



**STUDENT CENTERED**



**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) was founded in 1908 as a private non-sectarian college before becoming a municipal institution in 1930. Intent on providing additional opportunities for Nebraska residents, the citizens of Omaha voted in 1968 to transfer all university property to the University of Nebraska system.

The role and mission of UNO reflects its metropolitan location. Many of the academic majors, research activities, and public service programs are designed to provide leadership and education aligned with the urban and metropolitan environment. The university mission states, “The University of Nebraska at Omaha will be among the nation’s premier metropolitan universities – a university of high distinction with strong academic and scholarly values distinguished by creative relationships with the communities we serve.”

UNO is guided by a shared set of values and beliefs that articulate the overall spirit of the institution. The three overarching goals of UNO’s strategic plan are that UNO will be recognized 1) as a student-centered metropolitan university, 2) for its academic excellence as a metropolitan university, and 3) for its outstanding engagement with the urban, regional, national, and global communities. The current mission, vision, values, and strategic plan are available at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our\\_plan.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our_plan.php).

As one of four campuses of the University of Nebraska System, UNO is governed by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. The Board has broadly identified the eastern region of Nebraska—especially the Omaha metropolitan area—as the focal service area for most UNO programs and has deemed UNO responsible for addressing educational issues that are uniquely urban.

Currently classified as a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University (DRU), UNO draws the majority of its students—nearly 88 percent—from the seven-county, bi-state Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Statistical Area. The remaining 12 percent of the student body includes students from Greater Nebraska, other U.S. states, and foreign countries. In addition to its designation as a DRU, the Carnegie Foundation has also classified UNO as having substantial commitments to Curricular Engagement and Outreach & Partnerships. UNO was among the first set of 63 higher education institutions nationally to receive this designation in 2006.

Approximately 50 percent of UNO’s students are first-generation college attendees and, overall, UNO students work off campus to a greater extent than their counterparts at peer institutions. UNO has historically been characterized as a “commuter campus” with a high percentage of part-time and nontraditional students. The introduction of student housing and other popular amenities on campus, combined with additional academic and co-curricular programs, have led to a marked increase in the size of the traditional undergraduate student population. Total fall 2012 headcount enrollment was 14,786 and included 9,871 full-time undergraduates, 2,859 part-time undergraduates, 796 full-time graduates, and 1,868 part-time graduates. Enrollment of part-time students increased significantly. This trend is expected to continue as economic conditions, financial aid issues, and various metropolitan-based factors push students to part-time status as they work to support themselves while pursuing their degree.

During the Fall 2012 semester, UNO had a total of 921 faculty, including 425 part-time and 496 full-time faculty. The proportion of full-time faculty who were tenured or tenure-track was approximately 83 percent. Among full-time faculty, 19.6 percent were members of minority groups and 43.9 percent were women. The university employs 1020 staff members.

The primary UNO campus location is at 60<sup>th</sup> and Dodge Streets in central Omaha. In addition to the Dodge Street location, UNO has expanded its total campus area to include two additional sites within two miles of one another. The three campus sites are connected through a series of walking trails and shuttle-bus routes. In total, UNO encompasses 239 acres and more than 60 structures with 3.7 million square feet of finished space. Since 2008, UNO has completed a combined total of 204 million dollars in capital improvements and new construction. Currently, a taskforce is planning for future facility changes. Detailed maps for all three campus locations can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/maps/>.

UNO offers 126 baccalaureate degrees and more than 60 graduate and certificate programs, including six doctoral degrees, in a wide range of disciplines. These programs are offered through seven colleges—Arts and Sciences; Business Administration; Communication, Fine Arts and Media; Education; Information Science and Technology; and Public Affairs and Community Service.

The campus leadership team has developed strategies and tactics to facilitate better meeting the needs of ever changing expectations of its students; enhance research and creative activity achievements; and engage with the community in mutually beneficial ways. UNO recognizes that these changes must be well planned, coordinated, and communicated to both internal and external constituencies, to be most effective. Thus, the ongoing planning and implementation processes proactively engage all UNO constituents, including students, faculty, staff, and community representatives.

A guiding component of recent planning at UNO is Chancellor Christensen’s challenge to the campus to increase headcount enrollment to 20,000 by the year 2020. In 2012, the campus community identified five focal areas as key campus priorities that will direct UNO’s efforts to reach this “20/20” milestone. The focal areas include Doctoral/Graduate Research; Early Childhood/Child Welfare; Global Engagement; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Initiatives; and Sustainability. The overarching imperative guiding these five emphasis areas is to draw upon the inherent and unique strengths of UNO, especially in providing an interdisciplinary framework in which to bring each key initiative to fruition.

To provide oversight for enrollment-related activities, the university recently established a new office, the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing (EMM). EMM is charged with developing, facilitating, and providing ongoing assessment of enrollment-management-related activities and marketing strategies to enhance UNO’s institutional image. In addition, EMM is committed to delivering superior customer service to prospective and current students, campus constituents, and the greater Omaha community. UNO recently launched a strategic enrollment-management planning process, and EMM is working with partners across the campus and in the community to lead these efforts.

In addition to the increasing student population, UNO is evolving in two additional major ways: 1) shifting away from being exclusively a “commuter campus” and 2) placing increased emphasis on research, creative activity, and external research funding as the institution matures in its recent reclassification by the Carnegie Foundation as a Doctoral/Research University. UNO is transforming the physical landscape of the university, and this is expected to be an area of noteworthy progress going forward. In addition to the physical changes, UNO needs to continue to make modifications to its infrastructure, including staffing, to meet the needs of the larger student body. In addition, UNO continues its commitment to being a Metropolitan University of Distinction. These changes and associated opportunities and challenges are summarized in a report, “Campus Priorities: Charting A Clear Vision For 20/20,” which is available at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/documents/campus\\_priorities\\_022012.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/documents/campus_priorities_022012.pdf).

**AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn** focuses on the design, deployment, and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes that underlie your institution's credit and non-credit programs and courses, and on the processes required to support them.

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## INTRODUCTION

The first of three overarching goals in the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Strategic Plan is that "UNO will be recognized as a student-centered metropolitan university." UNO's commitment to students and their learning is evident in the institution's teaching-learning and academic support processes, which encompass a wide range of services designed to help students learn, including those related to academic programs, curriculum, pedagogy, advising, community engagement, faculty support, and campus culture. To ensure effective coordination and integration of UNO's diverse academic and student support services, the Senior Vice Chancellor for academic and student affairs oversees all academic and administrative support units that are engaged in designing and deploying academic programs and services.

Within this administrative structure, UNO faculty maintain primary responsibility for curriculum design, development, and evaluation. Individual academic units and faculty direct curricular change within their departments, and the Campus Educational Policy Advisory Committee coordinates campus-wide review of curricula and programs (1P1). To meet the changing needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century students, UNO faculty have designed and implemented many program revisions and program additions in recent years. For example, a UNO faculty committee with representatives from all colleges revamped the university's General Education program in Spring 2010, and the new program was implemented in Fall 2011 (1P1).

UNO has made several other improvements related to student learning since the 2008 systems portfolio submission, including the development and implementation of a systematic process for assessing student learning. This process is coordinated by a new university-wide Assessment Committee that assists academic units in conducting program reviews and in identifying and implementing subsequent improvements (1P18). UNO has been systematic in the upgraded of support services to help students succeed, including the addition of a Math Lab, expansion of the Speech Center and the Writing Center, and revised coordination of all student learning communities. UNO has also established an Advising Task Force to improve undergraduate advising, which has been the focus of two of UNO's recent AQIP Action Projects (1P7). These new efforts are resulting in improved alignment of undergraduate advising across campus.

Going forward, UNO will continue to identify new opportunities to improve student learning, in accordance with the institution's commitment to being a student-centered metropolitan university.

## PROCESSES (P)

### 1P1. How do you determine which common or shared objectives for learning and development you should hold for all students pursuing degrees at a particular level? Whom do you involve in setting these objectives?

**HLC Core Component 3.B.** The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs. Also see 1P2.

**General Education Requirements**—Common objectives for learning and development of UNO’s undergraduate students are defined in the university’s general education requirements. In Spring 2010, the faculty adopted a new approach to University General Education to ensure that UNO’s general education program is student-centered, aligned with the student learning outcomes desired of all UNO graduates, and assessable. The faculty created a University General Education Committee, with each college selecting one faculty member to serve on the committee. The committee is responsible for (1) establishing the definition, criteria, and learning outcomes for each university general education area; (2) reviewing syllabi and approving courses used to satisfy university general education requirements; and (3) facilitating ongoing review, assessment, and modification of the university general education curriculum.

The goals for UNO’s General Education program include the following:

- UNO’s general education curriculum should ensure that each graduate of UNO possesses certain academic skills, experiences the breadth of a liberal education, and develops an appreciation for the cultural diversity that exists in the nation and the world.
- UNO’s general education program curriculum should be student-centered. There should be clear articulation of the curriculum and options for students. Students, faculty, and advisors should know how students can meet the university general education requirements.
- UNO’s general education program should be aligned with the student learning outcomes desired of all UNO graduates, as developed by the faculty. There should be identified methods for assessing the effectiveness of the general education curriculum in meeting the goals articulated by the faculty.

UNO’s current general education requirements, including student learning outcomes and examples of approved courses, are available at <http://gened.unomaha.edu/forms.php>.

**Curriculum Review**—Proposals for curricular change originate at the faculty level and are reviewed by faculty in the relevant academic units and colleges prior to being submitted to the Campus Educational Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC). This committee, which serves as a campus-wide curriculum committee, advises the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs about curricular changes, including, but not limited to, proposals for new programs or courses and major revisions to existing

courses. Major course revisions include changes in level, credit hours, purpose and scope, content, or method of instruction. EPAC reviews such changes from a campus-wide perspective to accomplish the following:

- Ensure that proposed changes are in accord with university-wide objectives and priorities as identified in the role and mission statement and relevant planning documents
- Prevent the unnecessary duplication and proliferation of curricular offerings
- Consider possible impacts of proposed curricular changes on other units and programs

**1P2. How do you determine your specific program learning objectives? Whom do you involve in setting these objectives?**

