in assisting economic and community development.**
- **Explore methods of effectively and efficiently meeting the changing needs of different constituencies throughout the state such as agriculture, business, government agencies, community organizations, cultural and recreational groups, and families.**
- **Institutions report and effectively communicate their success in meeting the educational, research, and public service needs of the state and its citizens.**

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Chapter 4

MEETING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS THROUGH EXEMPLARY INSTITUTIONS

This *Comprehensive Plan's* vision for higher education in Nebraska calls for institutions that are vital, vigorous, and visionary; that fulfill their roles and mission with distinction by being responsive to changing needs throughout the state; and that exercise careful and creative stewardship of available resources. It is a vision committed to the development and support of a first-class, nationally recognized higher education system in Nebraska. Realization of this vision will require the steadfast commitment of higher education governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as the support of state policymakers, current and future students, and the citizens of the state.

Goals and Strategies

Major Statewide Goal: Exemplary Institutions

Each Nebraska postsecondary institution will fulfill its role and mission in an exemplary manner and will compare favorably with peer institutions.

Exemplary institutions provide high quality education and skill development opportunities that prepare students to be personally and professionally successful, to be good citizens of the state and knowledgeable contributors to an increasingly global and multi-cultural society, and to be lifelong learners. They attract motivated and high-performing students, as well as top-quality faculty and staff. They are student-centered yet offer rigorous courses and programs that challenge students to learn. They are heavily engaged in leading-edge research, both basic and applied, and compete successfully for external research funding that can stimulate the state's economy. They actively pursue opportunities for public engagement, technology transfer, and technical assistance to meet the needs of Nebraska businesses, communities, and government. They are responsive, flexible, and innovative. They receive appropriate levels of funding from the state and invest it wisely to meet their needs and aspirations. They have visionary leaders who create a culture of continuous improvement.

Comparisons with peer and competing institutions can provide indicators of where an institution is and where it wants to be in the future. Such comparisons also provide a method of measuring and demonstrating an institution's progress toward specific goals and outcomes. Governing boards and administrators provide leadership to establish goals for their institutions

and leverage them to greater accomplishments. Faculty, students, state policymakers, and Nebraska citizens also have significant roles in the accomplishment of these goals.

- **The governing boards and administrators of each Nebraska institution are responsible for and encouraged to commit attention and resources to the following:**
 - Fostering a collaborative model to connect students, educators, and practitioners together, whenever appropriate, in the design and implementation of instructional programs with both academic goals and working-world applications;
 - Focusing energy and targeting resources on areas of excellence in teaching, basic and applied research as appropriate to role and mission, and public service that benefit the students and the state and enhance the institution's regional and national reputation;
 - Promoting quality and innovation in teaching and learning within each institution's designated role and mission, particularly in areas of importance to the state;
 - Assessing student learning and using the results to enhance the quality of the students' learning experiences;
 - Eliminating existing programs and services that are non-viable or marginal in terms of outcomes, costs, and centrality to the role and mission of the institution;
 - Improving retention and graduation rates so that higher percentages of students who are seeking degrees achieve their educational goals;
 - Attracting, developing, and retaining high quality faculty and staff members;
 - Implementing student recruitment strategies aimed at enrolling Nebraska's top performing students in Nebraska postsecondary education institutions;
 - Using information technologies and resource sharing to enhance learning opportunities both on- and off-campus;
 - Being responsive to the changing needs of the state and its citizens;
 - Providing creative, efficient, and flexible leadership and planning that will help institutions achieve exemplary status;
 - Conducting analysis and evaluation of the educational and service needs of the institution's service area through ongoing dialogue with employers, civic leaders, and citizens;
 - Prohibiting discrimination on their campuses in the hiring of faculty, staff, and administrators; in recruitment of students; and in curriculum development and student activities; and,
 - Providing supportive environments and professional development opportunities that allow the faculty to acquire the technical skills needed to utilize new learning and instructional technologies in the classroom and lab.

RESEARCH

Research is a vitally important role of higher education. Research conducted by higher education institutions has been a major contributor to the economic productivity of the country, literally transforming the way daily business is conducted. It has made a major difference in the quality of life, lengthening life expectancies, developing new products, creating new job

opportunities, transforming the agriculture industry, and bringing new knowledge and understanding to the citizenry.

- **Public institutions with major research roles, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, set goals and prioritize areas of research to become more prominent and nationally competitive for research funding and to meet the health and economic needs of the state.**
 - Focus energy and resources on areas of excellence in research that will advance knowledge and bring national recognition to the institutions.
 - Expose students to research skills and experiences that are relevant to their field of study and future career goals.
 - Increase the visibility of the contributions of research programs to the quality of life in Nebraska to improve understanding of research activities and to attract increased support from within the state for these activities.
- **High quality, state-of-the-art research facilities on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center will help the institutions to attract external research funding.**
- **The state colleges and community colleges play a role in applied research, partnering with regional industries to complement classroom learning, UNL extension efforts, and workforce development.**

***Major Statewide Goal:
Funding Exemplary Institutions***

Nebraska will value higher education and support its investment in public higher education through fair and reliable funding policies that provide appropriate levels of support to enable institutions to excel and meet the educational needs of the state and its students.

FUNDING EXEMPLARY PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Adequate and stable funding is critical to any successful, high quality higher education institution. Nebraskans traditionally have been supportive of higher education. For a state with a relatively small population base, Nebraska provides a proportionally high level of financial support for its public postsecondary education institutions. Nebraska also has a higher proportion of its high school graduates enrolled in higher education than most states. Because of high levels of support and participation, the people of Nebraska have enjoyed the

benefits of a comprehensive and accessible network of public postsecondary education institutions.

Institutions face growing demands for more and better programs and services. At the same time, the state's resources are being stretched by demands for services in other critical areas such as health, corrections, and the public schools. It is crucial that in this environment Nebraska's public higher education institutions receive appropriate levels of support that will allow them to meet the needs of the state.

Ongoing State Funding

State appropriations are the mainstays of Nebraska's public postsecondary education institutions. While the proportion has declined over the past two decades, about one-sixth of the state's general fund appropriations go toward public postsecondary education institutions. It is important, therefore, that there is agreement between the state and higher education on major funding policies and priorities.

- **State funding for the University of Nebraska, state colleges, and community colleges:**
 - Reflects the state's educational needs and priorities and provides additional funding to institutions that demonstrate they are addressing these needs and priorities;
 - Is a priority in the state's spending plan, reflecting the commitment of the legislative and executive branches to achieve the educational goals set forth in this *Comprehensive Plan*, including Nebraska's state educational attainment goal;
 - Supports higher education's significant role in the state's economic and workforce development efforts;
 - Is sufficient to provide salaries and professional development opportunities that will attract and retain high quality faculty and staff at the institutions;
 - Rewards institutions that use partnerships and collaborative efforts to achieve greater efficiency, enhance access, or address student and state needs; and,
 - Is focused on the efficient and effective use and management of education resources for purposes of attaining optimal educational results.

Emerging State Needs

State appropriations for the state colleges and the University of Nebraska are based on review of base budgets and incremental funding, not formulae. The state also provides some matching funds for external grants. The state expects auxiliary services at public postsecondary education institutions and some student services, such as residence halls, bookstores, and food services, to be self-supporting.

The state provides some funding incentives to public higher education targeted at specific state goals, such as funding for the Nebraska Research Initiative (NRI) and the Behavioral Health Education Center. Increasingly, higher education is expected to be responsive to new and emerging needs throughout the state.

- **As high priority state needs and demands are identified, the state and its public postsecondary education institutions will target new state funds to meet these needs and demands.**

Technological Connectivity

Statewide connectivity of technology hardware is a key element for a high quality, statewide network of higher education. Instructional technology expands access to higher education across the state and promotes efficiency through sharing courses, faculty, and other resources. Quality is also enhanced as institutions import courses and classroom resources that would otherwise be unavailable to their faculty and students. The workforce training needs of the state's employers are also better served as training and professional development courses are delivered on-site or at sites convenient to employees via distance learning technologies.

- **Recognize statewide connectivity of information technology for Nebraska postsecondary education institutions and the communities they serve as a state policy and funding priority.**

Community College Funding

The state, area property owners, and the students all contribute to the costs of the community colleges. Beginning with fiscal year 2025, the state has assumed responsibility for community college operating funding formerly provided by property taxes, while local property taxpayers continue to fund capital projects. Student tuition and fees continue to cover approximately 20% of costs. Community colleges retain the ability to levy property taxes for operations if state aid declines from baseline.

- **Community college funding continues to reflect a shared responsibility of the state, the property taxpayers of the community college areas, and the students.**

Foundations Education

The state has given the community colleges primary responsibility for foundations education within higher education. In some instances, the state colleges also provide some foundations education courses. Foundations education includes targeted entry-level education for recent graduates of secondary education with deficits in specific knowledge or skills, as well as adult learners returning to postsecondary education and needing to refresh or advance their knowledge and skills in specific areas.

Aligned K-12 standards and college readiness initiatives between high schools and postsecondary institutions will lessen the number of under-prepared students entering postsecondary education, but no matter how successful these initiatives, there undoubtedly will always be a need for some level of foundations education. The institutions currently cover the cost of these non-degree credit programs through their regular operating budgets. The cost of the courses is covered primarily by revenues paid by students. Federal, state and local

revenues help support Adult Basic Education, GED, and English Language Learner courses. As a result, evaluating the overall cost of foundations education courses to the state is difficult. Addressing solutions to foundations education and its costs to the state will require an evaluation of the overall costs by the state, higher education, and the elementary/secondary school systems.

- **In cooperation with the elementary and secondary school systems, pursue avenues or means to diminish the need for foundations education in postsecondary education.**
- **Incorporate research-proven improvements to the delivery of foundations education, such as corequisite remediation and multiple placement methods, to increase students' success and lower costs.**
- **To the extent that such needs exist for foundations education, assure that funds are available to address the needs.**

Research and External Funding

Nebraska provides comparatively strong support to the University of Nebraska for research. Most of the state's research funding is targeted toward specific research areas. Some funding also is provided for human resources and support services for research.

- **The state continues to provide financial support for research conducted at the University campuses, particularly when it is targeted toward specific fields that provide economic impact on the state.**
 - Institutions demonstrate effectiveness and productivity in the use of state research funding through measurable outcomes.

Higher education institutions also look to other sources for funding support to help continue existing activities and develop new ones. These additional funding resources may result from collaboration with corporations, donations from private sources, funding from the federal government, or partnerships with other entities. These resources not only bring funds to the institutions, but also can enhance the strength and richness of the institutions' instruction, research, or public service roles.

- **Governing boards, administrators, and faculty share responsibility for competing for and acquiring increasing levels of private, federal, corporate, and other non-state funds for institutional development and enhancement.**

Facilities Funding

Exercising careful and creative stewardship of available physical resources, as articulated in Chapter 6, is an important part of this *Plan's* vision for higher education.

- **The state will continue to invest monies for the ongoing and deferred repair and maintenance of existing facilities at the University and state colleges, and for new facilities when warranted. Capital construction and maintenance at the community colleges is funded through a capital levy.**
 - Ongoing preventive maintenance of facilities is the responsibility of the institutions.

Major Statewide Goal:
Accountability and Effectiveness

Higher education in Nebraska will be effective in meeting the needs of students and the state; will be efficient in its expenditure of the state's resources; and will be accountable for developing and sustaining exemplary teaching, learning, research, and public service.

One of the greatest challenges faced by higher education is being responsive to the many needs of the state and its citizens within the reality of state, institutional, and student resources. To improve quality, expand access, adapt new technologies, meet the diverse needs of students, and be creative and visionary in fulfillment of their roles and missions, higher education institutions must develop methods to become more efficient and productive. It is equally important that higher education institutions measure their productivity and share the results of those measurements with the public to generate a better understanding of the outcomes of higher education.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Exercising careful and creative stewardship of available resources is an important part of this *Plan's* vision for higher education. If higher education is to have the ongoing support and confidence of the people of Nebraska, it must practice effective and efficient use of resources and communicate how it maximizes use of public funds for the benefit of students and the citizens of the state.

- **Institutions maintain the confidence and support of the public by allocating resources wisely and seeking cost efficiency and effectiveness in their operations and management of resources.**
 - Governing boards reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary duplication in program offerings and in all operations of the institutions.
 - Governing boards focus institutional resources on areas of excellence within each institution's role and mission that meet the needs of students and serve institutional, regional, and state priorities.

- Whenever feasible, campuses share resources and collaborate as a way of maximizing their resources.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Increasingly, governing boards, accrediting bodies, and the public are asking not only for accountability for the use of public funds but also for assessment of outcomes for higher education. Are students learning? Are they employed in Nebraska after graduating? Are research efforts producing results? Are the citizens receiving needed services? It is important for higher education to be able to evaluate effectiveness and productivity through appropriate measurable outcomes.

- **Postsecondary education institutions evaluate and communicate measurable outcomes and benchmarks appropriate to their role and mission in areas of importance to students and the state. These include student retention, degree completion, student debt, and job placement rates; access and success of all students; comparability with peers in quality of teaching, learning, research, and public service; and student satisfaction.**
 - Governing boards set standards of excellence appropriate to their role and mission and identify measurements that reflect their productivity and enable them to demonstrate progress toward achievement of their standards.
 - Higher education institutions inform the public about the outcomes and benefits of their instruction, research, and public service roles.
 - NSWERS plays a key role in demonstrating institutional accountability.

Chapter 5

MEETING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

No higher education institution or sector can operate successfully in isolation. To realize its full potential, higher education must extend beyond colleges and universities and forge partnerships with businesses, industries, K-12 schools, government agencies, cultural institutions, communities, and families. Such partnerships offer many benefits to the institutions as well as the state and its citizens.

Goals and Strategies

Major Statewide Goal: Partnerships

Higher education institutions will work as partners with one another and with other entities whenever appropriate to share resources and deliver programs cooperatively to enhance learning opportunities for Nebraska residents.

PARTNERSHIPS AMONG PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Collaboration and partnerships among the state's public postsecondary education institutions will improve efficiency and save taxpayer dollars. Beyond the savings, however, collaboration also offers institutions a means to improve quality and enhance the scope of their offerings through integrating learning opportunities and sharing expertise and resources. The result of such partnerships will be a network of institutions with distinct roles and missions and unique areas of excellence that work together to ensure that the state's higher education needs are met.

