UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SYSTEM

# ODYSSEY TO EXTRAORDINARY

## FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

SEPTEMBER 2026

We lead the world in transforming lives and communities to an extraordinary future through our enduring commitment to creating and sharing knowledge, inspiring and nurturing discovery and through forging and sustaining relationships built upon trust.

We do this as a University community by building upon our legacy of excellence and our commitment to a future of the extraordinary.

## EXTRAORDINARY TEACHING & LEARNING:

Establish the University of Nebraska System and its educational programs as the most extraordinary learner-centered university with nationally recognized programs and top tier faculty and staff.

**Inspiring All Learners:** Themes for this strategy include inspiring all learners with multidisciplinary experiential learning/internships, clear paths to graduation, and rethinking ways to create unique and personalized opportunities that create distinctive learning environments that create true student success .Strategic performance indicators include:

- *1.1.1 - Total Student Headcount:* Total enrolled student headcount at Census.
- *1.1.2 - Total Student Credit Hours:* Number of enrolled credit hours at Census.
- *1.1.3 - FTFT Student Headcount:* Headcount of first-time, full-time students (freshmen).
- *1.1.4 - FTFT Student Credit Hours:* Number of credit hours enrolled among first-time, full-time students (freshmen).
- *1.1.5 - Transfer-in Headcount:* Headcount of first-time undergraduate transfer students.
- *1.1.6 - Internal Undergraduate-to-Grad/Professional Transition Rate:* Percentage of students who earn an undergraduate award in the prior two academic years and are enrolled in a graduate/professional program at NU the subsequent fall semester.
- *1.1.7 - High School Recruitment Visits:* Number of high schools visited by NU recruiters.
- *1.1.8 - Freshmen Student Admission to Matriculation Rate - In-State Students:* Percentage of admitted freshmen students from Nebraska who matriculate the following semester that applied during the prior academic year.
- *1.1.9 - Transfer Student Admission to Matriculation Rate - In-State Students:* Percentage of admitted transfer students from Nebraska who matriculate the following semester that applied during the prior academic year.
- *1.1.10 - Freshmen Student Admission to Matriculation Rate - Out-of-State Students:* Percentage

of admitted freshmen students from outside Nebraska who matriculate the following semester that applied during the prior academic year.

- *1.1.11 - Transfer Student Admission to Matriculation Rate - Out-of-State Students:* Percentage of admitted transfer students from outside Nebraska who matriculate the following semester that applied during the prior academic year.

**Transforming the Learning Environment:** Themes for this strategy include optimizing the most advanced technology to support the learning environment and experiences, enhancing customized student support services, and supporting facility innovation to enhance outcomes across the academic spectrum with focus on key high enrollment and "bottleneck" pipeline courses and programs. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *1.2.1 - Fall-to-Fall Retention:* Percentage of all undergraduate degree-seeking students enrolled at the prior fall census who re-enroll or graduate before the subsequent fall census.
- *1.2.2 - First-Year Retention Rate (First-Time Cohort):* Percentage of first-time bachelor's-seeking students enrolled at the prior fall census who re-enroll at the subsequent fall census. HLC Indicator.
- *1.2.3 - Overall DFW Rate:* Percentage of undergraduate course attempts that results in a D, F, or student withdrawal.
- *1.2.4 - Math/Quantitative Literacy DFW Rate:* Percentage of undergraduate math/quantitative course attempts that results in a D, F, or student withdrawal.
- *1.2.5 - English Comp DFW Rate:Percentage of undergraduate English Comp course attempts that results in a D, F, or student withdrawal.*
- *1.2.6 - Completion and Transfer Rate at 8 Years After Entry:* Percentage of all entering undergraduate students in a particular cohort year who complete their educational program or transfer to subsequent institutions, measured at 8 years after entry. HLC indicator.
- *1.2.7 - Undergraduate Graduation Rate (150% of Normal Time):* Percentage of the bachelor's or equivalent degree and other degree/certificate-seeking adjusted cohort that completes an award in six years or 150% of normal time. AAU informational indicator.
- *1.2.8 - Pell Grant Recipient Graduation Rate (150% of Normal Time):* Percentage of the Pell bachelor's or equivalent degree and other degree/certificate-seeking adjusted cohort that completes an award in six years or 150% of normal time. AAU Informational Indicator.
- *1.2.9 - Pell Graduation Rate Gap:* Gap between Pell Grant Recipient and Undergraduate Graduation Rate (150%). AAU Informational Indicator.
- *1.2.10 - DOE Earnings Premium: At-Risk Program Rate:* Percentage of evaluated programs with an earnings premium that is below the DOE's established benchmark or exceeds that benchmark by a margin of 10% or less (at-risk).
- *1.2.11 - DOE Earnings Premium: Program Improvement:* Percentage of programs below or within 10% of the DOE's premium earnings benchmark in the previous reporting period that now exceed the threshold by a margin greater than 10% due to earnings growth (no longer at risk).