**HLC Core Component 3.B.** The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs. Also see 1P1.

**HLC Core Component 4.B.** The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. Also see 1P18.

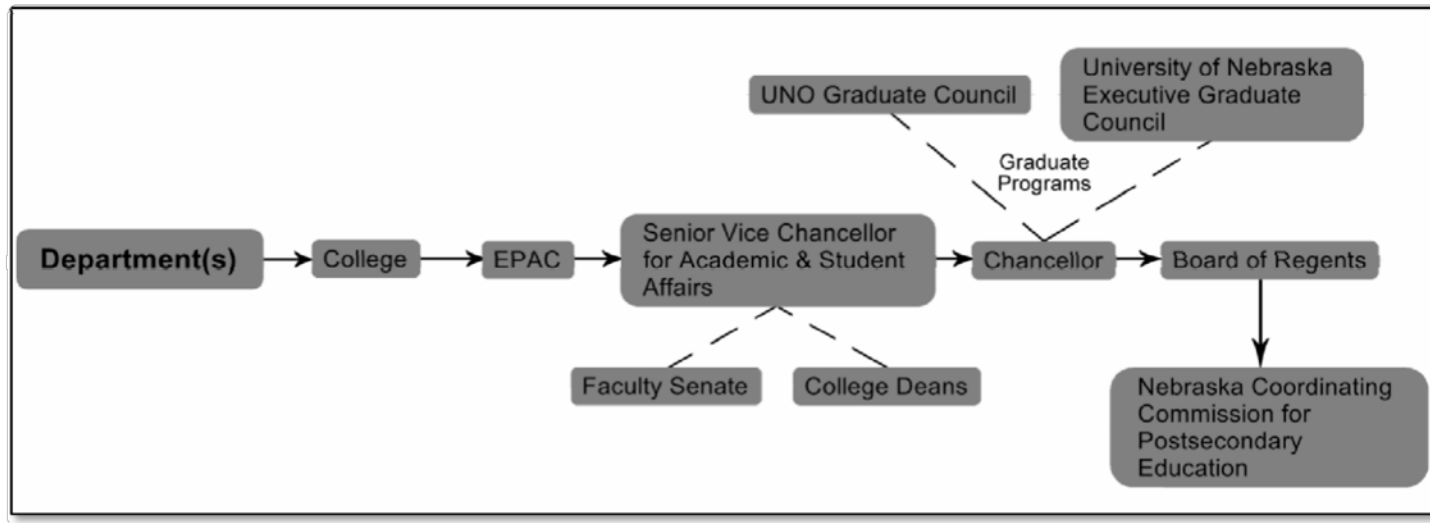
As indicated in 1P1, faculty have primary responsibility for the curriculum, including defining program-specific learning objectives for the academic programs offered in their respective departments. Faculty also design and implement measurement tools, record results, and plan and implement changes based on those results. At each stage of the assessment process—from defining the student learning objectives to implementing changes based on assessment results—faculty work in collaboration with the university-wide Assessment Committee, which has established a standardized process for reporting assessment goals and results, as summarized in the response to 1P18 below. The assessment process includes an ongoing cycle of communication between faculty in the various academic units and the Assessment Committee. This communication takes the shape of both written reports and individual meetings.

When setting student learning goals, program faculty draw on the findings of student-focused surveys, including NSSE data directly related to their department, the UNO Senior Exit Survey for undergraduate and graduate students, and department-specific survey instruments. To ensure that each program conforms to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs in the given discipline, faculty also consider discipline-specific standards, including those established by any relevant accrediting bodies.

**1P3. How do you design new programs and courses that facilitate student learning and are competitive with those offered by other organizations?**

When instituting any new degree program leading to a degree or a certificate, departments must submit proposals to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, after the necessary approval processes at the department and college levels. New program proposals are generally written by individual faculty members or committees in cooperation with other faculty and administrators in their departments and, when appropriate, in collaboration with faculty in one or more other departments. These proposals are then submitted to UNO’s Educational Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC; see 1P1), which reviews all proposals for new degree programs before submitting a recommendation to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. The Senior vice Chancellor consults with the college deans and the Faculty Senate prior to recommending new programs or minors to the chancellor before final approval by the Board of Regents. New graduate programs are also reviewed by the UNO Graduate Council and the University of Nebraska Executive Graduate Council prior to submission to the Board of Regents. Additionally, all new programs must be approved by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, which aims to address redundancy and efficiency at all postsecondary institutions in the state. At each stage of the review process, reviewers ensure that the proposed program is compatible with the UNO mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. Reviewers also ensure that the proposed program conforms to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs in the given discipline and is thereby competitive with similar programs offered by other organizations.

**Figure 1.1: Program Approval Process**





**1P4. How do you design responsive academic programming that balances and integrates learning goals, students' career needs, and the realities of the employment market?**

**HLC Core Component 1.C.** The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. Also see 1P10.

**HLC Core Component 3.A.** The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education. Also see 1P12.

**HLC Core Component 4.A.** The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. Also see 1P13.

Across the campus, faculty in each academic unit maintain primary responsibility for determining curricular content, course sequencing, and requirements within specific programs (see 1P2 and 1P3). As is the standard practice at institutions of comparable size, curricular design begins as a largely decentralized process, with each college following internal processes for curricular development prior to submitting proposals for curricular change to a common, campus-wide review process coordinated by the Educational Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC; see details in 1P1 and 1P3). The campus-wide review process is intended to ensure alignment with the UNO mission and strategic plan, which includes an explicit commitment to develop and serve a diverse student body reflecting a dynamic metropolitan community (see especially Goal 1, Sub-goal B in the UNO strategic plan, available at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our\\_plan.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our_plan.php)).

To help students and faculty identify career trends, UNO has partnered with Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (EMSI) to implement Career Coach, an online, interactive tool that provides information about careers. Career Coach identifies industry and occupational trends and provides career guidance to students. This tool is available on the UNO website at <http://www.unomaha.edu/careercoach/>.

UNO also contracts annually with EMSI to determine occupational trends in the local and regional economy. This information is disseminated to the campus community through deans, chairs, and program directors to facilitate widespread use of the data in identifying emerging workforce needs. Faculty then consider these data—along with commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs in the given discipline—to design academic programming that is appropriate to higher education, integrates learning goals with students' career needs, and is responsive to the realities of the employment market.

**1P5. How do you determine the preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, courses, and learning they will pursue?**

The programs and curriculum, including preparation requirements, are determined by the faculty in each academic unit with approval of the campus-wide Educational Policy Advisory Committee, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, and, if appropriate, the Board of Regents.

**1P6. How do you communicate to current and prospective students the required preparation and learning and development objectives for specific programs, courses, and degrees or credentials? How do admissions, student support, and registration services aid in this process?**

**HLC Core Component 2.B.** The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

UNO's admissions policies and program-specific objectives are clearly and uniformly outlined in disseminated publications, including university catalogs, the institutional website, and recruitment brochures. See, for example, the prospective student page <http://www.unomaha.edu/prospective.php>, the home page of the UNO Admissions Office <http://admissions.unomaha.edu/index.php>, the online undergraduate catalog <http://unomaha.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2012-2013/Undergraduate-Catalog.aspx>, and the UNO graduate studies brochure [http://issuu.com/unograduate/docs/uno\\_grad\\_studies\\_brochure?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222](http://issuu.com/unograduate/docs/uno_grad_studies_brochure?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222).

