



It's my pleasure to welcome the Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association Visiting Review Team to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. This is an exciting time in the history of the university. We are a decade into an unprecedented expansion and renovation of our classroom, research, athletic and residential facilities; two years into a campus-wide academic strategic planning process; and one year into a reform of our general education program. Our faculty just set a record by attracting \$104.6 million in research funding in fiscal 2006. As you will see in Chapter 2, the decade since our last accreditation visit has been one of phenomenal activity and progress.

Two years ago, we decided that a meaningful academic planning process was in our own best interest. I do not mean to suggest that planning had been nonexistent. Both at the university level and within many programs, we had clear direction. However, no unifying document tied together the strategic elements of those various plans with agreement on core values, on common objectives and on measures of accountability. More important, we did not have a process or a culture that ensured that a planning effort would have lasting consequences, forming the basis for conversations about establishing priorities and allocating resources.

We have made great progress in short time, starting by mining key documents for evidence of core values, deciding finally that at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln we are committed to:

- Learning that prepares students for lifetime success and leadership;
- Excellence pursued without compromise;
- Achievement supported by a climate that celebrates each person's success;
- Diversity of ideas and people;
- Engagement with academic, business, and civic communities throughout Nebraska and the world;
- Research and creative activity that inform teaching, foster discovery, and contribute to economic prosperity and our quality of life; and
- Stewardship of the human, financial, and physical resources committed to our care.

Although second in our mnemonic sequence, the most important of these values is that we are committed to an uncompromising pursuit of excellence. This is a university that will not be distracted from its goals and its dreams by external circumstances or by the ebb and flow of resources that are beyond its control. This is a university that will take risks, that will dare to be first, to pioneer new frontiers if necessary to achieve excellence. This is a university where the only thing unknown about reaching our goals is how long it will take, not whether it will occur. How long it will take depends on this state's willingness and ability to provide us with resources, but it also depends on our own creativity and appetite for embracing change.

Our campus-wide academic strategic planning process is one key way of achieving that value. While remaining open to unexpected opportunities, our academic strategic planning process has given us a clearer and more widely shared direction. We have created an iterative process with opportunities for us to work together toward a plan that is meaningful, one that facilitates collaboration between programs and between the campus administration and the faculty, and, most important, one that has consequences in the ongoing operation of the university.

These plans are forming the basis for our decisions on priorities and resource allocation. As we asked units to establish priorities, we have done the same.

As you will see in Chapter 3 of the document which follows, we tweaked our process in the second year to make it less onerous and more useful at the campus and unit levels. We are doing the same now in preparation for our third year, and as we had hoped, preparing this self-study has helped us better understand where we've been, where we are now, and where we hope to be. Your visit, your expertise, are welcome at this key time in our efforts at building and sustaining an academic strategic planning process that helps us continue to move forward.

We are proud of our achievements and believe that we meet and will continue to meet all expectations for a distinctive, connected, learning-focused, future-oriented educational institution. Thank you for taking the time to get to know us. We look forward to our interactions with you, and we hope you enjoy your visit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Harvey Perlman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Harvey Perlman
Chancellor
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