- **Meet state needs through collaborative ventures and institutional partnerships that produce efficient uses of courses, instructional resources, faculty, and other campus resources.**
 - Opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and sharing resources are a high priority of higher education administrators.
 - Public institutions are encouraged to enter into cooperative ventures resulting in cost efficiencies to the state, or address local, regional, and/or state economic development goals.

- **Through the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC), support and encourage the coordinated and productive use of instructional technologies to expand access to higher education and improve efficiency and network security.**
 - Explore methods to cooperate in the development and use of informational and instructional technology and develop joint plans for addressing current and future educational needs through the use of new technologies.

There are excellent examples within Nebraska of higher education sharing facilities with other institutions, government entities, and communities that yield many benefits to the users. Learning centers in Alliance, LaVista, West Point, and Grand Island are examples of differing learning center models that have all yielded successful results for improving efficiencies and meeting needs.

- **When possible, partner with other higher education institutions, communities, businesses, and other entities to share facilities, to improve efficiencies, and to accommodate the needs of students and communities.**

PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS

Nebraska's independent colleges and universities and private career institutions are valuable education resources to the state.

Independent institutions are predominantly liberal arts institutions with distinct characteristics that in some cases attract a national and international student body. Some offer a strong religious affiliation; others offer specialization in certain disciplines. Some independent colleges and universities include a focus on specific populations; for instance, targeting the older, returning college student.

The state's private career schools provide short-term, career-oriented training programs in disciplines such as business, cosmetology, allied health, and trade and/or technical fields. Entities that license and regulate the postsecondary education courses offered through these schools include the Nebraska Department of Education, the Board of Barber Examiners, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Real Estate Commission.

The positive and competitive environment created by the presence of both public and private institutions within the state is beneficial to the overall quality of postsecondary education. Nebraska will realize the best use of its resources through communication, cooperation, and collaboration among public, independent, and private institutions.

- **Encourage cooperation and partnerships, whenever possible, between public and private higher education to realize the best use of resources and to enhance educational opportunities.**

- Independent colleges and universities and private career schools are invited to participate in statewide educational planning and coordinating processes.
- The public and private sectors of higher education share an interest in assuring that financially needy students have access to postsecondary education opportunities.
- Public higher education institutions enter into partnerships with the two tribal colleges in the state to help increase the level of participation and the success of Native Americans in higher education and to provide the tribal colleges and their students with access to needed programs and technologies.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER STATES

The State of Nebraska cannot attempt to provide programs to meet everyone's educational needs. Postsecondary educational services that are not readily available and are expensive to replicate in Nebraska may be available via regional, national, and international consortium linkages. To make maximum use of these collaborative efforts, the institutions and students need heightened awareness of the educational opportunities they present.

- **Participate in regional interstate compacts, including the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA), which will help broaden educational opportunities for Nebraska students and promote resource sharing with institutions in other states.**

By statute, the Board of Regents is authorized to negotiate contracts with accredited schools of veterinary medicine to provide admission to these programs for qualified Nebraska students. These contracts save Nebraska the expense of offering these programs while providing access to the programs for students through reciprocal agreements.

- **Continue to use reciprocity agreements with other states to provide access for Nebraska students to specific programs that are not otherwise available within the state.**

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education has a responsibility to determine whether out-of-state institutions will be permitted to offer classes in Nebraska with a physical presence.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES

An active partnership between higher education and Nebraska's business sector is essential if the state's economy is to grow. Coalitions formed by a wide range of leaders can help guide institutions to educate and/or train students for the economic and social realities they will encounter. Community-level partnerships may include joint planning, collaborative research, and cooperative education and training programs.

- **Partner with the state's employers and other state agencies to provide ongoing training to employees in both rural and urban locales to sustain the workforce's knowledge, skills, and readiness for change.**

- The Coordinating Commission and institutions work collaboratively with community-based organizations, one-stop shared agency service centers, and employers to communicate and share information on support and training and/or education opportunities.
- Through the Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Educational Reporting System (NSWERS), higher education, state agencies, and employers link data systems to connect education and employment data.

***Major Statewide Goal:
K-12 Schools***

Higher education will work cooperatively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels of education and to facilitate the transition from one level of education to another.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

The ability of students to enter college directly upon graduation from high school and succeed in their studies is the shared responsibility of the K-12 schools, postsecondary education, and the students and their families. The K-12 system must provide the appropriate breadth, depth, and quality of learning for students in the elementary and secondary grades. To help students make smooth transitions from high school to college, colleges must provide appropriate curriculum, course work, and levels of support to students when they reach their institutions.

Responsibility for the quality of learning also is shared by the K-12 schools that hire and retain quality educators; the postsecondary institutions that prepare educators initially and upgrade their skills throughout their professional careers; the Nebraska Department of Education, which credentials educators for Nebraska's schools; and the families, communities, and postsecondary education institutions that shape students' enthusiasm for higher levels of academic achievement. In turn, the State of Nebraska is responsible for providing access to college for those students who are prepared to enter and succeed in Nebraska's colleges.

Cooperative Ventures

Cooperative ventures between K-12 and postsecondary education can be vehicles for improved communication and cooperation on shared issues between the two levels of education.

- **Higher education will support the efforts of the Nebraska Department of Education and cooperative ventures to improve communication and cooperation between K-12 districts and schools and Nebraska's public and private postsecondary institutions.**

- Participate in working groups that have been established at the discipline level so that math and reading/writing educators at the K-12 district level and college faculty work together to discuss course content to meet both K-12 standards and lead to proper preparation for college freshmen classes.

Prepared Students

Students who are not academically prepared for college-level work are likely to become discouraged or dissatisfied when they enter college and are not successful. A truly coordinated system of education that ensures that students transition easily from one level of education to another begins with an understanding of the abilities of students as they leave one system to enter another.

- **Higher education will collaborate with K-12 to inform all students attending Nebraska's schools, as early as middle-school, about what they need to learn and accomplish in order to enter and have the best chance to succeed in Nebraska's colleges.**
 - Work with K-12 educators to clearly communicate to students and their parents, as well as to new educators, the prerequisite knowledge, skills, competencies, and course work needed for admission to and success in colleges in Nebraska.
 - Increase exposure of K-12 students and their parents to Nebraska's postsecondary education campuses through programs such as college fairs, career and job placement services for students, campus visitations, and presentations at various student organizations.
 - Provide information that helps families prepare financially for college, including information about college savings plans, federal and state financial aid, and scholarship opportunities.
 - Assist high schools and community organizations with their efforts to persuade and help more graduating seniors to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- **Higher education will collaborate with school districts across the state to identify and address any gaps between K-12 standards for graduation and prerequisite college preparation for admission to and success in Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions.**
 - Collaborate with school districts in curricula reform to reduce the number of students unprepared to succeed in college-level courses, such as the Nebraska Math Readiness Project.
 - Provide feedback to the K-12 school system regarding the academic performance and retention of recent high school graduates enrolled in Nebraska's colleges and universities.
 - Work in concert with K-12 to define academic standards for students that clearly connect high school graduation with college preparation, admission, and success, and clearly connect the curriculum in the first two years with standards for admission.

- Review curricula and course work for appropriateness to the level of entering students, the sequence of general and major field course work, and the instruction, learning support, and advisement for students in their first two years of postsecondary education.
- **Higher education will collaborate with K-12 districts and schools to assure equitable statewide access to advanced placement and college-level courses for academically prepared students to facilitate a successful transition to postsecondary education course work.**
 - Enhance students' access to existing and emerging postsecondary education/high school programs by permitting academically prepared high school students to be eligible to receive dual high school and college credit for the college-level courses they complete satisfactorily while attending high school.
 - ▶ Encourage and/or enable institutions (e.g., through funding priorities) to use technologies to deliver advanced placement and college-level instruction across the state to academically prepared and eligible students who are admitted to Nebraska's colleges while still attending high school.
 - ▶ Collaborate with the Nebraska Department of Education and the state to align state funding policies and formula for K-12 funding with postsecondary education funding and tuition policies to provide equitable and appropriate tax funding for such programs.
 - ▶ Provide courses, certificates, graduate degree options, and financial aid for educators who need additional graduate credit hours in one or more disciplines to meet accreditor requirements to teach college-level courses.
 - ▶ Through dual enrollment guidelines (following this section), establish collaborative minimum standards for dual enrollment programs that (1) assure college-level rigor of college credit courses; (2) enrich the high school curriculum; (3) aid students in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education; and (4) foster collaboration between high school and college faculty in curriculum development, instruction, assessment, and evaluation of dual enrollment courses.
 - Promote high school students' participation in college-preparation and college-level instruction through programs such as career academies, career and tech ed, high school-college academic summer courses and camps, and other such programs.
 - Publish an annual statewide report on dual credit and concurrent enrollment course taking to ensure that opportunities to enroll in courses are equitable across all high schools and across the diverse student body and to measure the effectiveness of dual credit and concurrent enrollment for encouraging college enrollment, completion, and cost savings for students and parents.

Nebraska Dual Enrollment Standards

In 2019, five Nebraska community colleges, Nebraska's two tribal colleges, the Nebraska State College System, and the University of Nebraska collaborated to develop a "Nebraska Public Post-Secondary Institutions Statement of Principles and Standards for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Credit." The standards are incorporated into the *Comprehensive Plan* in their entirety.

Principle 1

All post-secondary institutions shall ensure that dual credit courses offered to high school students will be college-level courses. The rigor of the dual credit course shall be the same as the corresponding course offered at the post-secondary institution.

Standards:

- a. Students shall be registered with the post-secondary institution and concurrently enrolled at the high school.
- b. All college-level credits shall be recorded on the official post-secondary institution transcripts.
- c. High school students shall be identified as junior or senior level students. Sophomores may be admitted with post-secondary administration approval. Enrollment of high school students in dual credit courses shall follow processes and eligibility criteria established by the post-secondary institution and agreed upon by participating high school personnel.
- d. All courses shall be post-secondary institution catalogued courses with same department designations, course descriptions, number, titles and credits (see Principle 3 for additional standards).
- e. High school students shall meet all post-secondary institution's policies regarding course pre-requisites prior to enrolling in the college-level course.
- f. High school students shall adhere to the post-secondary institution's policies and procedures as outlined in the post-secondary institution's catalog and student handbook.

Principle 2

The decision to award high school credit for a college-level course being taken for dual credit shall be the responsibility of the appropriate high school district.

Standards:

- a. The high school district shall identify course(s) meeting high school credit.
- b. The high school district shall inform students and parents of college-level courses to be granted high school credit.

Principle 3

All instructors for dual credit courses, regardless of the mode of delivery, shall hold credentials consistent with a full-time faculty member employed to teach the college-level course for the post-

secondary institution. All such selection criteria shall be consistent with the policies established by the institution for all faculty, which comply with the standards set forth by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Standards:

- a. Credentials for instructors who teach dual credit courses shall be consistent with policies established by the institution for all faculty, which comply with the guidelines established by the HLC for all post-secondary faculty, relevant to successful completion of required degrees, graduate content credit, and/or tested experience.
- b. Instructors for dual credit courses shall provide original college transcripts and other relevant materials to validate credentials and meet all institutional requirements as a full-time or adjunct instructor for the post-secondary institution. Instructors for dual credit courses shall follow the established policies and procedures for all post-secondary faculty at the institution.
- c. The dual credit instructor, holding the required credentials, shall be the individual who provides the instruction for the course, assesses the students, and provides a final grade for the college-level course according to the post-secondary institution's timeline, policies, and procedures.
- d. The post-secondary institution shall assure that dual credit instructors are provided with relevant training and orientation, including course philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment prior to teaching the course, and at regular intervals subsequent to the initial teaching assignment.
- e. The dual credit instructor (employed by either the high school or college), along with meeting all qualifications to teach credit courses at the college, must also meet qualifications to teach dual credit courses within the State of Nebraska, which includes an appropriate PK-12 teaching certificate or permit, as dictated by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Principle 4

The quality of instruction and standards of excellence for dual credit courses shall be consistent with other course offerings by the college.

Standards:

- a. The dual credit course, regardless of mode of delivery, shall follow the same course syllabus/outline, textbook (or an approved alternative), and student assessment methods, as the course offered solely by the institution.
- b. Dual credit students shall be held to the same standards of achievement and grading standards as those expected of students taking the same course at the institution.
- c. Students shall be assessed using comparable grading standards and methods of assessment (e.g., papers, portfolios, quizzes, labs, etc.) as the course offered by the post-secondary institution.

Principle 5

The evaluation of the instructor and quality of instruction for dual credit courses shall be comparable with the practices each college has in effect for other college credit courses.

Standards:

- a. College-level courses shall be current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
- b. The college-level course quality and learning outcomes shall be consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations.
- c. The evaluation of the course shall be jointly completed by the district and the post-secondary institution on an annual basis, using the post-secondary end-of-course evaluation method.
- d. The evaluation of the instructor by the students shall be completed in a comparable manner as the evaluation of all instructors at the post-secondary institution.

*Concurrent enrollment/dual credit refers to courses taught to high school students for which the students receive both high school credit and college credit. These courses or programs are offered under a variety of names; the Criteria on "dual credit" apply to all of them as they involve the accredited institution's responsibility for the quality of its offerings.

SOURCE: HLC The Criteria for Accreditation: Glossary

Educator Preparation

- **Higher education and K-12 leadership will collaborate in the recruitment, preparation, and retention of quality educators in Nebraska's schools.**
 - Institutions offering teacher education undertake initiatives to:
 - ▶ Improve the academic and pedagogical competency of their candidates for certification and assist schools in mentoring new educators and in the professional development of all educators.
 - ▶ Develop more integrated approaches to the preparation of educators in both the Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences.
 - ▶ Equip educator preparation program graduates with continuing education and professional development opportunities that provide knowledge and skills in utilizing new instructional technologies in the classroom.
 - ▶ Provide graduates with skills and interest in teaching diverse groups of students who are at-risk and in need of remedial/developmental education.
 - ▶ Collaborate with school districts and Educational Service Units to improve the availability and the value of in-service training, to mentor new educators, and to recruit high schools' best students to the teaching profession.
 - ▶ Regularly assess the content and methodology of postsecondary education's educator and counselor preparation in response to reform in K-12 curricula.

- ▶ Identify the need for additional pre-service and in-service training in terms of K-12 curricula reform, changing characteristics of students, and changes in college curriculum, teaching, and advising.
- ▶ Collaborate with the Department of Education to find ways that elementary and secondary schools can improve the productivity of learners and educators, such as through expanded use of technology.
- ▶ Work with the K-12 community to address issues related to educator shortages, including educator salaries and recruitment programs.
- ▶ Encourage educators to promote and encourage their students to consider teaching as a rewarding and meaningful career option.
- ▶ Assure that all new educator graduates possess the requisite skills to effectively teach courses using distance learning technologies.

