

Strategic Priorities

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

The College of Arts and Sciences has three strategic priorities aimed at enhancing the quality and reputation of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The college and the campus are modest in size and in financial resources; achieving our priorities will require marshalling human resources in ways that are not confined by our current structure, but will accomplish goals for the larger good. Promoting low walls and porous boundaries will be a hallmark of how the College of Arts and Sciences plays its part in advancing the university.

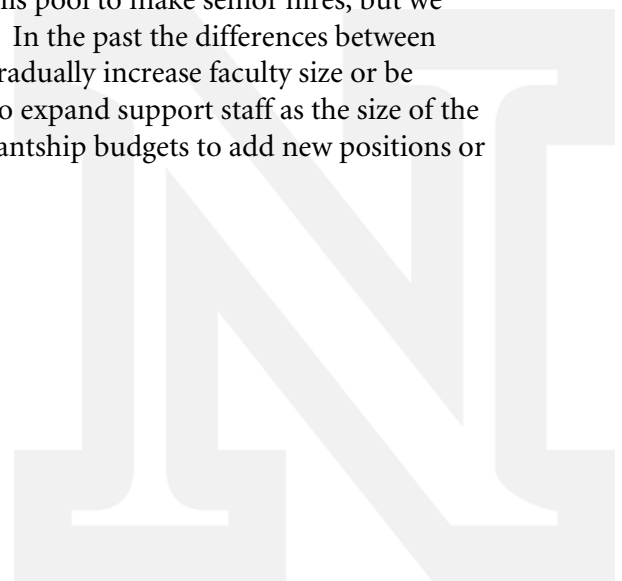
Our core values include the notion that our teaching and outreach programs are informed by our research. Our priorities are thus overlapping in the sense that we are the core college in a research university. We promote quality research for its own sake. That research informs our collective work in classrooms, and it provides the basis upon which the college's service to the larger society is built.

Making progress towards our priorities largely means deploying faculty positions in ways that reflect them. Although the following priorities seem general, they are built upon the plans of the departments and programs in the college. This plan flows out of the underlying individual plans, and they need to be considered along with it.

In aggregate, the program plans make requests for faculty hiring in an amount totaling about \$8.9 million over the next three years. The programs project that more than \$5.6 million of this amount could be provided by turnover of existing resources. However, the college historically has been able to authorize only about \$1 million in salaries for new faculty per year from its own existing resources. It is not clear whether we can really expect almost twice the turnover that is typical, but it seems unlikely. Therefore, the College of Arts and Sciences as a whole will see slower progress than the programs that report to it would like.

It is also unclear whether the fact that a little more than 35% of the funds released by faculty departures now finds its way to Academic Affairs will further diminish the college's ability to move forward. We have found success in recovering dollars from this pool to make senior hires, but we have not garnered new faculty lines from the reverted dollars. In the past the differences between senior departures and junior replacements could be used to gradually increase faculty size or be redeployed for other college needs, such as an absolute need to expand support staff as the size of the research enterprise grows or for expansions of graduate assistantship budgets to add new positions or to resolve matters of low stipend levels.

Our priorities are to:



1. Invest in signature programs of research and graduate education that promise to propel UNL towards realizing *Vision 2020*. Such programs include projects that are already ongoing, but they are not limited to them. Examples include:
 - Signature programs in the physical sciences, including Atomic, Molecular, Optical, and Plasma Physics; Nanoscience and Technology; the new MERSEC; the Keck Center; Structural Biology and Proteomics
 - Software Engineering
 - Digital Research in the Humanities, the Cather Project, the Nebraska Creative Writing Summer Workshop
 - Nebraska Center for Virology, Bioinformatics and Biological Modeling
 - Law and Psychology, the Center for Children, Youth, Families and Schools, Behavioral Health

The College will promote programs of this kind by:

- a. Placing new and replacement faculty positions in programs that have good prospects for bringing national prominence to UNL.
 - b. Working to enhance graduate stipends through private donations for enhancements of state-funded stipends and by redeployment of state resources where possible.
 - c. Seeking central commitments to increase staff support, particularly in grant impacted departments and programs.
 - d. Urging the pursuit of research facility enlargement and improvement as a major part of the university agenda.
2. Invest in an enhanced undergraduate experience that increases the value of a UNL degree and encourages students to reach their full potential by:
 - a. Enhancing the undergraduate experience in large lecture courses by encouraging development of more discussion sections led by graduate teaching assistants, including adding new GTA lines.
 - b. Encouraging the deployment of our best teachers, particularly talented senior faculty, in lower division courses to stimulate academic interest and promote better retention.
 - c. Providing continued academic support for student centered learning that occurs in learning communities across the university.
 - d. Promoting research by undergraduates wherever possible.
 - e. Investing in improved advising through the college Advising Center, by placing additional professional advisors in heavily impacted programs when funds can be identified, by providing opportunities for professional development for advisors, and by making advising part of the reward system for faculty with teaching responsibilities.
 - f. Promoting as university priorities the improvement of classroom spaces and the construction of additional quality classrooms.

3. Encourage effective outreach where the college's research programs result in outcomes of service to society, through programs such as:
 - a. Science and mathematics teacher training and outreach to public schools.
 - b. Other school services, such as the Nebraska Writing Project, Modern Languages work in elementary schools.
 - c. Center for Children, Families and the Law.
 - d. Research and outreach on ethnic, minority, and immigrant communities.