**Curriculum Innovation and Multicampus Alignment:** Themes for this strategy include reimagining curriculum, pedagogy and assessment strategies (e.g. competency-based curriculum), non-curricular opportunities, high technology skills and incorporating unique workforce readiness into all academic programs. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *1.3.1 - AI Components in UG Courses:* AI curricular content embedded in general education courses (Yes/No).
- *1.3.2 - Undergraduate Student Research Participation:* Percentage of undergraduate students participating in research and creative activity.
- *1.3.5 - Internship UG Experience Participation:* Percentage of undergraduate students successfully completing internships, clinicals, and practicums.
- *1.3.7 - Academic Program AI Integration:* Percentage of academic programs with AI-related discussion, content, and/or experiences.
- *1.3.8 - Expansion of Undergraduate Online Courses:*Number of online undergraduate courses delivered annually.
- *1.3.9 - Expansion of Undergraduate Online Credit Hours:* Number of online undergraduate credit hours at Fall Census.
- *1.3.11 - Expansion of Undergraduate Online Bachelor's Degrees:* Number of completely online bachelor's degrees available.
- *1.3.12 - Expansion of Graduate and Professional Online Credit Hours:* Number of online graduate and professional credit hours at Fall Census.
- *1.3.13 - Expansion of Graduate and Professional Online Degrees:* Number of completely online master's and doctoral degrees available.

**Supporting Faculty Success:** Themes for this strategy include stimulating innovation by supporting educators, reinforcing our culture of extraordinary scholarship based upon learning excellence, and implementing new and transformative teaching and learning strategies. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *1.4.2 - Instruction Extramural Sponsored Awards (#):* Number of instruction-related sponsored extramural awards.
- *1.4.3 - Instruction Extramural Sponsored Awards ($):* Amount of instruction-related sponsored extramural awards.

## EXTRAORDINARY RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITY:

Establish the University of Nebraska System research and creative activity scope and prominence as widely recognized for extraordinary societal impact as a top tier institution.

**Building a Highly Impactful Research Identity:** Themes for this strategy include supporting the growth of the five specific top-tier, highly impactful federally funded research programs, including the research areas of Human Performance, National Security, Agriculture and the Bioeconomy, Health & Wellness and Advanced Technology, and cultivating the scholarship of creative activity and the arts. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *2.5.1 - Proposal Success Rate ($):* Percentage of the extramural research & development proposal submissions that were awarded (Dollars).
- *2.5.2 - Proposal Success Rate ($) in Research Concentration:* Percentage of the extramural research & development proposal submissions that were awarded in research concentration (Dollars).

- *2.5.3 - Federal Direct Research Proposal Success Rate (#):* Percentage of the extramural research & development proposal submissions to federal sources that were awarded (Number).
- *2.5.4 - Federal Direct Research Proposal Success Rate ($):* Percentage of the amount requested via extramural research & development proposal submissions to federal sources that was awarded ($).
- *2.5.5 - Sponsored Awards ($):* Amount of extramural non-federal research sponsored awards and contracts normalized by research faculty.
- *2.5.6 - Competitively Funded Federal Research Support per Faculty - AAU (10-year average):* Amount of competitively funded federal research & development expenditures / AAU faculty (10-year average). AAU Phase I Indicator.
- *2.5.7 - Competitively Funded Federal Research Support per Faculty - AAU (most recent FY):* Amount of competitively funded federal research & development expenditures / AAU faculty (most recent FY). AAU Phase I Indicator.
- *2.5.8 - Book Publications per Faculty - AAU (10-year average):* Number of books published by tenure and tenure-track faculty within Academic Analytics' benchmarkable units / AAU faculty (10-year total). AAU Phase I Indicator.
- *2.5.9 - Book Publications per Faculty - AAU (most recent FY):* Number of books published by tenure and tenure-track faculty within Academic Analytics' benchmarkable units / AAU faculty (most recent FY). AAU Phase I Indicator.
- *2.5.10 - Citations per Faculty - AAU (10-year average):* Number of citations by tenure and tenure-track faculty within Academic Analytics' benchmarkable units / AAU faculty (10-year average). AAU Phase I Indicator.