In addition to disseminating information regarding admissions and program requirements through print and electronic media, UNO advisors and other student support personnel are available to provide one-on-one advice to students during the admissions and registration processes. For first-year and transfer students, UNO provides an extensive daylong orientation program at which new students meet with advisors to register for fall classes. Current students serve as campus guides for new students during the orientation. Information about the program is available at <http://orientation.unomaha.edu/>.

UNO uses an online Course Catalog Maintenance System (CCMS) to aid in the development of new courses and the revision of existing courses. A primary motivation in adopting the CCMS was to ensure effective articulation of student learning objectives at the course level. When initiating new courses, departments must submit proposals through the CCMS to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, after the necessary department and college approval processes. These proposals are then reviewed by the Educational Policy Advisory Committee (referenced in 1P1 and 1P3), and appropriate action is taken. If the potential for duplication or cross listing exists, authorization is required within the CCMS from the appropriate department chair/school director.

**1P7. How do you help students select programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities?**

**HLC Core Component 3.D.** The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching. Also see 1P15.

All students admitted to UNO either declare a major or indicate they are undecided. Students who declare a major at the time of admission are directed to the appropriate program advisors. Newly admitted students who are undecided are either advised within the College of Arts and Sciences, if they have indicated an interest in one of the programs offered there, or by advisors in the University

Division, a non-degree granting entity at UNO. Advisors within the University Division assist students in selecting general education courses that will fulfill UNO's general education requirements for all colleges until the student selects a major program of study.

Advising at UNO is a relatively decentralized process, the exact nature of which varies by college and, in some cases, even by program. UNO has initiated an Advising Task Force to evaluate the state of undergraduate advising across campus. The group has identified and begun to implement improvement strategies in the area of advising, as represented by two of UNO's recent AQIP Action Projects. The first of these projects focused on developing an aligned, coordinated, distributed model for academic advising that allows for decentralization while maximizing communication, efficiency, and effective use of resources. The second is focused on improving the academic advising process in the College of Arts and Sciences by strengthening the relationship between the advising of freshmen by the professional advising staff and the advising of upper class students by faculty.

### **1P8. How do you deal with students who are underprepared for the academic programs and courses you offer?**

**Targeted Academic Support Centers**—During the 1990s, UNO sponsored an all-encompassing Learning Center with a goal of supporting students in need of supplemental instruction in a wide variety of academic areas before a sizable budget cut forced the university to reallocate resources. Following an examination of student usage and demand, and with substantial input from faculty and administration, UNO disbanded the Learning Center and, instead, created several new entities that target specific student support areas, including the following:

- **The Speech Center**—The UNO Speech Center assists all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations and/or incorporating them into their courses. The Speech Center includes two rooms—the Basic Course Room and the Speech Consulting Room. The Basic Room provides support for students in a basic speech course that fulfills the UNO oral communication general education requirement (e.g., the Public Speaking Fundamentals course). The Speech Consulting Room provides consulting and coaching across all disciplines, faculty support, and more.
- **The Writing Center**—The UNO Writing Center is available to all UNO students and staff. This center provides assistance with overcoming writer's block, generating and focusing ideas, organizing ideas, improving writing style, handling technical details of grammar, documentation and formatting, and becoming a more confident, comfortable writer.
- **The Math-Science Learning Center**—The Math-Science Learning Center (MSLC) is a place where UNO students can find the assistance they need to conquer academic challenges in Math and Science. Model students serve as tutors, supplemental instruction leaders, and study group facilitators trained to assist their peers in achieving academic success. The MSLC houses meeting alcoves, study/tutoring space, tutorial computers, and reserve study materials. It also offers academic consultation for students seeking to increase their overall learning effectiveness and efficiency.
- **The Math Lab**—The Math Lab operates with the student's success in mind. In addition to computer-aided instruction and tutoring, a trained instructor leads small groups through discussions, activities, and problems emphasizing group dynamics and student-to-student interaction. Information about the Math Lab is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/mathlab/index.php>.

In addition to direct student support, the above centers provide assistance to faculty, including curriculum-writing and instruction support.

**Faculty Development**—Primarily for faculty, UNO also relies on the Center for Faculty Development (CFD), Academic Partnerships for Instruction (API), and the Faculty Senate’s Professional Development Committee to provide information about and create opportunities for addressing issues related to student learning support needs. The CFD and API are described in more detail in section 1P9.

### **1P9. How do you detect and address differences in students’ learning styles?**

UNO addresses differences in students’ learning styles by offering several faculty support initiatives, each of which is dedicated to cultivating diverse and responsive learning environments, as summarized below.

**Academic Partnership for Instruction**—The Academic Partnership for Instruction <http://api.unomaha.edu/index.php> is dedicated to helping faculty effectively integrate technology into teaching and learning. API members provide consulting to UNO faculty and departments on educational technology and related issues, including the following: teaching with technology, developing a distance education approach, designing information and graphics, selecting assessment methods, locating university resources, and researching new technologies.

The API offers regular classes for UNO faculty and on specific educational technology tools and software, including Adobe Connect, Blackboard, clickers, InDesign (desktop publishing), Photoshop, RSS/podcasting, and web templates.

**Center for Faculty Development**—UNO’s Center for Faculty Development <http://www.unomaha.edu/facdevelop/> fosters teaching and learning development through workshops, materials grants, one-on-one teaching consultations and analysis, and learning communities. Recent workshops have covered topics such as service learning, using course evaluation feedback for professional development, optimizing graphics, writing in a fall writers’ retreat, and how to voice over a PowerPoint presentation. A complete list of faculty development activities related to educational design and delivery at UNO is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/facconnet/>.