Chapter 6

STATEWIDE FACILITIES PLAN

The state's college and university campuses represent decades of investment in the creation and maintenance of intellectual and physical environments designed to support the fundamental missions of higher education.

Students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors must be supported by a physical, technical, and natural environment that encourages intellectual growth and human interaction. The physical environments of the campuses must be functional, well utilized, safe, accessible, cost effective, well maintained, and responsive to the changing needs of the institutions' programs and the people served. The campuses must possess a sense of place, beauty, and quality that clearly represents their priorities and mission-driven responsibilities.

Increased use of information technologies has significant implications for planning, constructing, and utilizing facilities for colleges and universities. How changing technologies will affect future teaching and learning styles both on and off campuses must be considered and addressed in institutional facilities planning.

To some students, the "campus" is their computer at home or wherever a laptop can take them. To other students, a branch campus, learning center, or job site can serve as the campus. How institutions bring academic and student services to this geographically diverse student population is a facilities planning issue. In addition, high-speed connectivity between campuses, learning centers, and homes is increasingly necessary to enable the learner to access information at any place and time. Expanding partnerships with local communities and businesses, and local, state, and federal agencies can enhance institutional efforts to meet these needs.

Within this context, the following questions are being asked of those who are responsible for the planning, construction, maintenance, and financing of the physical environments of postsecondary education institutions:

- What are the best ways to adapt the existing physical environment to support changes in academic programs? What facilities will these programs require? How will the courses of these programs be delivered?
- When new facilities are constructed, how can they be made more adaptable to future change?
- What are cost-effective strategies for maintaining campus facilities?
- How will the various infrastructures of the campuses be enhanced and maintained—not only the utilities, but the information technology networks, roads, walks, landscapes, and instructional and research equipment?
- How will those physical elements of the campuses that support and encourage human interaction be preserved and enhanced?

- How can these challenges best be addressed by state funding policies?

The following goals and strategies frame an approach that should enhance the physical environments required to support effectively the current and future programs of Nebraska's institutions of postsecondary education.

Goals and Strategies

Major Statewide Goal: Facilities

Nebraskans will advocate a physical environment for each of the state's postsecondary institutions that: supports its role and mission; is well utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; is safe, accessible, cost effective, and well maintained; and is sufficiently flexible to adapt to future changes in programs and technologies.

FACILITIES PLANNING

College and university facilities are becoming increasingly complex, requiring careful planning to meet the functional, social, educational, technological, and environmental challenges of the present and future world. Branch campuses, shared learning centers, online learning, and other educational advances are accelerating the pace of change. Within this context, facility planning has become more important than at any time in the history of postsecondary education institutions.

In developing institutional comprehensive facilities plans, a facilities' information database can serve as an excellent tool for making prudent and wise planning decisions. Facilities plans should be developed in cooperation with local residents, so that both the institution and community at large may benefit.

- **An institution's comprehensive facilities plan will be an integral tool that supports the institution's role and mission and strategic plan.**
 - The content and format of institutional comprehensive facilities planning documents should be flexible in order to be responsive to a rapidly changing educational environment.
 - A statewide facilities information database will be available to support the development and review of institutional comprehensive facilities plans.

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE

Facilities are perhaps the best example of how institutional decisions are made permanent, with long-term effects on operating budgets and programs. Buildings constructed to meet today's immediate needs have the potential of either enhancing or impeding institutions from meeting needs of future generations. The same may also apply to buildings that are offered to institutions as gifts. Therefore, weighing the initial contribution of a gift with its long-term costs and benefits is a critical factor in determining need.

- **Individual capital construction projects will support institutional strategic and comprehensive facilities plans; comply with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*, which includes the Statewide Facilities Plan; and not unnecessarily duplicate other facilities.**
 - Collaboration and cooperation between higher education institutions and public and private agencies can enhance an institution's programs and services and provide for efficient use of resources. When economically and programmatically feasible, institutions will share facilities with one another.
 - Commission evaluation of individual capital construction projects are based on the following review criteria:
 - ▶ Prior Commission approval of applicable academic programs that would occupy space in the capital construction project has been granted.
 - ▶ The project demonstrates consistency with the governing board's institutional comprehensive facilities plan.
 - ▶ The project addresses current and projected needs.
 - ▶ The project enhances the effectiveness and efficiencies of institutional programs and services.
 - ▶ Reasonable project alternatives have been considered.
 - ▶ The amount of funding requested does not represent insufficient or extraordinary proposed expenditures of tax funds and the use of tax funds is appropriate.

FACILITIES FUNDING

- **Facilities funding has historically come from a variety of sources. These sources of funding and example applications include:**
 - State and local taxes for infrastructure projects, academic instructional, academic and operational support, and public service facilities;
 - User fees for student centers, residence halls, and parking;
 - Federal funding for research facilities;
 - Self-generated funding for auxiliary programs such as bookstores, childcare centers, hospitals, etc.;
 - Student tuition and fees, which increasingly are being used to support renewal and renovation of academic and support facilities; and,

- Private funding available to support each of these types of facilities projects.

Institutions are responsible for ongoing preventive maintenance of campus facilities. Facility operating and maintenance (O&M) funding has historically come from state and local taxes, student tuition, user fees, and auxiliary funding. Federal or private funding has rarely been used for facility O&M in the past. However, there is a recent trend nationally to request private donors to contribute to a facility O&M trust fund when donating funds for a facility project. State tax funds also are used for deferred maintenance, fire and life safety, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and energy conservation projects at the University and state college campuses.

State funding for university and state college facilities is provided during a biennial budget cycle. Community colleges have not received state funding for capital construction or maintenance projects. Community college projects are funded through a capital improvement levy.

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents and Nebraska State College Board of Trustees submit a capital construction budget request to the Governor and Legislature biennially on even-numbered years. These requests include a prioritized list of capital construction projects submitted by each governing board.

The Commission reviews and makes recommendations on the governing board capital construction budget requests and submits a unified, prioritized list that recommends the sequential order of appropriations for approved capital construction projects. The Commission's prioritization process is based on numerically weighted criteria that establish the recommended funding order of individual projects. The process is reviewed biennially with the University and state colleges for needed revisions.

- **Adequate and stable funding will be available for maintenance, repair, renovation, and major construction projects as identified in the comprehensive facilities planning and review processes.**
 - Provide adequate funding for appropriate maintenance of facilities and utility and infrastructure systems and to provide a safe, accessible, and energy-efficient physical environment.
 - The Commission will consider national standards and work collaboratively with the public higher education sectors and other state policymakers to set standards for appropriate levels of funding for routine maintenance, deferred repair, and renovation/remodeling projects to help ensure that campus facilities are well maintained and that deferred repairs and needed renovation and remodeling projects are completed.
 - Continue the use of dedicated and stable funding sources for capital construction and maintenance projects to include:
 - The community college areas' dedicated capital improvement property tax levy;

- ▶ Long-term state funding provided to the University and state colleges through the University of Nebraska Facilities Program and the State College Facilities Program by LB 384, Laws 2021.
- ▶ Capital construction fund reserves funded by the two-percent-of-total-project-cost annual deposits into the University of Nebraska Facilities Program required by LB 384, Laws 2021.
- ▶ State funding of the Task Force for Building Renewal.

GUIDELINES FOR COMMISSION REVIEW OF THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND RENEWAL OF CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Nebraska public postsecondary education aspires to maintain the highest standards in the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects. Maintaining public trust in this process is a responsibility shared by institutions, governing boards, and the Coordinating Commission.

To support the highest standards in the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects, the Commission has adopted the following *Guidelines* to assist in its review and decision-making regarding capital construction projects that utilize tax funds. These *Guidelines* are not intended to constrict or constrain the constitutional or statutory authorities provided institutional governing boards to review, approve, and manage capital construction projects. Rather, they serve to make all interested parties aware of points that will guide the Commission's own deliberations in an increasingly complex environment.

Funds to support institutional facilities are drawn from an increasing variety of sources, and funding mechanisms are becoming correspondingly complex. As the percentage of institutional revenues coming from state funds continues to decline around the country, public institutions will increasingly seek support from diverse sources. Despite that necessity, Nebraska public postsecondary institutions should acknowledge and embrace their public missions, seek to deliver the greatest value for the state's investments in higher education, and pursue practices that support maintenance of the public trust.

Public higher education officials must comply with numerous laws, regulations, and policies governing capital construction and related projects. Higher education officials also should acknowledge and embrace the *spirit* behind those laws, regulations, and policies, and its leaders encourage individuals, organizations, foundations, and facilities corporations created to benefit public institutions to do the same.

Many generous donors provide needed support to our institutions, and their preferences and interests should rightly receive careful consideration. Nonetheless, public higher education institutions and boards should ensure that donor preferences do not place undue future burdens on public taxpayers to pay for increased project, operating, or maintenance costs.

The Commission encourages institutional governing boards to maintain policies and practices governing the acquisition, construction, and renewal of capital construction projects that in the

public interest (i) assure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies relating to award of contracts, (ii) are in compliance with public meetings and public records laws, (iii) assure good value for acquisition of land and facilities, construction of new facilities, and renewal of existing facilities, and (iv) thoroughly review and assess existing hazardous materials, fire and life safety, deferred repair needs, and building system issues, needs, and conditions for all major renovation projects.

Examples of such policies and practices are provided in the following *Guidelines* that the Commission has endorsed to assist it in its review of these increasingly complex issues. The examples are not intended to comprise a comprehensive or exclusive list.

Guidelines for Commission Review of the Acquisition, Construction, and Renewal of Capital Construction Projects

Open Processes

Nebraska’s public higher education institutions and boards use transparent and open processes and practices as they plan and make decisions about capital construction projects. Some examples of such open processes and practices include:

- Maintaining Transparency. Board decisions regarding capital construction projects are made in announced, public sessions (other than those exempted under open meeting laws) and disclosed in public documents. Modifications to those documents, and documents developed through contracting processes delegated by governing boards, are subject to public examination under the Nebraska public records statutes.
- Expecting and Supporting Professional Codes of Ethics. Individuals, entities, and boards involved in the capital construction process are guided by their respective professional Codes of Ethics, including conflict of interest policies, use of quality construction standards, and standard business practices.

Good Value in Acquisition of Facilities

Public higher education institutions and boards seek good value as they consider acquiring facilities, either by purchase or gift. Some examples of such “seeking good value” practices include:

- Considering Alternatives. An analysis of possible alternatives is made prior to the acquisition of any facility to determine the most effective approach to meeting the identified need (e.g., purchase vs. lease vs. new construction vs. renewal of existing facilities). Decisions about the most cost-effective approach include considerations of both initial and long-term costs.
- Determining How Much to Pay. When purchasing a property, tax valuations or independent appraisals are used to assure that a justifiable price is paid.

Good Value in New Capital Construction Projects

Nebraska’s public higher education institutions and boards seek good value as they make decisions about new capital construction projects, whether constructed directly by an institution or through a private developer. Some examples of such “seeking good value” practices include:

- Competitive Selection Process. Competitive proposals are sought and received from developers or construction contractors for any new facility built on institutional property, in accordance with applicable statutes and governing board policies.

- Development Fees. Development fees assessed in the purchase of new construction are generally based on an up-front, cost-plus fee basis and do not generally exceed rates typical for the local market.

Good Value in Renewal of Existing Facilities

Nebraska’s public higher education institutions and boards seek good value as they make decisions about the renewal of existing facilities. Some examples of such “seeking good value” practices include:

- Thoroughly Assessing Current and Future Needs. A thorough survey of existing hazardous materials, fire and life safety, and building system issues, needs, and conditions is made for all major renovation projects. These surveys help provide accurate cost estimates and may eliminate costly future work.
- Ensuring Attention to Broad Safety, Accessibility, and Repair Concerns. Major fire and life safety, accessibility, and deferred repair needs are addressed when major renovation projects are undertaken, including repair or replacement of roofs and other exterior building envelope work.

Sources of Funding for Various Types of Space

As previously stated, funds from diverse sources support the construction, acquisition, renewal, and ongoing operations and maintenance of campus facilities. Nebraska’s Governor and Legislature have the final responsibilities for determining whether and how state funds are provided for capital construction projects; the Coordinating Commission is charged to approve capital projects and make funding recommendations on such projects. Those recommendations are based upon some general considerations, listed below, that focus mainly on the use of tax funds. Regardless of these general considerations, institutions are encouraged to cultivate non-tax sources of funding to enhance offerings and allow state funds to have the greatest impact on key institutional and state needs.

- Instructional, Instructional/Administrative/Operational Support, and Public Service Space. Tax funds generally support the design, construction, and/or ongoing facility operations and maintenance (O&M) of needed instructional, instructional/administrative/operational support, and public service space.
- Research Space. In Nebraska, as in other states, funding for research space at public institutions has traditionally come from a variety of sources, including federal, state, and private sources. Opportunities to advance economic development, improve public health or safety, match external funds, renew existing space, or support key institutional missions are circumstances that institutions should consider in asking for (and the Legislature in determining) the provision of state funds for the construction and O&M of research space.
- Other Types of Space. Funds from non-tax sources support the design, construction, and ongoing facility O&M of other institutional space, such as:

- Alumni or foundation program space.
- Auxiliary enterprise space.
- Self-sufficient intercollegiate athletic program space.
- Self-sufficient student support space such as student housing, parking, student centers/unions, student medical services, recreational facilities, and student auxiliary services (e.g., childcare services, bookstores, etc.).

Other Issues

Institutions, boards, and the Commission consider individual capital construction projects within the context of broad institutional and state needs, while maintaining the flexibility to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

In most instances, state tax support should be focused on projects that address important state needs or institutional role and mission. In general, if such a need is not readily apparent for a particular project, the percentage of non-tax support made available for that project should be relatively high. Tax funds should be used to support projects that respond to high state and/or institutional needs, while projects responding to lesser state and/or institutional needs should increasingly rely on non-tax funds.

Additional considerations may include:

- Cost-Benefit Ratio. Potential cost savings or other benefits to the state may make a project more attractive.
- Matching Funds. A high level of non-tax matching funds may make a project more attractive and justify greater reliance on state support.
- Ongoing Facility O&M Commitments. Alternate (non-tax) sources of ongoing O&M support may make a project more attractive. In cases where alternative funds are appropriate and available, meeting long-term commitments with dedicated alternative funding streams may enhance project justification.