**Internal Programmatic Infrastructure Growth and Alignment:** Themes for this strategy include providing an integrated infrastructure that supports research and innovation (including personnel, facilities and advanced technology), setting measurable goals, creating cross-campus/integrated research collaborations, and creating avenues to foster talent and attract top-tier researchers. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *2.6.2 - Realized Facilities and Administrative Fees:* Total realized Indirect Cost Percentage.
- *2.6.3 - F&A Recovery on Research Sponsored Projects:* Indirect costs $ normalized by research faculty.

**External Collaboration, Recognition and Alignment:** Themes for this strategy include building sustainable programs between the public, private, government and philanthropic sectors and NU, supporting pathways for accelerating innovation, technology transfer and commercialization, building frameworks across campuses, disciplines and external organizations.

- *2.7.1 - Allocated USDA, State, and Industrial Research Funding per Faculty - AAU (10-year average):* Amount of formula-allocated USDA, state, and industrial research & development / AAU faculty (10-year Average). AAU Phase II Indicator.
- *2.7.2 - Allocated USDA, State, and Industrial Research Funding per Faculty - AAU (most recent FY):* Amount of formula-allocated USDA, state, and industrial research & development / AAU faculty (most recent FY). AAU Phase II Indicator.
- *2.7.3 - NRC Highly Prestigious Awards per Faculty - AAU (any year):* Number of NRC highly prestigious awards among tenure and tenure-track faculty within Academic Analytics'

benchmarkable units / AAU faculty (any year). AAU Phase I Indicator.

- *2.7.4 - NRC Highly Prestigious Awards (most recent year):* Number of NRC highly prestigious awards (most recent year).
- *2.7.5 - NRC Highly Prestigious Awards per Faculty - AAU (most recent year):* Number of NRC highly prestigious awards among tenure and tenure-track faculty within Academic Analytics' benchmarkable units / AAU faculty (most recent year). AAU Phase I Indicator.
- *2.7.6 - Postdoctoral Appointees per Faculty - AAU:* Number of postdoctoral appointees / AAU faculty. AAU Phase II Indicator.
- *2.7.7 - Research doctorates per Faculty - AAU:* Number of research doctorates granted / AAU faculty. AAU Phase II Indicator.

## EXTRAORDINARY PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT:

Establish the University of Nebraska System and our engagement partners as having the highest-quality and impact that are recognized for extraordinary rural and urban outcomes.

**University Collaboration and Internal Alignment:** Themes for this strategy include supporting sustainable collaborations and partnerships across all campuses and disciplines within the educational, research and service missions, using policy, technology, finances and incentives to eliminate silos and bridge existing and future gaps.. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *3.8.1 - NU Partnerships:* Number of active research sponsored projects with multi-campus PI/Co-PI Collaborations.
- *3.8.2 - Intellectual Property - Patents:* Number of intellectual property patents.
- *3.8.3 - Intellectual Property – Licenses:* Number of commercial intellectual property licenses.
- *3.8.4 - Intellectual Property - Number of Start-Ups:* Number of research-based start-up companies formed that are based on university technologies.
- *3.8.5 - Intellectual Property - Number of Inventions:* Number of new Invention disclosures per year.
- *3.8.6 - Rural Community Based Clinical Rotation Agreements:* Number of Rural Community Based Clinical Rotation Agreements.

**Partnerships Across Nebraska and Beyond:** Themes for this strategy include fostering multi-state, national and global partnerships that allow NU to create and grow future mission driven opportunities for students, faculty, staff and alumni that provide positive community and educational impacts by forging agricultural, health care, military, public, educational sectors, philanthropic, and business collaborations that lead to overall quality of life and economic development improvements for all populations within the state and beyond. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *3.9.1 - Owned Media Impact Website Pageviews:* Pageviews (#).
- *3.9.2 - Earned Media Impact Reach:* Earned media reach.