The Center for Faculty development also coordinates Teaching Circles—small groups of faculty members who encourage scholarship, research, and creative activity at UNO by facilitating scholarly interactions among faculty. These groups allow faculty to interact with colleagues from across campus as they work to fulfill the three strategic goals of UNO’s metropolitan mission. In academic year 2011–2012, there were thirty-two active Teaching Circles on campus.

**National Center for Academic Transformation Course Redesign Project**—UNO’s Center for Faculty Development, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of Assessment, Dual Enrollment, the University Committee on the Advancement of Teaching

(UCAT), and Information Services Academic Computing are collaborating on a series of events organized on the theme of “Supporting Faculty Teaching Students in the Digital Age.” These events will provide faculty with models of course redesign that have proven to be successful at improving student learning, information about instructional technologies that can be used to enhance student learning, and ideas about using technology. In the past two academic years, sixteen course-redesign grants have been awarded.

**Service Learning Academy**—UNO is a metropolitan university committed to building bridges between the campus and the community. One such bridge is service learning, which brings the talents and energy of UNO students into the service of the Omaha community. Students not only address community needs but also enrich their own education by experiencing the real-world application of academic subjects and developing the habit of active citizenship. UNO’s Service-Learning efforts have been recognized and featured in *The Guide to Service Learning Universities and Colleges*. The University of Nebraska at Omaha is a member of Campus Compact and the Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education. Detailed information on UNO’s Service learning Academy is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/servicelearning/>.

### **1P10. How do you address the special needs of student subgroups (e.g. handicapped students, seniors, commuters)?**

**HLC Core Component 1.C.** The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. Also see 1P4.

One of UNO’s stated values is a belief in “the principles of inclusion, representation, openness, and diversity” [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our\\_plan.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our_plan.php). In support of this commitment, UNO provides a number of services designed to ensure equal opportunity for all members of the UNO community and to resolve any issues or complaints related to discrimination or other grievances. These services are coordinated by the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Title IX Coordinator, the Office of Student Affairs, and the University Ombudsman. In addition, UNO has several offices and programs that address the special needs of particular student subgroups, as outlined below.

**Disability Services**—Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Disability Services Office when completing their application for admission. Through this office, students with disabilities are provided with volunteer note takers, testing accommodations, interpreters, tutors, recorded or electronic textbooks, and other accommodations necessary to allow full access to the educational opportunities offered at UNO. Students are encouraged to meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services in advance to begin the accommodation planning process and arrange to secure services.

**Project Achieve**—The Project Achieve program was created to provide help for those students who are first-generation college students. Project Achieve is available to students with academic needs who come from a low-income family, first-generation college

students, and students with disabilities. Some of the services provided through this office include special course offerings with equivalent credit, tutors, advising and counseling, and a computer lab with one-on-one assistance.

**The Office of Multicultural Affairs**—This office is responsible for developing and maintaining programs and services to ensure the successful recruitment, retention and graduation of underrepresented students. Through scholarship aid, academic and personal support students are empowered to attain their educational and professional goals. Collaborative efforts within the University and with the greater Omaha metropolitan community aid to ensure an inclusive environment where shared understanding is facilitated, knowledge is expanded and appreciation for varied perspectives is cultivated.

**Military and Veteran University Services Office**—UNO has opened a new office dedicated to military personnel, veterans, and their families. The Military and Veteran University Services Office (MaV USO) features a virtual presence for those who are currently deployed or stationed elsewhere. The office is a one-stop location where students can access programs and services specifically designed for active military and veterans, including GI-Bill assistance, transfer of credit, academic support, and counseling. Additional services, including an in-processing checklist, mentoring program, and workshops are also provided as part of MaV USO.

**Services for Student-Athletes**—Academic services for athletes are provided both within the athletic department and on campus through university-wide resources. Within the department, the director of academic success helps coordinate and direct students to support services, which include advisement and academic performance monitoring, the newly developed Hamilton Academic Excellence Center, the laptop checkout program, a tutorial program, and a University Seminar Course tailored for student-athletes. The athletic department also recently launched a Student-Athlete Development program with the purpose of developing the student-athlete outside the athletic realm, with a focus on life skills, community service, and leadership.

**1P11. How do you define, document, and communicate across your organization your expectations for effective teaching and learning?**

**HLC Core Component 2.D.** The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

**HLC Core Component 2.E.** The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly. Also see 4P7.

**Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska**—The *Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska* define expectations regarding the rights and responsibilities of professional staff, including expectations related to 1) the responsible acquisition and application of knowledge (Section 4.1, Academic Responsibility) and 2) freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth (Section 4.2, Academic Freedom). A link to the *Bylaws* is available at <http://www.nebraska.edu/board/bylaws-policies-and-rules.html>.

**Strategic Plan**—The UNO strategic plan defines expectations for effective teaching and learning. Goal 1 of the plan—that “UNO will be recognized as a student-centered metropolitan university”—includes a specific sub-goal and objectives that are directly related to teaching and learning, as follows:

Goal 1, Sub-Goal A: UNO’s academic programs, advising, and support services will reflect the varying and evolving academic, career, and personal goals of traditional and non-traditional students.

- Objective 1: Offer curricula that provide a strong academic foundation.
- Objective 4: Offer alternate delivery methods, such as distance education, study abroad, and flexible course format, to increase accessibility and adaptability of academic programs consistent with student demand and resource availability.

Teaching and learning are also highlighted in Goal 2—“UNO will be recognized for its academic excellence as a leading metropolitan university”—under the following sub-goal and objectives:

Goal 2, Sub-Goal A: UNO’s teaching focuses on student learning and is designed to meet the multiple needs and highest aspirations of students drawn to a metropolitan campus.