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Chapter 7

PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ROLES AND MISSIONS

Each postsecondary education institution within Nebraska has a clearly defined role and mission upon which it bases its educational programming, services, and other operational procedures. An institution's role and mission provide the rationale for its being and define the institution's fundamental priorities and characteristics.

- **Each institution has a clearly defined role and mission, and has students, programs, and services that are appropriate to that institution's role and mission.**

Traditionally, public postsecondary education's roles and missions are considered in the context of three primary programmatic areas of responsibility: instruction, research, and public service. Each institution has responsibilities to varying degrees in each of these areas and each has responsibility for serving a specific geographic area of the state.

Underlying the roles and missions of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions are a number of important objectives:

- **In fulfilling its role and mission, each institution recognizes the importance to the individual of high quality teaching and learning and the value of educated citizens to society.**
- **Fulfilling the responsibilities of postsecondary education is best accomplished when institutions with distinct roles and missions cooperate to provide a balance within and between them to provide excellent teaching, appropriate research, and pertinent public service to the state.**
- **Each institution values a variety of perspectives and backgrounds and promotes an atmosphere of civil discourse and mutual respect.**
- **Institutions cannot be everything to everyone. Each institution sets priorities between and within instructional programs, research projects, and public service activities as a basis for budget, program, and facility decisions that best serve the needs of the students, the institution, and the residents of its service areas.**
- **Institutions track their progress toward accomplishing their institutional role and mission responsibilities and the statewide goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* through available outcome measures and benchmarks. These measures may include comparisons of an institution's accomplishments with those of its peer institutions. Benchmarks also are used by higher education institutions as a means to evaluate and improve programs and services to the region and state, and to inform the public.**

GEOGRAPHIC AND PROGRAMMATIC SERVICE AREAS

Statutes require the Commission to designate geographic and programmatic service areas for each public institution within the state.

Geographic Service Areas

Institutions, by statute, will not offer programs at sites outside their designated geographic service area except as permitted under Commission rules and procedures. These rules and procedures offer institutions relatively broad flexibility to offer some courses or programs off campus and outside their geographic service areas, assuming such courses or programs are within the institution's programmatic service mission, meet need and demand, are currently approved programs, and do not unnecessarily duplicate offerings of the resident institutions.

- **Outside-of-service-area courses may be offered in the following situations:**
 - Electronically delivered distance learning programs delivered via the internet and other technologies to individual students at sites such as their homes and workplaces may be offered without CCPE oversight.
 - Short courses and seminars (fewer than 20 contact hours) provided for businesses, associations, and professional groups as part of professional growth activities may be offered without CCPE oversight.
 - Courses or programs delivered by institutions, either electronically or traditionally, at established ongoing sites outside a designated geographic service area may be offered if notice is given to institutions within the geographic area where the course or program will be delivered and such institutions do not object by notifying the Commission within three working days.
- **The residents of geographic service areas are the primary beneficiaries of the off-campus programs and activities provided by the institution. Institutions share a responsibility with other institutions in their geographic service area to provide needed services to area residents.**
- **Institutions sharing a service area cooperate to avoid unnecessary duplication of both off-campus and on-campus programs.**
 - The Commission facilitates meetings with institutions to collaboratively plan off-campus programming in shared service areas.
 - Cooperation and joint sharing of courses to meet needs and increase efficiencies are encouraged.

Service areas are in no way meant to curtail students from other counties, states, or nations from attending the campuses of any institution. In addition, student internships, cooperative education positions, and student teaching placements will cross geographic service area boundaries.

Programmatic Service Areas

Programmatic service areas are areas of responsibility within the instructional, research, and public service roles of a public institution. Programmatic service areas may be shared by several institutions; however, some programmatic service responsibilities are limited to certain types of institutions. One institution also may be designated as the primary provider of specific program areas, either within the sector or statewide among all public institutions. An example is the statewide role of the University of Nebraska Medical Center in health-related disciplines within the University of Nebraska system.

The Commission recognizes that its designation of geographic and programmatic service areas creates the potential for layering or overlapping of programs and services among institutions serving the same area. Its concern is unnecessary duplication of programs and services. Where demonstrated need exists, an overlap of programs and services may be justified. The Commission will monitor its rules and procedures regarding geographic and programmatic service areas and make revisions, as needed, to eliminate unnecessary duplication while maintaining needed programs and services.

PEER GROUPS

A peer institution is one that is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The Commission is required by statute to identify peer institutions for each public postsecondary education institution in the state. The Commission reviews and compares several characteristics of institutions, such as enrollment and program offerings, in identifying peers. Peer groups are used for budget and program review, as well as for other comparisons that will aid in Commission decision making. The Commission's purpose for the use of peer groups does not include influencing the collective bargaining process.

INSTRUCTION

The primary responsibility of educational institutions is to facilitate learning. Instruction of students is the most important function of all public institutions.

- **Institutions, governing boards, and the Commission (through its program review process) share responsibility to evaluate existing and proposed new instructional programs to determine if they are appropriate to role and mission of the institution, if they meet the objectives of the institution, and if they meet the needs of students and the state.**
 - Institutions prepare their graduates to be ready to enter the workforce through ongoing review and evaluation of program offerings and content, through employer advisory councils, through “real work” experiences such as internships and apprenticeships, and through communication with employers to identify emerging needs.

Clearly defined instructional roles for each sector and institution help students make informed choices of institutions that meet their needs. Once at the institution, students have the right to expect educational programs and support services, which provide them with the best possible opportunity to learn and succeed. Given such a learning environment, it is incumbent upon students to apply those opportunities toward their educational goals. Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions have the right to expect achievement from students, as do the citizens, who have a substantial investment in those admitted to the institutions.

- **Instruction at Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions prepares students to succeed in the workplace and to contribute to a democratic society.**
- **All public institutions are responsive to industry needs for technical, professional, and vocational skills and knowledge, providing programs, services and—when appropriate—specific certifications for both employees and management. Certifications demanded by business are typically competency based and directly connected to needed work skills.**
- **Institutions identify priority program areas to make the best use of resources, eliminating program areas where there is little need or demand, unnecessary duplication, or inconsistency with institutional objectives.**
- **Institutions use instructional technologies to provide educational opportunities to place-bound students, who are often working adults, as well as to traditional, on-campus students.**
- **Institutions develop agreements to share courses with other institutions, and to share faculty and other resources to make the best use of state resources and serve students by increasing access to programs and enabling students to cross-register between institutions.**
- **All degree-seeking students, no matter how specialized their programs of study, receive quality general education as a part of their educational experience.**
- **In addition to their other instructional roles, community colleges have the primary responsibility within the public sector to provide foundations education courses for students who are underprepared for college-level work.**
 - When possible, underprepared persons wishing to attend a University of Nebraska or state college campus would be directed into foundations education courses offered by a community college. See the community colleges' role and mission for the Commission's recommended foundations education (developmental/remedial) guidelines.

RESEARCH

Nebraska and the nation depend on the postsecondary institutions to conduct research and scholarship that generates new knowledge and technological advances in theory, techniques, and products.

Research is a part of each institution's role and mission in varying degrees. At some institutions, particularly the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, research—both basic and applied—is a high priority. At the state colleges and some portions of the University, research is more closely tied to teaching and directly applicable to scholarship, improvement of instruction, and faculty development. Community college research is much more limited and directly applicable to the classroom or workplace.

- **Research conducted at Nebraska public postsecondary education institutions is productive and effective.**
- **Each institution strives for a balance between teaching and research that is appropriate to its distinct mission.**
- **Faculty scholarly activity and research at all institutions enhances teaching to the extent feasible.**
- **Postsecondary institutions transfer knowledge and technology produced by research to Nebraska's businesses whenever possible to help Nebraska's businesses become more competitive and to promote the state's economy.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

All public institutions, irrespective of sector, have public service roles that vary based on the differing roles and missions, programs, disciplines, and resources of each institution. Public service missions provide valuable expertise, human resources, and cultural activities aimed toward the betterment of the state.

- **Postsecondary education institutions reach out into their communities in their service areas as active participants in public and community service activities.**
- **Cooperative public service efforts between and among public and private institutions and other entities are utilized to meet public service needs.**
- **Institutional leaders identify and review their public service projects to eliminate unwarranted duplication of services.**

The educational value of public service for students is not to be overlooked or discounted. Service learning can vastly enhance a student's educational experience. Among the most far-

reaching lessons higher education provides its students with is an understanding of the satisfaction and rewards of service to others.

- **Public service activities are incorporated, whenever possible, into program curriculum and student activities.**
- **By statute, public service activities of public postsecondary education institutions are subject to review by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.**

Community Colleges' Role and Mission

Community colleges provide educational options for students seeking career training or transfer to a four-year institution. The education program may culminate in an associate of applied science degree, diploma, or certificate; or an associate of arts or associate of science degree from an academic transfer program.

The community colleges are student-centered, open-access institutions primarily devoted to quality instruction and public service. They provide counseling and other student services intended to promote the success of a diverse student population, particularly to those who have been traditionally underserved in other educational settings. Students often attend community colleges for purposes other than to obtain a degree, such as for specific job-related training for career advancement.

- **The community college programmatic service areas, as defined in statutes, include:**
 - The first instructional and service priority of the community colleges is applied technology and occupational education, and—when necessary—foundations education, which includes developmental and remedial education.
 - The second instructional and service priority is transfer education, including general academic transfer programs or applied technology and occupational programs that may be applicable to the first two years of a bachelor's degree program, and—when necessary—foundations education, which includes developmental and remedial education.
 - The third instructional and service priority of the community colleges is public service, particularly adult continuing education for occupations and professions; economic and community development focused on customized occupational assessment and job-training programs for business and communities; and avocational and personal development courses.
 - The fourth instructional and service priority of the community colleges is applied research.

INSTRUCTION

Community colleges provide an array of one- and two-year career programs designed to enable students to enter the job market immediately upon completion of their programs.

- **Community colleges' governing boards and the Coordinating Commission, through the established program review process, evaluate existing and proposed new career programs to determine if they comply with institutional objectives, meet student and state needs, and whether they constitute unnecessary duplication. Existing programs at private career institutions will be considered by the Commission in this process.**

- **The community colleges coordinate with other public and private institutions within their geographic service areas in providing continuing education to avoid unnecessary duplication.**

Many students choose community colleges with the desire to achieve or improve employability quickly. They want specific, job-oriented training that will lead directly to employment or will upgrade their knowledge and skills. Stackable credential pathways, leading from short-term training to diplomas and certificates, are an important strategy for preparing students for work and additional education. Employment-related courses, complemented by a solid core of general education courses, give community college students the opportunity to enter the workforce and advance successfully in their chosen careers.

Students also attend community colleges to complete their first and second years and then transfer to a four-year institution to complete their baccalaureate degree. Significant progress has been made in articulation between community colleges and other Nebraska postsecondary education institutions to facilitate this process.

- **Community colleges serve as feeder institutions into four-year colleges and universities through their academic transfer programs.**
 - Two- and four-year institutions continue development of a broadly accepted articulation policy where an AA or AS degree from a community college is accepted to meet the lower division general education requirements of the four-year institution.
- **Community colleges provide a core of high quality general education courses that permeate all of their programs of study. All degree-seeking students complete a general education component as a part of their educational experience.**
- **Community colleges incorporate relevant and appropriate “real” work experiences, such as internships, volunteerism, and cooperative education, into students’ educational programs whenever possible.**
- **Community colleges continue to develop and use instructional technologies to expand the accessibility of their educational and training programs within their service areas.**
- **When considering new instructional programs and public service activities, each community college area assesses if an actual unmet need exists and assigns that need a priority. If it has sufficient priority, the community college then directs responsibility for meeting that need to the campus that is best able to meet the need. Geographic access, financial, human and physical resources, and institutional expertise are all considered in selecting the appropriate campus.**

**Coordinating Commission's
Recommended Foundations Education (Developmental/Remedial) Guidelines:**

Foundations education courses are pre-college level courses designed to correct skills deficiencies in writing, reading, and mathematics, all of which are essential for college study. Such courses often feature low student/instructor ratios or independent study options that allow opportunities for one-on-one assistance from instructors. No college credit toward degree completion is granted for foundations education programs.

The Commission recommends the following guidelines for the delivery of foundations education courses:

- **Community colleges have the primary responsibility to provide foundations education courses for students.**
- **Community colleges may offer foundations education courses through cooperative arrangements with the state colleges and University campuses. The arrangements may include offering the community college foundations education courses at a state college or University campus.**
- **Student success courses, such as study skills, library skills, and tutoring, are not to be defined as foundations education courses. Community colleges, as well as four-year institutions, continue to offer these success courses for their students.**
- **Community colleges are major providers of English Language Learner (also known as English as a Second Language) and U.S. citizenship courses, which are critical to immigrant populations in Nebraska, as well as high school equivalency courses (GED).**
- **Community colleges and partnering high schools should consider adopting the Nebraska Math Readiness Project, which identifies students unlikely to be ready for college math while they are in high school and prepares them to succeed directly in college math courses.**
- **Pedagogy for foundations courses should be research-based, and courses should be structured and sequenced to move students into or enroll directly into credit-bearing courses applicable to degree or certificate requirements as soon as possible. Multiple measures for determining placement of students into foundations courses should be employed. Co-requisite models are encouraged.**
- **Community colleges should monitor the success of students enrolled in foundations education in terms of passing subsequent related credit-bearing courses and completing programs of study.**

RESPONSE TO EMPLOYER NEEDS

Community colleges are critical to the state's economic development efforts. They are a major source of trained and skilled workers for the workforce. In addition, through cooperative education efforts with businesses, they provide customized, on-the-job training for employees as well as services such as re-employment training, skills upgrading, and occupational assessment. It is critical that community colleges be structured to allow flexibility and rapid responsiveness to workforce needs.

- **Community colleges, through ongoing communication with employers and advisory groups, identify competency-based skills that employers are seeking and provide testing mechanisms to assure graduates of training programs, skills-upgrading courses, and customized training programs have attained these skills.**
- **Community colleges continue efforts to pursue cooperative education and training efforts, as well as technical assistance programs, with businesses and communities to support the economic development of their geographic service areas.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

Community colleges provide many public services within their geographic service areas, including economic development, cultural awareness, personal and professional development, and community activities. Their active public service role and their local tax-supported funding base have contributed to their reputation as community-based institutions.