- *3.9.3 - Earned Media Impact Ad Equivalency:* Ad equivalency ($).
- *3.9.8 - Constituent Engagement Score:* Measures an aggregate of data elements recorded in Ali CRM to measure a constituent's individual Engagement with NU and its affiliates.
- *3.9.9 - Paid Student Internships:* Percentage of undergraduate students with paid internships.
- *3.9.10 - Academic Program Accreditation:* Percentage of academic programs that are accredited by outside bodies without follow-up reports requested, appeals, denials of accreditation, probations, show causes, involuntary withdrawals of accreditation, or warnings.

**Connecting Nebraska Through Engagement:** Themes for this strategy include benefiting all Nebraskans by translating university expertise into programs that strengthen communities, prepare the workforce of the future, support economic growth and vitality, and advance innovation. These include efforts reflecting our Land Grant mission such as Nebraska Extension's statewide county-based network, the Buffett Cancer Center's statewide programming and our statewide technology transfer partnerships. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *3.10.1 - Community Outreach and Partnerships:* Percentage of Nebraska counties and legislative districts participating in NU community engagement activities that share knowledge and resources, aspiring to co-create reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships between the university and these communities' public and private entities.
- *3.10.2 - Undergraduate Programs Graduates Employed in Nebraska:* Percentage of graduates from undergraduate programs working in Nebraska four years after graduation.
- *3.10.3 - Graduate/Professional Programs Graduates Employed in Nebraska:* Percentage of graduates from graduate and professional programs working in Nebraska four years after graduation.
- *3.10.4 - Public Service Sponsored Awards (#):* Number of public service sponsored awards.

## EXTRAORDINARY CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT:

Establish the University of Nebraska System campuses, across all their missions, as having an extraordinarily vibrant and engaging culture in environments that are safe, welcoming.

**Defining a People-Centric Culture, Workplace and Experience:** Themes for this strategy include creating a unified, defined and distinctive culture across our 500-mile-wide NU campuses and our myriad of statewide partnership sites. The themes focused on arts and culture, athletics. team based workspaces, engagement, belonging, communication, and technology in thriving campus student and employee communities. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *4.10.1 - Employee Job Satisfaction:* Percentage of staff and faculty who are 'Somewhat Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with their job.
- *4.10.2 - Faculty Retention:* Percentage of faculty employed at the prior October employment snapshot who are employed at the subsequent October employment snapshot.
- *4.10.3 - Staff Retention:* Percentage of staff employed at the prior October employment snapshot

who are employed at the subsequent October employment snapshot.

- *4.10.4 - Faculty Academic Promotion Success Rate:* Number of faculty granted promotion in the prior academic year / number of faculty reviewed for promotion in the prior academic year.
- *4.10.5 - Faculty Academic Tenure Success Rate:* Number of faculty granted tenure / number of faculty reviewed for tenure.
- *4.10.6 - Engagement Staff Career Development:* Percentage of staff engaged in career development programs.
- *4.10.7 - Employee Engagement and Well-Being:* Percentage of staff and faculty that have a composite 'Good' rating across the questions related to work well-being on the annual Health Assessment.
- *4.10.8 - Employee Strength Utilization:* Percentage of staff and faculty who feel that they are 'Frequently' or 'Always' able to use their strengths at work.
- *4.10.9 - Employee Perceived Respect:* Percentage of staff and faculty who 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that it is normal to be treated with respect at work.
- *4.10.10 - Employee Work-Life Balance:* Percentage of staff and faculty who 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they are able to achieve a balance between work, rest, and play.
- *4.10.11 - Annual Health Assessment Participation Rate:* The percentage of employees enrolled in the university health plan who complete the Annual Health Assessment.

**Campus Safety, Health and Wellness:** TThemes for this strategy include creating a shared responsibility for, continuously strengthening of our integrated system wide engagement and truly world class student experience. This includes health and wellness programs, campus recreation opportunities, as well as campus safety plans that focus on prevention, early awareness, communications, management and recovery. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *4.11.1 - Criminal Offenses Reported:* Number of on-campus criminal offenses per 1,000 students.
- *4.11.2 - Hot-line Reports:* Number of student, faculty, and staff hotline reports.