- Objective 1: Increase faculty commitment to outstanding instruction and enhanced student learning with particular emphasis on undergraduates.
- Objective 2: Conduct periodic review of all programs and services, emphasizing learning outcomes.
- Objective 3: Increase faculty and staff use and understanding of technology in all aspects of the academic experience.
- Objective 4: Enhance faculty and staff development opportunities and support for improvement of student learning.

Each academic unit further defines effective teaching and learning based on discipline-specific standards, but the common general definition includes meeting the diverse needs of learners, using active learning techniques, and supporting each learner as necessary.

**University-Wide Assessment**—Expectations for effective teaching and learning are integrated into the institution’s assessment process, which focuses on continuously improving UNO’s academic programs based on the assessment of student learning outcomes. This ongoing process is coordinated by the university-wide Assessment Committee, as described in 1P2 and 1P18. The Assessment Report Template requires each academic unit to define the methods of assessment used in its program(s). In addition, the Assessment Committee has been given the authority to cultivate or generate university-wide methods of assessment that will facilitate comprehensive documentation of effective teaching and learning. Examples of university-wide assessment tools include course evaluations and graduation surveys.

UNO has recently adopted a student course-evaluation instrument that is required for all courses and includes measurement of suggested teaching strategies in nine dimensions—learning, enthusiasm, organization, group interaction, individual rapport, breadth,

assessment and evaluation, assignments, and course workload. The survey was developed by Dr. Herbert Marsh, an educational psychologist currently serving as a faculty member at Oxford University. More information about the instrument and links to accompanying teaching guides can be accessed <http://www.unomaha.edu/aandsaffairs/tabs/academic/courseeval.php>.

Each year UNO asks its graduating seniors to complete a short exit survey, which includes questions related to academic quality and the level of instruction at UNO. Survey results are available at the department level and are distributed to the relevant deans, chairs, and directors.

**Faculty Performance Reviews and Teaching Awards**—In addition to course evaluations and program-level assessment tools, key mechanisms for documenting effective teaching and learning include the review of full-time faculty performance in two separate but related processes, as follows:

- Annual Review, which evaluates faculty members' activities for the previous year and determines merit increases for the following year.
- Reappointment, promotion, and tenure review (hereafter referred to as RPT), which evaluates faculty members for continuous appointment and guides tenure decisions.

Both of the above processes include a substantive evaluation of faculty achievements related to teaching, and both are thoroughly integrated into the campus culture at UNO. All Annual Reviews and RPT documents are assessed at the department/school level before progressing through the appropriate college and the Office of Academic and Student Affairs for action. For part-time faculty, performance expectations and evaluations are generally confined to the specific academic unit.

UNO also emphasizes its expectations for high quality and effective teaching and learning by recognizing faculty achievement with numerous annual awards related to teaching, including the Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award, The Excellence in Teaching Award, and the University of Nebraska's University-Wide Departmental Teaching Award.

### **1P12. How do you build an effective and efficient course delivery system that addresses both students' needs and your organization's requirements?**

**HLC Core Component 3.A.** The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education. Also see 1P4.

A master course schedule is created by the registrar's office, with input of individual units. The schedule is available online at <https://ebruno.unomaha.edu/schedule/>. The emerging Enrollment Management and Marketing Plan includes improving the course delivery system strategy. In addition, the Facilities Master Plan is designed to facilitate efficient course delivery in the future.



Technology is an important component of course delivery. On an annual basis, Information Services (IS) gathers requirements from campus constituents in order to evaluate their current level of satisfaction and future course delivery system needs. This process involves gathering information from departmental meetings and Faculty Senate committee meetings, interviewing academic deans and surveying students. IS staff collaborates with the Center for Faculty Development and the University Committee on the Advancement of Teaching in order to keep abreast of national and international trends and discuss if and when new pedagogical approaches and/or instructional technologies should be implemented. In addition, IS supports the use of Blackboard, a course management system, designed to support both on-line and face-to-face delivery strategies.

### **1P13. How do you ensure that your programs and courses are up-to-date and effective?**

**HLC Core Component 4.A.** The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. Also see 1P4.

UNO relies on several related processes to ensure that its programs and courses remain up-to-date and effective, including a systematic process of curriculum review coordinated by the Educational Policy and Advisory Committee (1P1), a comprehensive assessment process coordinated by the Assessment Committee (1P2 & 1P18), and a cyclical academic-program review process, coordinated by the Academic Planning Council.

The Academic Planning Council coordinates reviews to ensure that all of UNO's academic and co-curricular programs/units are reviewed at least once every seven years. The academic program review focuses on department/school units and encompasses all of the programs in a given unit—including the academic majors, service and general education courses, and programs offered by related centers or institutes—as well as the unit's research, service, and outreach activities. For programs that are accredited by external organizations, the UNO review process may be coordinated with accreditation reviews, either to prepare for an upcoming accreditation review or to use information from an external accreditation review in the internal review process. The internal academic program review process consists of the following five primary elements:

1. Self-study prepared by the department
2. Site visit by a peer review team
3. Report prepared by the team
4. Response by the unit being reviewed
5. Follow-up meeting involving the unit members, the cognizant dean, the Senior Vice Chancellor, and several team members

As part of the self-study, units are asked to respond to the recommendations of their previous review team. While the overall structure of the review process described above has not changed, the format of the self-study was updated in 2011. In the new format, each unit is now asked to examine its effectiveness and potential for improvement in the following AQIP areas: helping students learn, accomplishing other distinctive objectives, understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs, valuing people, leading and

communicating, supporting organizational operations, measuring effectiveness, planning continuous improvement, and building collaborative relationships. Links to program review guidelines and a self-study outline are available on the UNO website at <http://www.unomaha.edu/aandsaffairs/tabs/academic/progreview.php>.

In addition to the formal processes outlined above, most academic units and all colleges have created community advisory councils that facilitate open communication between UNO and members of the Omaha community and that help to inform internal curricular decisions.