- **Economic development within geographic service areas is an important and continuing function of a community college's public service role.**
- **Community colleges have responsibility to provide public service activities in their geographic service areas that are within the scope and limitation of their resources.**

RESEARCH

Applied research is the fourth and last priority of community colleges. Community colleges do not serve as a principal source of research.

- **Research activities at community colleges generally are limited to the enhancement of instruction, public service, technical assistance activities, and faculty professional development.**

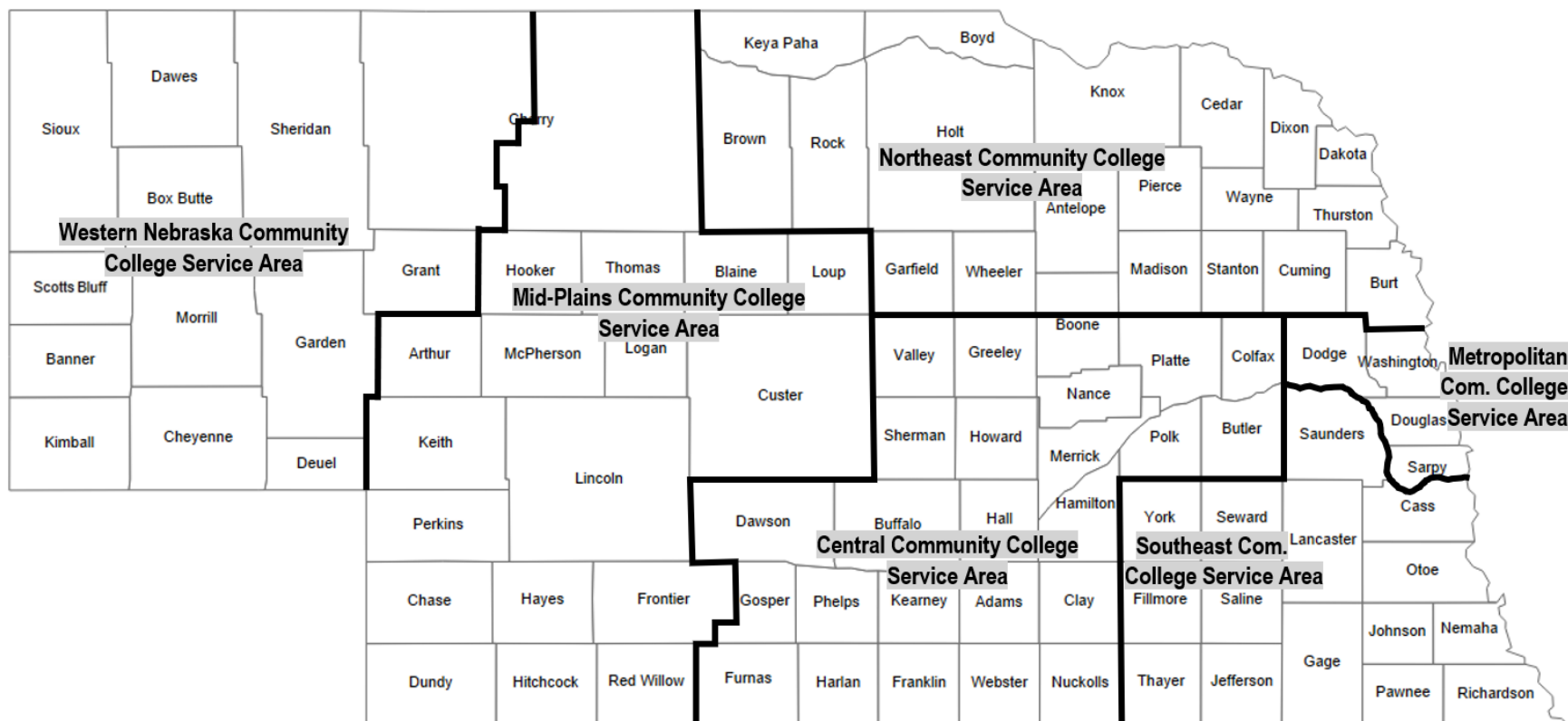
GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREAS

- **Community colleges shall serve the educational needs of their geographic service areas, which are defined by statute (N.R.S. § 85-1504). When warranted, Commission procedures permit institutions to offer programs and services outside their geographic service areas (see map, page 7-12, and Table 2, page 7-13).**

PEER GROUPS

- **The Commission has identified several institutions as appropriate peers for each of the community colleges. Community college area peer lists are found in Appendix 2.**

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICE AREAS



** Electronically delivered distance learning courses to individual homes and worksites are not restricted by service areas.

TABLE 2

NEBRASKA’S PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

NAME OF INSTITUTION	CAMPUSES	AREA COUNTIES
Central Community College	Columbus, Grand Island, Hastings	Adams, southern half of Boone, Buffalo, Butler, Clay, Colfax, Dawson, Franklin, Furnas, Gosper, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Howard, Kearney, Merrick, Nance, Nuckolls, Phelps, Platte, Polk, Sherman, Valley, Webster
Metropolitan Community College	Elkhorn Valley, Fort Omaha, Sarpy County, South Omaha	Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington
Mid-Plains Community College	McCook Community College, North Platte-North Campus, North Platte-South Campus	Arthur, Blaine, Chase, eastern half of Cherry, Custer, Dundy, Frontier, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, Thomas
Northeast Community College	Norfolk	Antelope, northern half of Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Garfield, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock, Stanton, Thurston, Wayne, Wheeler
Southeast Community College	Beatrice, Lincoln, Milford	Cass, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, York
Western Nebraska Community College	Scottsbluff	Banner, Box Butte, western half of Cherry, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Grant, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sioux, Sheridan

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State Colleges' Role and Mission

The state colleges at Chadron, Peru, and Wayne are regional institutions that provide educational programs and public services to meet needs indigenous to their service areas. State colleges historically have served "traditional-age" students; however, in more recent years they have expanded to meet the needs of non-traditional students, who often are place-bound individuals seeking professional and personal development.

- **The Nebraska State Colleges' programmatic service areas, as defined in statute, include:**
 - Its first instructional priority is the provision of baccalaureate general academic, occupational, and education degree programs.
 - Its second instructional priority is to provide master's programs in education and other disciplines authorized by the Coordinating Commission.
 - Its third priorities are applied research, public service activities, and continuing education activities that serve their geographic service areas, except in programs where a college has been assigned the responsibility to provide a particular service on a statewide basis.
 - Delivery of academic transfer and pre-professional associate degree programs for which a degree may be awarded if approved by the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State College System and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, and upon demonstration of a compelling need and unique capacity of the state college to offer such a program. Associate degree programs, however, are a less-needed function of a state college and are directed to community colleges whenever possible. This factor will be considered in the review of new program proposals by the Coordinating Commission.
- **Certain responsibilities within the Nebraska State Colleges' role and mission are appropriate to more than one of its institutions. When considering new instructional programs, research projects, and public service activities, the Board of Trustees of the system determines whether or not an actual unmet need exists and, if so, assigns that need a priority. If it has sufficient priority, the Board then directs responsibility for meeting that need to the state college that is best able to meet the need. Geographic access, institutional expertise, and financial, human, and physical resources are all considered in selecting the appropriate institution.**

INSTRUCTION

The first two priorities of the Nebraska State College System relate to instruction. The state colleges have evolved from their earlier role as teachers' colleges into more comprehensive institutions that provide diverse educational opportunities to their region. Future expansion of state college programs will respond to regional educational needs, subject to institutional capacity and quality assurance.

- **State colleges best serve the people of the state by focusing on programs and services that have the broadest implications and demand within their region.**
- **Educator preparation, business, and liberal arts education leading to a baccalaureate degree are the major emphases of state colleges.**
- **General education courses permeate all undergraduate education at the state colleges. Each college offers a core of general education courses that provides a foundation for all other programs.**
- **Graduate-level programs are proposed only when they are within the role and mission, when resources are available, and when there is evidence of ongoing need and demand.**
- **State colleges and the Coordinating Commission, through the established program review process, evaluate existing and proposed new instructional programs to determine if they comply with institutional objectives, meet student and state needs, and whether they constitute unnecessary duplication.**
- **Student success courses, such as study skills, library skills, and tutoring, are not to be defined as developmental courses. State colleges are encouraged to continue to offer these survival skills courses for their students.**
- **Each state college provides continuing education opportunities to its region that are within the institution's role and mission and that do not represent unnecessary duplication.**

RESEARCH

High quality teaching is the primary focus of state colleges. Research at state colleges is strongly linked to and supportive of the state colleges' emphasis on undergraduate teaching.

- **Research that enhances the state colleges' regional roles and is within their mission is appropriate as part of their third and last priority and shall not supplant the state college's emphasis on teaching.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

The state colleges are recognized for the significant public service role they provide in the educational, cultural, and economic development of their service areas. State colleges meet their public service mission with emphasis on educational outreach programs, cultural enrichment programs, and assistance to the businesses and communities of their geographic region of the state.

- Each state college identifies strengths and capabilities within its role and mission that best serve its region's public service needs.
- Whenever possible, public service activities are related to and supportive of instruction.
- The state colleges have responsibility to provide regional public service activities within the scope and limitation of their resources.
- State colleges use distance learning and instructional technologies to the best effect possible within available resources to provide access to educational, cultural, and personal development activities within their regions.

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREAS

- State colleges shall serve the educational needs of their geographic areas (see map, page 7-18). Services outside the programmatic/geographic service areas are also permitted in accordance with Commission rules and procedures.

- * State college geographic service areas are contiguous with community college geographic service areas.
 ** Electronically delivered distance learning courses to individual homes and worksites are not restricted by service areas.

Chadron State College (CSC)

Chadron State College is classified as Carnegie Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs Institution. Chadron State College's programmatic service area includes baccalaureate-level liberal arts and occupational degree programs and professional degree programs in education.

- **The primary focus of CSC's educational programs is high quality, comprehensive undergraduate programs leading to baccalaureate degrees in arts and sciences, business, rangeland management, and educator preparation, all of which are enhanced by a coherent general education program.**
- **CSC's new baccalaureate degree programs will reflect the needs of its service area and the priorities of the State College Board of Trustees.**
- **CSC offers the Master of Education, the Master of Arts in Education, the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Science in Organizational Management, the Master of Science in Athletic Training degrees, and the Education Specialist in Mental Health and Addiction degrees, and may offer other master's degree programs upon demonstration of a compelling need in disciplines in which it has a demonstrated capacity—including fiscal, human, and physical resources—to meet that need.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **Chadron State College's service area encompasses most of western Nebraska and includes the counties of Arthur, Banner, Blaine, Box Butte, Chase, Cherry, Cheyenne, Custer, Dawes, Deuel, Dundy, Frontier, Garden, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Kimball, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Morrill, Perkins, Red Willow, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux, and Thomas.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for Chadron State College are listed in Appendix 2.**

Peru State College (PSC)

Peru State College is classified as Carnegie Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs Institution. Peru State College offers undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, business, and educator preparation.

- **PSC focuses on high quality undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, business, and educator preparation, all enhanced by a coherent general education program.**
- **PSC offers the Master of Science in Education and the Master of Science in Organizational Management degrees. New master's degree programs at PSC are developed only when a compelling need exists and when PSC has demonstrated the capacity—including fiscal, human, and physical resources—to meet that need.**
- **PSC's new baccalaureate degree programs will reflect the needs of its service area and the priorities of the State College Board of Trustees.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **PSC's geographic service area encompasses much of southeast Nebraska and includes the counties of Cass, Douglas, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, and York, as well as shared responsibility with Wayne State College in Dodge and Washington.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for Peru State College are listed in Appendix 2.**

Wayne State College (WSC)

Wayne State College is classified as a Carnegie Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs Institution. The college has grown from its tradition as a teacher's college to offer a comprehensive curriculum with balanced emphasis on the arts and sciences, business, and educator preparation.

- **WSC's primary emphasis is high quality, comprehensive undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, business, industrial technology, and educator preparation.**
- **WSC offers the Master of Science in Education, the Education Specialist, the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Science in Organizational Management, and the Master of Arts/Science in Interdisciplinary Studies degrees. New master's degree programs at WSC are developed only when a compelling need exists and when WSC has demonstrated the capacity—including fiscal, human, and physical resources—to meet that need.**
- **WSC's new baccalaureate programs will reflect the needs of its service area and the priorities of the State College Board of Trustees.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **WSC's service area encompasses northeast and much of central Nebraska and includes the counties of Adams, Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Buffalo, Burt, Butler, Cedar, Clay, Colfax, Cuming, Dakota, Dawson, Dixon, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield, Gosper, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Holt, Howard, Kearney, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Merrick, Nance, Nuckolls, Phelps, Pierce, Platte, Polk, Rock, Sherman, Stanton, Thurston, Valley, Wayne, Webster, and Wheeler, as well as shared responsibilities with Peru State College in Dodge and Washington.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for Wayne State College are listed in Appendix 2.**

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University of Nebraska's Role and Mission

The University of Nebraska provides extensive, comprehensive postsecondary education to Nebraska citizens through its four administrative units: the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The two-year Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, under the management of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UNL, is also part of the University of Nebraska system. While these different institutions share some common missions, each has a distinct heritage and performs a different role.

The heritage of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is that of a land-grant institution. For the University of Nebraska at Kearney, it is that of a former state college. The University of Nebraska at Omaha's heritage is that of an urban private and, later, a municipal university, with the needs of the Omaha metropolitan area as its primary concern. The University of Nebraska Medical Center has a heritage of specialization in health education. These differing heritages have helped create each institution's distinct personality.

- **The University of Nebraska's programmatic service area, based on statutes, includes:**
 - The University of Nebraska is engaged in instruction, research, and public service. These three parts of the University's mission are interdependent. However, when viewed in its entirety, the University's first priority is undergraduate instruction (with the exception of UNMC) and extension; its second priority is graduate and professional instruction and research; and its third priority is public service.
 - The University of Nebraska has sole responsibility for graduate programs at the specialist and master's degree level and all baccalaureate professional programs throughout the public sector of postsecondary education in Nebraska, with the exception of programs in education, business, and other areas authorized for the state colleges by the Coordinating Commission.
 - The University of Nebraska has primary responsibility for instruction in agriculture and natural resources and primary statewide responsibility for research and public service in agriculture and natural resources.
 - The University of Nebraska has sole responsibility for doctoral and first-professional degree programs, cooperative extension programs, and other degree programs and services specifically provided for by law. The non-health-related first-professional degrees offered by the University of Nebraska shall be in law and architecture.
 - The University of Nebraska has sole responsibility for baccalaureate, first-professional, master's, and doctoral degree programs in the health professions to include medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, and allied health professions, with the exception of the baccalaureate programs in allied health professions established at the state colleges.
 - The University of Nebraska may continue to offer the associate degree, diploma, and certificate in agriculturally related fields, radiologic technology, radiation therapy, nuclear medicine technology, and engineering technology if approved by the Coordinating Commission.