## EXTRAORDINARY STEWARDSHIP & EFFECTIVENESS:

Establish the University of Nebraska System as an extraordinarily effective, efficient, and sustainable organization for planning and implementation of all mission-driven goals.

**Creating Sustainable Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Themes for this strategy include creating value by identification and evaluation of structures, systems, processes, and areas that are redundant or inefficient, raising an awareness of these issues, then eliminating redundancy and inefficiency where possible across the system. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *5.12.1 - Faculty Salaries:* Difference between NU's average faculty salary and the 98% to 102% salary range of peer institutions.

- *5.12.2 - Staff Salaries:* Difference between NU's average staff salary and the 98% to 102% salary range of market average by job family.
- *5.12.3 - Faculty - Staff Ratio:* Faculty FTE / Staff FTE.
- *5.12.4 - Credit Hour Production per Faculty:* Number of student credit hours taught / instructional faculty FTE.
- *5.12.5 - Research Production per Faculty:* Faculty research expenditures / research faculty FTE.

**Strengthening Data Driven Strategic Decisions:** Themes for this strategy include using data and proactive communication to support decision-making to align financial, facility and human resources with strategic academic priorities and by eliminating unnecessary campus and program silos and redundancy to streamline and improve efficiency. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *5.13.1 - Net Tuition per Student Credit Hour:* Gross tuition revenue less tuition remissions / student credit hours.
- *5.13.2 - Net Remissions per Student Credit Hour:* Tuition remissions / student credit hours.
- *5.13.3 - Net Remission to Net Tuition Ratio:* Tuition remissions / Tuition Non-discounted Charges.
- *5.13.4 - Strategic Initiatives Tied to NU System Metrics:* VisionSync initiatives tied to strategic Metrics.
- *5.13.5 - Timeliness of Strategic Initiative Updates:* VisionSync initiatives that are updated quarterly.
- *5.13.6 - Value of NU System Metric Reporting:* Accuracy and timeliness of NU System metrics.

**STRATEGY 15 - Enhancing Fiscal Responsibility and Stewardship:** Themes for this strategy include maximizing the impact of state, university, and philanthropic resources through responsible stewardship, sustainability, transparent reporting of outcomes, and performance-based budget models that advance access, affordability, productivity, and academic excellence. Strategic performance indicators include:

- *5.14.1 - Structural Operating Budget Status:* Actual operating expenses above/below budgeted expenses.
- *5.14.2 - Structural Capital Budget Status:* Actual capital expenses above/below budgeted expenses.
- *5.14.3 - NU System Debt to Equity Ratio:* Actual debt to equity ratio.
- *5.14.4 - UTDC Net Income:* Actual revenue less actual expenses.
- *5.14.5 - UNF Endowment 5-Year Average Return relative to Benchmark:* 5-year return at or above benchmark (Annual 5-year average).
- *5.14.6 - NU Endowment 5-Year Average Return relative to Benchmark:* 5-year return at or above benchmark (Annual 5-year average).

- *5.14.7 - Endowed & Expendable Underutilized Funds:* Percentage of foundation funds deemed to be underutilized (2 years without an expenditure for Expendable funds, or 2X the annual distribution amount in spendable for Endowed Funds).
- *5.14.8 - New Philanthropic Funds Committed:* New philanthropic funds committed during the fiscal year, reported by UNF consistent with CASE Global Reporting Standards.
- *5.14.9 - Active Appointments to Chairs and Professorships:* The number of faculty who are currently holding active appointments to one or more chairs or professorships funded through either foundation or university dollars.
- *5.14.10 - Student supported by UNF scholarships and fellowships:* Number of students supported by scholarships and fellowships funded through UNF endowed and expendable funds.
- *5.14.11 - Average Foundation Scholarship Award:* Average scholarship award amount funded by the University of Nebraska Foundation.
- *5.14.12 - Foundation Scholarship Coverage Rate:* Percentage of the total cost of attendance among undergraduate students covered by University of Nebraska Foundation scholarships.
- *5.14.13 - Non-foundation Scholarship Coverage Rate:* Percentage of the total cost of attendance for undergraduate students covered by scholarships not funded by the University of Nebraska Foundation.