#### **1P14. How do you change or discontinue programs and courses?**

Unit chairs or directors and program faculty maintain primary responsibility for initiating changes or discontinuance of programs or courses in their academic area. Once proposed and approved at the unit level, all such changes also must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate college committee(s) and the campus Educational Policy Advisory Committee, which is responsible for submitting a recommendation to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (see 1P2 for details). The approved revisions are then entered into the online Course Change Management System.

#### **1P15. How do you determine and address the learning support needs (tutoring, advising, placement, library, laboratories, etc.) of your students and faculty in your student learning, development, and assessment processes?**

**HLC Core Component 3.D.** The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching. Also see 1P7.

As mentioned in the introduction above, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs oversees all academic and administrative support units that are engaged in designing and deploying academic programs and services. This oversight helps to ensure the effective coordination and integration of UNO's diverse academic and student support services, which are determined based on student usage and demand data with input from UNO faculty and administrators, as outlined below.

**Targeted Academic Support Centers**—UNO has several entities that target specific academic support areas, including the Speech Center, the Writing Center, the Math Lab, and the Math-Science Learning Center. These areas coordinate support services related to their content specialties for students, faculty, and staff and have been extremely successful. Services offered by these centers include student tutoring, consultation, faculty workshops, and classroom support. Also see 1P8.

**Service-Learning Academy**—UNO is committed to integrating its Service-Learning Academy further into the campus culture as a means to supplement traditional modes of student learning. Also see 1P9.

**Faculty Development**—The Center for Faculty Development, Academic Partnerships for Instruction, and the Faculty Senate’s Professional Development Committee provide information about and create opportunities for addressing faculty development issues related to student learning support needs. Also see 1P9.

**Information Services**—Information Services uses data from incoming freshman and graduating senior surveys, feedback from advisors and faculty, and national trends for the purpose of evaluating the current level of service and strategizing future information and technology needs.

**Library**—The Criss Library is a primary provider of information resources, auxiliary equipment (cameras, tablets, laptops, eReaders), and research support, and the library assesses student needs for learning support in a number of ways. For example, library staff recently conducted a website-use-ability survey, since student input is critical to ensuring that the primary portal to library resources is well designed. The library also recently surveyed student preferences for mobile device access to the library, since many students are using phones and tablets to access library services. The library maintains a regular statistical series documenting library attendance, circulation of books and media, and online access to databases of scholarly journals. An online and paper-based suggestion service is also available to gather input from students. Pre- and post-testing is conducted in all of the library’s information literacy training associated with the English 116 course. In addition, faculty have access to dedicated subject librarians and are contacted regularly to assess needs. Faculty participate in selection of materials and equipment for the library, and their requests are given high priority.

The Library recently underwent a major renovation, adding study rooms, classrooms, a coffee shop, outside deck, and many more services. Student use of the library grew three-fold after the renovations and new capabilities were completed. UNO students tend to use the library at a rate that is higher than the rate on many other residential campuses.

The Criss Library has created an electronic dashboard to track usage and performance of library services. Dashboard data are available to UNO students and the community at <https://sites.google.com/site/crisslibdash/>.

### **1P16: How do you align your co-curricular development goals with your curricular learning objectives?**

**HLC Core Component 3.E.** The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

Our current administrative structure is relatively distinctive in that, since 2003, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are one unit headed by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. This structure is designed to ensure that the various co-curricular elements sponsored by UNO are integrated within our primary function of enhancing student learning. Thus, all substantive programs, initiatives, and decisions related to students, whether curricular or co-curricular, are addressed within one administrative structure.

In addition, all co-curricular programs—including those planned by the Office of Student Organization and Leadership Programs, University Housing, International Studies and Programs, Service Learning Academy, and Student Government and its agencies—abide by the UNO strategic plan and the institutional mission, vision, and values. Faculty are involved in many aspects of programming through all of these offices.

### **1P17. How do you determine that students to whom you award degrees and certificates have met your learning and development expectations?**

The two primary processes for determining the extent to which UNO's graduating students have met stated learning and development expectations are the campus-wide assessment process and the cyclical academic program review. In the assessment process, each academic unit defines and reports on its expected student learning outcomes in an annual report that is reviewed by the university-wide Assessment Committee. The committee provides regular feedback and guidance as outlined in 1P18 below. Every seven years, each program undergoes an internal academic program review, wherein all assessment and outcomes data are reviewed by a peer review team, as described in 1P13. In addition, those programs that are subject to external accreditation regularly report assessment data and outcomes to their accreditation agencies and review teams.

### **1P18. How do you design your processes for assessing student learning?**

**HLC Core Component 4.B.** The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. Also see 1P2.

In 2008, UNO moved from a decentralized approach to assessment to a comprehensive model focused on both program and institution-wide improvement. This change included the creation of a university-wide Assessment Committee and the development of a common assessment template that allows the Assessment Committee and other faculty, staff, and administrators to effectively track the evolution of student learning assessment over time and across campus.

The UNO Assessment Committee has sixteen members who represent all colleges. According to its stated mission, the committee “is responsible for guiding the process of academic assessment across the campus in an effort to enhance student learning and facilitate the continuous improvement of our academic programs. In recognizing the diversity of disciplines supported by the university and the diversity of the community of learners we serve, UNO is committed to an inclusive and holistic process of assessment that is faculty-driven, student-centered, and meets the needs of individual programs.”

The current assessment process includes the following steps: 1) Each unit completes an annual assessment report using the common template wherein assessment goals, methods of assessment, results, and an analysis of and response to the results are included. 2) Written feedback on each unit's assessment report is provided by the assessment committee. 3) A member of the assessment

committee meets with each unit to answer any questions concerning the feedback to the unit as well as to assess the clarity and utility of the feedback itself. 4) In all subsequent years' reports, each unit is asked to respond to the most recent feedback from the assessment committee.