- If approved by the Coordinating Commission, the University of Nebraska may offer certificates within fields in addition to those specified in this section if the preponderance of courses comprising those certificates are above the associate-degree level.
- **Certain responsibilities within the University's role and mission are appropriate to more than one of its institutions. When considering new instructional programs, research projects, and public service activities, the University assesses if an actual unmet need exists and assigns that need a priority. If it has sufficient priority, the University then directs responsibility for meeting that need to the institution that is best able to meet the need. Geographic access, institutional expertise, and financial, human, and physical resources are all considered in selecting the appropriate institution.**
- **A close relationship exists between research and public service in support of instruction at University institutions. Concurrently, research and public service offer potential for the betterment of the University, as well as the state and society.**
- **The University Board of Regents appropriately aspires for its institutions to become competitive with the top tier of similarly classified universities nationwide. The University campuses strive for improvement in the various indicators of performance used for comparison of quality, productivity, and effectiveness, especially in instruction and research. To accomplish this goal, the University establishes focus areas, targeting high priority role and mission areas for enhancement toward national prominence.**

INSTRUCTION

- **Within its three-part mission of instruction, research, and public service, the overarching mission of the University is to serve as a teaching institution.**

Nebraska expects the University to provide the state with educated and competent graduates who form the nucleus of a professional, skilled, and progressive work force; provide leadership for the state's businesses, communities, and government; and become good citizens of the state. The state also expects the University to provide education of a caliber to challenge, stimulate, and empower Nebraska's students to excel. Together, these expectations have created the demand for a broad, all-encompassing, high quality, comprehensive university when, unfortunately, the resources to meet this demand are limited.

- **The University continues to identify priorities within its institutions to develop and strengthen into areas of superiority, and to identify those programs for which there is less need or that are more appropriately offered at other institutions or in other sectors. Through this process, the University can reallocate its resources to provide exemplary programs and services that best meet the needs of Nebraska.**

- **The University has the clear responsibility for providing doctorate programs within Nebraska's public postsecondary educational system. It is important that the University and the Commission, through its program review and approval authority, evaluate existing and proposed doctoral programs and prepare to make needed adjustments as student demand, as well as economic, social, and technological priorities, change.**
 - When new doctoral programs are deemed appropriate, the University will consider which of its institutions is most capable of providing the program and will best serve the needs of the students and the state.
- **The University avoids unnecessary duplication of full graduate programs at University campuses, closely scrutinizing proposals to avoid replicating graduate-level programs at multiple campuses.**
 - The opportunity for more graduate-level degrees often will be available without a major expenditure of Nebraska's public funds through multi-state higher education compacts or cooperative agreements involving the University of Nebraska.

To become a stronger institution, the University needs students who are capable of sharing in and contributing to its goals. Students who are unprepared for the rigor and climate of a comprehensive institution may remain on the periphery.

- **Under recommended guidelines for foundation (remedial) education in this *Plan*, when possible, underprepared students wishing to attend the University are directed into courses offered by a community college, possibly co-located on a University campus.**
 - Student success courses, such as study skills, library skills, and tutoring are not to be defined as developmental and the University of Nebraska is encouraged to continue to offer these courses for its students.

RESEARCH

The State of Nebraska relies on the University of Nebraska institutions as a source of research that advances knowledge and technology, serves the state's economic development goals, and enriches Nebraskans' quality of life. Research and creative activity of a historical, artistic, or more philosophical nature enhance the quality of our lives and our understanding of ourselves and our civic and cultural environment. Each institution within the University system defines its research role differently.

- **The University is responsible for research that advances knowledge, strengthens the University, and benefits the state and its citizens.**

- **The University targets its research efforts at specific, highly promising priority areas, attracting both research funds and research-oriented students to the institution and state.**
- **In instances in which research extensively relies on an infusion of state funds, it is prioritized and targeted to the needs of the state.**
- **Technology transfer and other commercial interactions that support existing industries and help the state attract new businesses merit focused attention by the University.**
- **The University strives to produce measures of research productivity that compare well with peer institutions.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

The University provides many public services to the state. As a primary source of knowledge, technology, cultural activities, research, and human resources, the University often provides leadership and participation in community, regional, and statewide issues. The University also provides a valuable public service to the state through its fine art centers, museums, performing art centers, and other activities.

- **The University continues to implement partnerships between the University and businesses, agencies, and communities throughout the state that contribute to the “good life” enjoyed in Nebraska.**
- **In most instances, public service at the University is tied to and supportive of instruction.**
- **The University strives to provide its students with an opportunity to participate in such activities.**
- **The University, to the extent its resources permit, supports its fine art centers, museums, performing art centers, and other activities that provide cultural and educational resources to the citizens of the state as well as students of the institutions.**
- **The University of Nebraska's service area for public service activities is statewide within the scope and limitation of its resources.**
- **Telecommunications and other distance learning technologies are an educational and public service function of the University. The University uses instructional technology to the best extent possible within available resources to provide citizens,**

students, and faculty access to educational, cultural, and personal development activities.

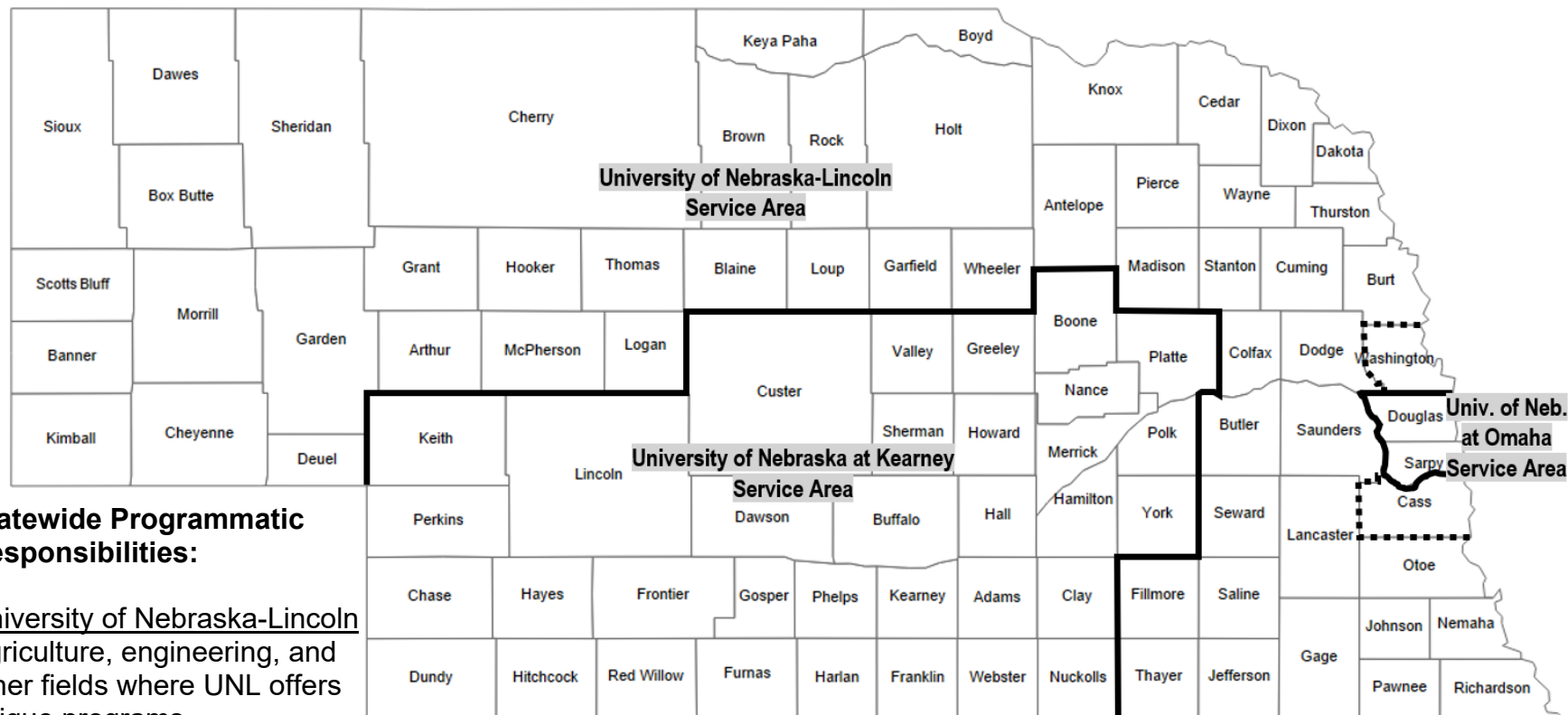
- The University of Nebraska continues to make and implement plans for how it might use telecommunications to extend access to its programs and courses.
- The University of Nebraska retools cooperative extension services to address the changing agricultural climate and to help rural communities bridge the digital divide.

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **Except in those program areas where they have statewide responsibility, the University of Nebraska's four campuses serve the educational needs of their specific geographic areas. Services outside the programmatic/geographic service areas are permitted in accordance with Commission rules and procedures (see map, page 7-28).**

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SERVICE AREAS

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Geographic Service Area for undergraduate and selected master's degree programs includes all counties in the state except those shown as University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University of Nebraska at Omaha Service Areas.



Statewide Programmatic Responsibilities:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Agriculture, engineering, and other fields where UNL offers unique programs

University of Nebraska Medical Center
Health care education

University of Nebraska at Omaha
Graduate-level programs in criminal justice, social work, gerontology, and public administration
Public service responsibility in urban-related programs

UNL and UNO share responsibility in Cass and Washington counties (shown by dotted line).

* Electronically delivered distance learning courses to individual homes and worksites are not restricted by service areas.

University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK)

The University of Nebraska at Kearney is a comprehensive regional institution, classified as a Carnegie Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs Institution. The University of Nebraska at Kearney has a historic role of providing postsecondary education opportunities to the central region of the state. Its off-campus programming, in particular, provides an important educational service to place-bound students within its geographic service area.

- **The University of Nebraska at Kearney serves its region as a part of the University system, providing comprehensive, accessible four-year postsecondary education programs and services.**

INSTRUCTION

- **UNK's primary emphasis is undergraduate programs leading to baccalaureate degrees in arts and sciences, business, educator preparation, and allied health.**
- **UNK will continue to identify disciplines for which needs exist, particularly within its geographic region.**
- **Educator preparation remains one of UNK's primary discipline areas.**
- **UNK offers the Master of Arts in Education and Master of Business Administration degrees with various specializations; specialist degrees in educational administration, school counseling, and school psychology; Master of Science degrees in Biology, Athletic Training, and Health Sciences; and Master of Arts degrees in English, History, and Public Communication. New master's degree programs at UNK are developed only when a definite need exists and when UNK has demonstrated the capacity—including fiscal, human, and physical resources—to meet that need.**
- **Given UNK's focus on strong undergraduate education and the availability of doctoral programs at other institutions, establishing doctoral programs at UNK is a low priority.**

RESEARCH

As an institution with a focus on strong undergraduate instruction, research at UNK is tied closely to scholarship and improvement of instruction. UNK's faculty have produced much valuable research and scholarship in their disciplines.

- **The majority of research conducted at UNK is directly related to enhancement of the instructional programs or the professional development of the faculty.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has a long tradition of service to its extensive geographic area. Involvement in the region's economic development and cultural climate continues to be an integral part of UNK's mission and supportive of its primary instructional role, to the extent resources permit.

- **UNK addresses its geographic service area's many public service needs by providing leadership, human resources, cultural activities, and enhancing volunteerism.**
- **UNK cooperates with regional leaders to advance the economic development of its geographic service area.**
- **Within its resources, UNK continues to provide continuing education services to its region.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **UNK's primary geographic service area is the south central region of the state, including the counties of Adams, Boone, Buffalo, Chase, Clay, Custer, Dawson, Dundy, Franklin, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Howard, Kearney, Keith, Lincoln, Merrick, Nance, Nuckolls, Perkins, Phelps, Platte, Polk, Red Willow, Sherman, Valley, Webster, and York.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for the University of Nebraska at Kearney are listed in Appendix 2.**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL)

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is the most comprehensive public university in Nebraska, providing an array of courses and career options for its undergraduate and graduate students. This comprehensive role has resulted in UNL being the largest public higher education institution in the state, attracting students from throughout the state, as well as the region, country, and world. UNL is classified as a Carnegie Research 1: Very High Research Spending and Doctorate Production institution and also fulfills the University of Nebraska's land grant mission.

INSTRUCTION

- **UNL's first priority is instruction.**
 - UNL supports, recognizes, and rewards faculty for their instructional achievements in the classroom.
- **UNL is the primary doctoral degree granting public institution in the state for fields outside the health professions.**
- **UNL is the state's principal provider of graduate-level programs.**
- **UNL has primary responsibility for fulfilling the University of Nebraska's statewide responsibility for instruction in agriculture and natural resources.**
- **The ability of UNL to set priorities and to target areas of strength will advance UNL's evolution as an exemplary institution throughout our region and nation.**

RESEARCH

Research is integral to UNL's mission, particularly at the graduate level. UNL faculty have produced much valuable research and scholarship that has attracted national recognition and benefited the state, nation, and world.

Research and scholarship that is directly applicable to the classroom or that transfers new and emerging technologies to industry most easily demonstrates measurable results and practical, direct usage. Efforts such as Nebraska Research Initiative Centers, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Center for Great Plains Studies, the Nebraska State Museum, the University Press, and interdisciplinary centers promote research while at the same time directly serving the state's economy and meeting the needs of our citizens. Basic research that advances our general core of knowledge also is essential for the students and for society as a whole.

- **UNL's second priority is research; therefore, research does not overshadow UNL's primary mission of instruction. When possible, research supports and enhances teaching and benefits students.**
- **UNL is the primary unit within the University of Nebraska for general research.**
- **UNL attracts increasing amounts of private and federal research funds, becoming more prominent in prioritized areas of research, often interdisciplinary in scope, that will advance knowledge in the field as well as meet the economic needs of the state.**
- **UNL has primary statewide responsibility for research service in agriculture and natural resources.**
- **UNL undertakes initiatives to inform the public of the direct benefits of its research.**
- **UNL promotes collaborative research with business, government, and other institutions that lead to the transfer of technology to benefit Nebraska.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

UNL has primary statewide responsibility for public service in agriculture and natural resources and for cooperative extension services in every area of the state. It also provides public service to citizens, businesses, and communities through its extensive and diverse continuing education programs. Distance learning technologies provide an excellent tool for enhancing access for both of these services. UNL's museums, fine art centers, and performing arts centers all greatly enhance the cultural opportunities of Nebraska's citizens and are viewed as a major public service to the state.

- **UNL supports the coordinated use of instructional technologies as one of the delivery systems for UNL's cooperative extension services and extended education programs.**
- **UNL continues efforts to help address the state's many public service needs through leadership, human resources, cultural enhancement, and examples of volunteerism.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **UNL's geographic service area for off-campus instruction and public service programs related to agriculture, engineering, and other fields in which UNL offers unique public postsecondary programs shall be the entire state. This includes the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.**

- **UNL's geographic service area for off-campus instruction and public service in other fields includes the counties of: Antelope, Arthur, Banner, Blaine, Box Butte, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Butler, Cedar, Cherry, Cheyenne, Colfax, Cuming, Dakota, Dawes, Deuel, Dixon, Dodge, Fillmore, Gage, Garden, Garfield, Grant, Holt, Hooker, Jefferson, Johnson, Keya Paha, Kimball, Knox, Lancaster, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Madison, Morrill, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Pierce, Richardson, Rock, Saline, Saunders, Scotts Bluff, Seward, Sheridan, Sioux, Stanton, Thayer, Thomas, Thurston, Wayne, and Wheeler, as well as shared responsibility in Cass and Washington with UNO.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are listed in Appendix 2.**

University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)

University of Nebraska Medical Center is the University of Nebraska's primary unit for programs in health-related disciplines. This includes responsibility for educating dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, the allied health professions, and biomedical scientists such as toxicologists and pharmacologists. UNMC is classified by Carnegie as a Special Focus Medical Schools and Centers institution, with a Research 1: Very High Research Spending and Doctorate Production designation.

INSTRUCTION

- **As the primary unit of the University of Nebraska for programs in health-related disciplines, UNMC continues to provide the state's education in health care disciplines and professions.**
 - UNMC anticipates and prepares for the changing health-related needs of our citizens.
- **UNMC collaborates with other institutions and hospitals to consolidate programs, services, equipment usage, and activities when appropriate.**
 - Collaboration with other institutions and hospitals means appropriately shared funding responsibilities.
 - UNMC continues as a partner in Nebraska Medicine, a coalition of hospitals that provides the primary teaching sites for clinical activities of UNMC.
- **The continuation of UNMC's high standards for admission will assure students are prepared for success at this level of education.**
- **UNMC's areas of specialization serve as an excellent model to other institutions. By identifying and prioritizing specific areas for emphasis, UNMC has earned widespread recognition and has attracted students from throughout the nation.**

RESEARCH

Medical research is vital to the role and mission of the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Its research has brought it national recognition and has benefitted medical advancement. It has also provided a valuable health service to people of Nebraska and surrounding states.

- **UNMC maintains its excellence in research and in health-related services. It continues to prioritize research in emerging sciences in which UNMC has the potential to address Nebraska health-care needs and become nationally prominent in the field.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

UNMC provides many health-related public services to the state, including public health education, consultation, and direct patient services. It serves the state and, in some specialized areas, the nation as a health referral center. It also has a leading role in health-related continuing education throughout the state.

- **UNMC's health-related public service roles includes enhancement and support of rural health care and support of health care in rural and other under-served areas. As the need for rural health care increases, UNMC may need to devise further strategies to improve access and maintain quality within its resources.**
- **UNMC develops strategies to mitigate the escalating economic impact of health care.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **UNMC is the public institution with statewide responsibilities in the areas of baccalaureate and graduate-level health-care education.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for the University of Nebraska Medical Center are listed in Appendix 2.**

University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO)

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is a metropolitan campus serving the educational needs of the Omaha metropolitan area. One of its responsibilities is to play a major role in preparing educators and administrators for service in local K-12 school systems. UNO is classified as a Carnegie Research 2: High Research Spending and Doctorate Production institution.

INSTRUCTION

- **UNO's programmatic service area, based on statute, is to serve as the primary unit within the University of Nebraska for urban-oriented programs.**
- **UNO has statewide responsibility for graduate-level programs in Criminal Justice, Social Work, Gerontology, and Public Administration. UNO also offers graduate and undergraduate education in Information Science and Technology on a statewide basis through its partnerships in the Peter Kiewit Institute for Information Sciences, Technology and Engineering.**
- **UNO offers degree programs from baccalaureate through master's and specialist in disciplines where it has a demonstrated capacity—including appropriate fiscal, human and physical resources to meet needs—and appropriate approval from the Coordinating Commission.**
- **The University of Nebraska at Omaha may and does offer doctoral programs upon demonstration of a clear need for disciplines in which UNO has a demonstrated capacity, including appropriate fiscal, human and physical resources, and as approved by the Board of Regents and authorized and approved by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.**

RESEARCH

UNO's faculty has produced much valuable research and scholarship in a wide variety of disciplines, as is appropriate for faculty at a senior institution where research is integral to graduate-level programs. UNO serves as a source of urban, economic, and business-related research that will serve its geographic and programmatic service areas and support its instructional programs.

- **UNO's research mission does not overshadow UNO's primary role of instruction. When possible, research ideally would support and enhance teaching and benefit students.**

- **UNO engages in collaborative research with business, government, organizations, and other institutions on issues of significance to the metropolitan area and in those fields in which UNO has statewide responsibilities.**

PUBLIC SERVICE

UNO has a special responsibility to use its resources and expertise to provide leadership in solving problems of the Omaha metropolitan area and support its social, cultural, international, and economic environment.

- **UNO works within the Omaha metropolitan area to provide leadership and to build partnerships with appropriate constituencies to meet urban needs.**
- **UNO's public service activities generally support and relate to its instructional and research activities.**
- **UNO maintains its linkages with businesses, providing public service appropriate to its areas of expertise and within its resources. In this capacity, UNO serves as the lead institution for the Nebraska Business Development Center.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **UNO's geographic service area is Douglas and Sarpy counties, with shared responsibilities with UNL in Washington and Cass Counties.**
- **UNO has statewide responsibility for off-campus instruction and public service in urban-related programs.**
- **For University of Nebraska institutions, UNO has statewide programmatic responsibility for graduate-level programs in Criminal Justice, Social Work, Gerontology, and Public Administration and for graduate and undergraduate programs in Information Science and Technology.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for the University of Nebraska at Omaha are listed in Appendix 2.**

Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA)

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) at Curtis is a two-year, Associate of Applied Science degree-granting institution that offers technical agriculture-related programs. This institution is managed by the University through the UNL Institute of Agriculture and National Resources (IANR).

- **NCTA operates under the administration and management of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. NCTA is recognized as fully integrated in the academic programs of the IANR at UNL.**
- **The Nebraska Legislature funds NCTA through a separate line-item appropriation.**

GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- **NCTA has a statewide mission of instruction relating to food and agriculture at less than the baccalaureate degree, with concentration on the applied associate degree.**

PEERS

- **The peer institutions for the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are listed in Appendix 2.**

Role and Mission

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education was created in 1990 by a constitutional amendment approved by the people of Nebraska. It became operational in January of 1992. The Commission's primary purposes and responsibilities are identified in the state's constitution and further explained and expanded in state statutes.

The primary statutory purposes of the Coordinating Commission are to:

- 1) Develop an ongoing comprehensive statewide plan for the operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of postsecondary education;
- 2) Identify and recommend or implement policies to meet the educational, research, and public service needs of the state; and
- 3) Effect the best use of available resources through the elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs and facilities among Nebraska's public institutions.

The Commission's role as a state-level coordinating agency includes:

- Serving as a focal point for identifying the critical needs of the state to which higher education can respond.
- Facilitating collaboration and innovation by higher education in meeting the needs of the state and its people in an increasingly competitive environment.
- Serving as an agent of the state to foster efficiency and effectiveness in higher education programs, facilities, and budgets.
- Acting as a catalyst for improvements in higher education in Nebraska.
- Providing reliable, timely, and pertinent data and information to assist the public, government, and institutions to make wise policy choices and individual decisions concerning higher education.

Both the state constitution and statutes clearly state that the Coordinating Commission's role is one of coordination, not governance. The governance and ongoing management of the institutions is the proper role of their governing boards.

COMMISSION DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary constitutional responsibilities of the Commission are as follows:

Academic Program Responsibilities:

The Commission has responsibility to review, monitor, and approve or disapprove new and existing instructional programs at public postsecondary educational institutions; to authorize out-of-state institutions to offer programs within Nebraska; to authorize new private

postsecondary education institutions to operate in Nebraska; to authorize Nebraska public institutions to offer programs outside their designated geographic service areas; to review and approve or disapprove new off-campus branches as education centers, colleges, and institutes; and to administer interstate reciprocity agreements.

- **The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and governing boards of postsecondary education institutions work together to avoid unnecessary duplication of academic programs and to deter unnecessary proliferation of new program offerings**
- **Short-term job training programs for business and industry are exempt from the Coordinating Commission's program review process.**

Budget and Capital Construction Responsibilities:

The Commission has responsibility to review, monitor, and approve or disapprove proposed capital construction projects of public postsecondary education institutions that use a set amount of state funds or property tax levies to build or operate; to make biennial recommendations to the Governor and Legislature regarding capital construction project prioritizations; and to review the budget requests of governing boards and recommend modifications to the Governor and Legislature, if needed, to promote compliance and consistency with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan* and prevent unnecessary duplication.

- **It is important that postsecondary education institutions have stable and adequate funding upon which they can plan.**
- **Budget requests are reviewed by the Commission with an emphasis on specific outcomes to meet the goals of the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan* and the changing needs of the state.**
- **The Commission promotes postsecondary educational funding that achieves all of the following:**
 - Reflects institutional and state priorities.
 - Does not unnecessarily duplicate existing services, programs, and facilities.
 - Is consistent with the goals of the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan*.
 - Represents efficient and effective utilization of state funds.

Comprehensive Planning Responsibilities:

The Commission has responsibility to develop an ongoing *Comprehensive Statewide Plan* for the operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of postsecondary education.

- The ***Comprehensive Plan*** establishes widely shared goals for higher education and strategies for their accomplishment, facilitates continuity of higher education policy, and provides a consistent direction for higher education as a whole within the state.
- The Commission collaborates with higher education leaders in the state toward the achievement of the goals set forth in the ***Comprehensive Statewide Plan***.
- The Commission, in collaboration with the public postsecondary institutions, will periodically report on the extent to which the goals of the ***Comprehensive Plan*** are being met and identify what, if any, revisions are needed to the ***Plan*** to address needs.
 - When special concerns arise regarding progress toward accomplishing the goals of the ***Plan***, the Commission may collaborate with public institutions to convene study and work groups to address the issues of concern, discuss state and student needs, suggest solutions, and establish outcomes, measures, and benchmarks to encourage improvements.
- The ***Comprehensive Plan*** will be revised as needed to reflect changing educational and state needs.

Other Statutory Responsibilities of the Commission Include:

- Recommend to the Legislature and the Governor legislation it deems necessary or appropriate to improve postsecondary education in Nebraska.
- Administer the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Nebraska Educational Data System (NEEDS).
- Administer the Community College Aid Act, the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program (NOG), the Access College Early Scholarship Program (ACE), the Community College Gap Assistance Program (Gap), the Excellence in Teaching Act Programs, the Nebraska Career Scholarship for community colleges and independent colleges and universities, and the Guaranty Recovery Cash Fund.
- Conduct surveys and studies as may be necessary to accomplish its purposes.

Goals and Strategies

In fulfilling its constitutional and statutory responsibilities, the Commission will strive to accomplish the following goals:

- The Commission will function as a coordinating body with the intent to work as closely as possible with each of the various educational sectors and institutions.
- The Commission will be a responsible partner in education, sharing common goals with all of the state's postsecondary educational sectors and institutions.

- The Commission will avoid placing unnecessary burdens on the institutions.
 - The Commission will strive to promote coordination, cooperation, and efficiency in institutions that will help create an exemplary postsecondary educational network within the state.
 - The Commission's primary role is leadership in fostering cooperation and coordination, which is dependent on good working relationships with public institutions, as well as with independent colleges and universities and private career schools.
-
- **The Coordinating Commission will act as a student-centered, statewide entity that is responsive to the postsecondary educational needs and concerns of the people of Nebraska.**
 - **The Commission will provide postsecondary educational memory for the state. Through this role, the Commission can provide continuity and stability regardless of changes in the state's office holders or in governance at institutions.**
 - **The Commission will serve as an advocate for effective and productive Nebraska postsecondary education and, in this role, will communicate to Nebraska citizens—and in particular to K-12 students—the many educational options that exist within the state's postsecondary educational sectors.**
 - **The Commission will inform citizens about the learning, research, and public service opportunities in Nebraska, including those provided via distance learning.**
 - **The Commission is dedicated to its own effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability and will not evolve into a bureaucratic state that becomes a hindrance to effective cooperation and responsiveness among institutions.**
 - **The Commission will abide by its official code of ethics in performance of all of its responsibilities and functions.**

APPENDIX 1

GUIDELINES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Courses offered in Nebraska via instructional technologies are expected to meet or exceed the relevant criteria and assumed practices of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The Coordinating Commission will refer to the HLC's relevant criteria and assumed practices in fulfilling its constitutional and statutory duties, including review of new programs and review of applications for out-of-state programs and new private colleges.

Crit. 3.A.3: The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Crit. 3.D.4: The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

AP 10: The institution remains in compliance at all times with all applicable laws, including laws related to authorization of educational activities and consumer protection wherever it does business.

AP 11: The institution documents outsourcing of all services in written agreements, including agreements with parent or affiliated organizations.

Detailed operationalization of HLC criteria and assumed practices as applied to distance education can be found HLC's *Distance or Correspondence Education Substantive Change Application*:

Section D. Curriculum and Instructional Design

14. How does the institution ensure good instructional design in its distance or correspondence education offerings? How are the institution's faculty and quality control mechanisms involved in the instructional design process?
15. What processes and procedures will the institution use for technology maintenance, upgrades, back up and remote services, and for communicating changes in software, hardware or technical systems to students and faculty?

16. How does the institution ensure that it provides convenient, reliable, and timely services to students or faculty needing technical assistance, and how does it communicate information about these services?
17. If the institution is planning partnerships or agreements with external organizations or institutions as identified in Questions 4 and 5, how will the institution ensure that students can use these services effectively?

Section E. Institutional Staffing, Faculty, and Student Support

18. How does the institution staff distance or correspondence education programs? How does this differ from the institution's processes for staffing traditional programs?
19. What is the institution's process for selecting, training and orienting faculty for distance or correspondence education? What special professional development, support or released time does the institution provide for faculty who teach distance or correspondence education offerings?
20. How does the institution assure copyright compliance and keep distance or correspondence education faculty aware of institutional policies on using others' intellectual property?
21. How does the institution ensure that distance or correspondence education students have access to necessary student and support services (e.g., institutional information, application for admission, registration, tutoring or academic support, advising, financial aid, tuition payment, career counseling and placement, library resources, complaint processes)? How does the institution provide them information about using these services, and how does it monitor and evaluate their use of these services?
22. What is the institution's student identity verification protocol? Describe the institution's process for determining the effectiveness of the protocol described.
23. How does the institution ensure both regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students engaged in distance education? (See HLC's Glossary for a definition of regular and substantive interaction.)

- a) Describe in detail how the institution ensures faculty are proactively engaging students in teaching, learning and assessment activity consistent with academic content under discussion in their programs (including, for example, core ideas, important theories, current knowledge in the discipline, critical thinking, analytical skills, written and oral communication abilities). Describe the manner in which faculty respond to questions from students about academic content of the program.
- b) How does the institution ensure substantive interaction occurs on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis appropriate for the program offered? What are the responsibilities of faculty in that interaction? What are the responsibilities of students?

Section F. Evaluation

- 24. Describe the process for monitoring, evaluating and improving the overall effectiveness and quality of the offerings.
- 25. Describe the process for assessing and improving student learning, including student persistence and completion, in the offerings.
- 26. How are the measures and techniques for distance or correspondence education offerings equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation in traditional face-to-face offerings? If there are differences, why are these differences appropriate?

Additional resources laying out best practices for distance learning are available from the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (see *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* (2011)) and from the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements.

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APPENDIX 2

COMMISSION-ESTABLISHED PEER LISTS

Community College Peer Lists*Peer Group for Central Community College*

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Barton County Community College	154697	Great Bend	Kansas
Coastal Alabama Community College	101161	Bay Minette	Alabama
Hutchinson Community College	155195	Hutchinson	Kansas
Indian Hills Community College	153472	Ottumwa	Iowa
Iowa Central Community College	153524	Fort Dodge	Iowa
Mohawk Valley Community College	193283	Utica	New York
Northeast Community College	181491	Norfolk	Nebraska
Northeast Mississippi Community College	176169	Booneville	Mississippi
Southeast Community College Area	181640	Lincoln	Nebraska
Western Iowa Tech Community College	154572	Sioux City	Iowa
Alternate Institutions:			
Iowa Western Community College	153630	Council Bluffs	Iowa
Paris Junior College	227401	Paris	Texas

Note. Peer institutions for Central Community College were approved by the Commission in May 2025.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE PLAN FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Peer Group for Metropolitan Community College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Bluegrass Community and Technical College	156392	Lexington	Kentucky
Brightpoint Community College	232450	Chester	Virginia
Chandler-Gilbert Community College	364025	Chandler	Arizona
Columbus State Community College	202222	Columbus	Ohio
Des Moines Area Community College	153214	Ankeny	Iowa
Erie Community College	191083	Buffalo	New York
Illinois Central College	145682	East Peoria	Illinois
Jefferson Community and Technical College	156921	Louisville	Kentucky
Moraine Valley Community College	147378	Palos Hills	Illinois
Salt Lake Community College	230746	Salt Lake City	Utah
Alternate Institutions:			
Camden County College	183938	Blackwood	New Jersey
Joliet Junior College	146296	Joliet	Illinois

Note. Peer institutions for Metropolitan Community College were approved by the Commission in May 2025.

Peer Group for Mid-Plains Community College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Allen County Community College	154642	Iola	Kansas
Bay de Noc Community College	168883	Escanaba	Michigan
Cloud County Community College	154907	Concordia	Kansas
Highland Community College	155186	Highland	Kansas
Iowa Lakes Community College	153533	Estherville	Iowa
Marshalltown Community College	153922	Marshalltown	Iowa
North Arkansas College	107460	Harrison	Arkansas
Southwestern Community College	154396	Creston	Iowa
Southwestern Michigan College	172307	Dowagiac	Michigan
Western Nebraska Community College	181817	Scottsbluff	Nebraska
Alternate Institutions:			
Lake Region State College	200192	Devils Lake	North Dakota
Northern Wyoming Community College District	240666	Sheridan	Wyoming

Note. Peer institutions for Mid-Plains Community College were approved by the Commission in May 2025.

Peer Group for Northeast Community College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Casper College	240505	Casper	Wyoming
Davidson-Davie Community College	198376	Thomasville	North Carolina
Minnesota State Community and Technical College	173559	Fergus Falls	Minnesota
North Dakota State College of Science	200305	Wahpeton	North Dakota
Northcentral Technical College	239460	Wausau	Wisconsin
Ridgewater College	175236	Willmar	Minnesota
Rochester Community and Technical College	174738	Rochester	Minnesota
Southern Maine Community College	161545	South Portland	Maine
SUNY Broome Community College	189547	Binghamton	New York
Walters State Community College	222062	Morristown	Tennessee
Alternate Institutions:			
Iowa Lakes Community College	153533	Estherville	Iowa
Niagara County Community College	193946	Sanborn	New York

Note. Peer institutions for Northeast Community College were approved by the Commission in May 2025.

Peer Group for Southeast Community College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Chandler-Gilbert Community College	364025	Chandler	Arizona
Coastal Alabama Community College	101161	Bay Minette	Alabama
Eastern Iowa Community College District	153311	Davenport	Iowa
Erie Community College	191083	Buffalo	New York
Gaston College	198570	Dallas	North Carolina
Illinois Central College	145682	East Peoria	Illinois
Joliet Junior College	146296	Joliet	Illinois
Kirkwood Community College	153737	Cedar Rapids	Iowa
Northwest Mississippi Community College	176178	Senatobia	Mississippi
Owens Community College	204945	Perrysburg	Ohio
Alternate Institutions:			
Harrisburg Area Community College	212878	Harrisburg	Pennsylvania
Jefferson State Community College	101505	Birmingham	Alabama

Note. Peer institutions for Southeast Community College were approved by the Commission in May 2025.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE PLAN FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Peer Group for Western Nebraska Community College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Bay de Noc Community College	168883	Escanaba	Michigan
Coffeyville Community College	154925	Coffeyville	Kansas
Marshalltown Community College	153922	Marshalltown	Iowa
Mid-Plains Community College	181312	North Platte	Nebraska
Neosho County Community College	155566	Chanute	Kansas
Northwest Iowa Community College	154129	Sheldon	Iowa
Pratt Community College	155715	Pratt	Kansas
Southwestern Community College	154396	Creston	Iowa
Southwestern Oregon Community College	210155	Coos Bay	Oregon
Williston State College	200341	Williston	North Dakota
Alternate Institutions:			
Lake Region State College	200192	Devils Lake	North Dakota
North Country Community College	194028	Saranac Lake	New York

Note. Peer institutions for Western Nebraska Community College were approved by the Commission in May 2025.

State College Peer Lists

Peer Group for Chadron State College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Black Hills State University	219046	Spearfish	South Dakota
Eastern Oregon University	208646	La Grande	Oregon
Minot State University	200253	Minot	North Dakota
Northern State University	219259	Aberdeen	South Dakota
Northwest Missouri State University	178624	Maryville	Missouri
Northwestern Oklahoma State University	207306	Alva	Oklahoma
Peru State College	181534	Peru	Nebraska
Truman State University	178615	Kirksville	Missouri
Wayne State College	181783	Wayne	Nebraska
Western Colorado University	128391	Gunnison	Colorado
Alternate Institutions:			
Dakota State University	219082	Madison	South Dakota
Western Oregon University	210429	Monmouth	Oregon

Note. Peer institutions for Chadron State College were approved by the Commission in April 2020.

Peer Group for Peru State College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Black Hills State University	219046	Spearfish	South Dakota
Chadron State College	180948	Chadron	Nebraska
Concord University	237330	Athens	West Virginia
Eastern Oregon University	208646	La Grande	Oregon
Fairmont State University	237367	Fairmont	West Virginia
Minot State University	200253	Minot	North Dakota
Northwestern Oklahoma State University	207306	Alva	Oklahoma
Valley City State University	200572	Valley City	North Dakota
Wayne State College	181783	Wayne	Nebraska
West Liberty University	237932	West Liberty	West Virginia
Alternate Institutions:			
Northern State University	219259	Aberdeen	South Dakota
Southwest Minnesota State University	175078	Marshall	Minnesota

Note. Peer institutions for Peru State College were approved by the Commission in April 2020.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE PLAN FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Peer Group for Wayne State College

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Black Hills State University	219046	Spearfish	South Dakota
Chadron State College	180948	Chadron	Nebraska
Emporia State University	155025	Emporia	Kansas
Minot State University	200253	Minot	North Dakota
Northern State University	219259	Aberdeen	South Dakota
Northwest Missouri State University	178624	Maryville	Missouri
Northwestern Oklahoma State University	207306	Alva	Oklahoma
Peru State College	181534	Peru	Nebraska
Southwest Minnesota State University	175078	Marshall	Minnesota
University of Wisconsin-River Falls	240471	River Falls	Wisconsin
Alternate Institutions:			
Dakota State University	219082	Madison	South Dakota
Western Colorado University	128391	Gunnison	Colorado

Note. Peer institutions for Wayne State College were approved by the Commission in April 2020.

University of Nebraska Peer Lists

Peer Group for the University of Nebraska at Kearney

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Eastern Illinois University	144892	Charleston	Illinois
Emporia State University	155025	Emporia	Kansas
Minnesota State University Moorhead	174358	Moorhead	Minnesota
Northwest Missouri State University	178624	Maryville	Missouri
Pittsburg State University	155681	Pittsburg	Kansas
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania	216010	Shippensburg	Pennsylvania
University of Central Missouri	176965	Warrensburg	Missouri
Western Carolina University	200004	Cullowhee	North Carolina
Western Illinois University	149772	Macomb	Illinois
Winona State University	175272	Winona	Minnesota
Alternate Institutions:			
Southeast Missouri State University	179557	Cape Girardeau	Missouri
University of Northern Iowa	154095	Cedar Falls	Iowa

Note. Peer institutions for the University of Nebraska at Kearney were approved by the Commission in April 2015.

Peer Group for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Colorado State University-Fort Collins	126818	Fort Collins	Colorado
Iowa State University	153603	Ames	Iowa
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	159391	Baton Rouge	Louisiana
The University of Tennessee-Knoxville	221759	Knoxville	Tennessee
University of Iowa	153658	Iowa City	Iowa
University of Kansas	155317	Lawrence	Kansas
University of Kentucky	157085	Lexington	Kentucky
University of Missouri-Columbia	178396	Columbia	Missouri
University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus	207500	Norman	Oklahoma
Washington State University	236939	Pullman	Washington

Alternate Institutions:

Oregon State University	209542	Corvallis	Oregon
University of Utah	230764	Salt Lake City	Utah

Note. Peer institutions for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln were approved by the Commission in August 2015.

Peer Group for the University of Nebraska Medical Center

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Medical University of South Carolina	218335	Charleston	South Carolina
Ohio State University-Main Campus	204796	Columbus	Ohio
The University of Tennessee-Knoxville	221759	Knoxville	Tennessee
University of Arizona	104179	Tucson	Arizona
University of Connecticut	129020	Storrs	Connecticut
University of Iowa	153658	Iowa City	Iowa
University of Kansas	155317	Lawrence	Kansas
University of Kentucky	157085	Lexington	Kentucky
University of Utah	230764	Salt Lake City	Utah
Virginia Commonwealth University	234030	Richmond	Virginia

Alternate Institutions:

University of Oklahoma-Health Sciences Center	207342	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma
University of New Mexico-Main Campus	187985	Albuquerque	New Mexico

Note. Peer institutions for the University of Nebraska Medical Center were approved by the Commission in August 2015.

Peer Group for the University of Nebraska at Omaha

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Cleveland State University	202134	Cleveland	Ohio
Eastern Michigan University	169798	Ypsilanti	Michigan
Northern Kentucky University	157447	Highland Heights	Kentucky
The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga	221740	Chattanooga	Tennessee
University of Central Oklahoma	206941	Edmond	Oklahoma
University of Colorado Colorado Springs	126580	Colorado Springs	Colorado
University of Missouri-St Louis	178420	Saint Louis	Missouri
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	199148	Greensboro	North Carolina
University of North Florida	136172	Jacksonville	Florida
Wichita State University	156125	Wichita	Kansas
Alternate Institutions:			
Middle Tennessee State University	220978	Murfreesboro	Tennessee
University of Akron Main Campus	200800	Akron	Ohio

Note. Peer institutions for the University of Nebraska at Omaha were approved by the Commission in June 2015.

Peer Group for Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

Institution Name	IPEDS Unit ID	City	State
Peer Institutions:			
Iowa Lakes Community College	153533	Estherville	Iowa
Lake Area Technical College	219143	Watertown	South Dakota
Mitchell Technical College	219189	Mitchell	South Dakota
Northland Community and Technical College	174473	Thief River Falls	Minnesota
Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute	204662	Wooster	Ohio
South Central College	173911	North Mankato	Minnesota
State Technical College of Missouri*	177977	Linn	Missouri
SUNY College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill	196033	Cobleskill	New York
SUNY College of Technology at Alfred**	196006	Alfred	New York
SUNY Morrisville	196051	Morrisville	New York
Former Peers:			
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College**	138558	Tifton	Georgia
Vermont State University**	231165	Randolph Center	Vermont

Note. Peer institutions for the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture were approved by the Commission in August 2015. *Also known as Linn State Technical College. **In November 2019, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College was removed from the peer list and replaced by an alternate institution (Vermont State University). In May 2025, Vermont State University was removed from the peer list and replaced by an alternate institution (SUNY College of Technology at Alfred).

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

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