While the overall assessment process and reporting is now uniform across campus, each unit still sets its own student learning targets. These targets are clearly identified in each assessment report. More information about the assessment process, template, and sample reports can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/assessment>.

## RESULTS (R)

### 1R1. What measures of your students' learning and development do you collect and analyze regularly?

UNO uses the following processes and tools to collect and analyze data related to student learning and development:

- **University Assessment Process**—Each academic unit defines methods of assessment and reports outcomes to the Assessment Committee as part of the university-wide assessment process described above (1P18).
- **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)**— The CLA measures students' gains in higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, analytic reasoning and evaluation, problem solving, and written communication. It also measures an institution's contribution to the students' development of these skills, allowing an institution to measure the value-added to undergraduate learning as a student moves from freshman to senior status. UNO students were tested as freshmen using the CLA in 2007 and again as seniors in 2011.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**—UNO participated in the NSSE survey of freshmen and seniors in 2006, 2008, and 2010 and will participate again in 2012. Survey results can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/> under the Institutional Research tab.

### 1R2. What are your performance results for your common student learning and development objectives?

UNO students were tested as freshmen using the CLA in 2007 and again as seniors in 2011, and results from the 2011 CLA find that seniors at UNO performed above the predicted expectations on all measures of student learning. UNO students performed Well Above Expected (90-99<sup>th</sup> percentile) for total CLA score, Well Above Expected on performance tasks, Above Expected on analytic writing tasks, Above Expected on make-an-argument tasks, and Above Expected on critique-an-argument tasks.

UNO has participated in the NSSE survey of freshmen and seniors in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and will again in 2012. NSSE's senior data can be found at <http://irapp.unomaha.edu/nsse.html> and the CLA results can be found at [http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/CLA\\_0711.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/CLA_0711.pdf)

### **1R3. What are your performance results for specific program learning objectives?**

Because each academic unit sets its own program-specific learning objectives, performance results vary from program to program. As described above, performance results are summarized in annual reports as part of the university-wide assessment process (1P18), and sample reports are available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/assessment>. Examples of performance results for specific program learning objectives include the following:

- Political Science faculty expect students to perform above the 50 percentile on the Major Field Test, which they do.
- English faculty have defined “stronger theses and documentation” as targeted student learning outcomes. During the 2009 program assessment, faculty noted that there was notable improvement in the strength of students’ theses between 2003 and 2006 and even more improvement between 2006 and 2009. On the other hand, faculty also noted continuing problems with documentation.
- Faculty in the College of Business reported comparative information from UNO’s 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results regarding the self-reported performance of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) students in comparison to the entire UNO campus. According to these data, a higher percentage of UNO students in the BSBA program complete multiple drafts of work, integrate ideas from multiple sources and courses in doing assignments, and are more likely to do analysis, synthesis, and make judgments in their coursework (<http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/cbaanalysis2011.pdf>).

### **1R4. What is your evidence that the students completing your programs, degrees, and certificates have acquired the knowledge and skills required by your stakeholders (i.e., other educational organizations and employers)?**

To determine whether UNO graduates have acquired the knowledge and skills required by other educational organizations and employers, UNO uses the following tools:

- **Graduation Survey**—Each year UNO asks its graduating seniors to complete a short exit survey. In the past, the survey has been voluntary. From this year forward, the survey will be a requirement. Survey data will be analyzed and results will be summarized at both the institutional and unit levels. The institutional information will be disseminated across campus, and reports for individual units will be distributed to the appropriate administrators in each college. Results from the 2011 annual baccalaureate degree exit survey include the following:
  - 9 out of 10 (90.8%) graduating seniors said they are satisfied with the knowledge and skills required to earn a degree
  - 95.4% said, “yes” to the statement: “I would recommend UNO to other students”
  - Over 92% of graduating seniors responded that they are satisfied/highly satisfied with their critical reasoning, writing, and quantitative literacy skills

More results can be viewed at [http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/ug\\_exit\\_survey\\_07252011.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/ug_exit_survey_07252011.pdf).

- **Alumni Survey**—UNO conducts an alumni survey, and this year will be using the ACT Alumni Outcomes survey that includes questions related to work force, graduate school, and plans beyond UNO. Once the ACT survey is completed, UNO will receive a report that will provide comparisons between our results and those of comparable institutions.
- **Employment Data**—According to UNO’s College of Business Administration, major local employers, such as Union Pacific Railroad, ConAgra Foods, First National Bank, and First Data Corporation, employ several thousands of our alumni.

**1R5. What are your performance results for learning support processes (advising, library, and laboratory use, etc.)?**

Several key constituencies at UNO regularly collect, update, and analyze data from key indicators related directly to UNO’s Strategic Plan. For example, for Goal 1 of our Strategic Plan—“UNO will be recognized as a student-centered metropolitan university”—we monitor areas such as faculty interaction with students, active learning in the classroom, internship opportunities, and service-learning offerings. Selected information can be found in the PING website, as well as the supplemental section of our Academic Department Indicators which can be accessed at [http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/academic\\_dept\\_ind\\_20112012.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/academic_dept_ind_20112012.pdf). For examples of results from library changes, see 6R4.

**1R6. How do your results for the performance of your processes in Helping Students Learn compare with the results of other higher education organizations and, where appropriate, with results of organizations outside of higher education?**

Overall, UNO’s student-learning results compare favorably with other higher education organizations, as demonstrated by the following examples:

- NSSE gives a good comparison of our Freshmen and Seniors responses to the Carnegie class. Question on NSSE, “Learning something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept,” 29% of UNO seniors responded, ‘Very Often’ and 27% of the Carnegie Class Seniors responded ‘Very Often.’
- Six-year graduation rates rose from 25% to over 40% in the last ten years
- Current first-year retention rate is 73%
- Results from the 2011 Collegiate Learning Assessment show that seniors at UNO performed above the predicted expectations on all measures of student learning, as summarized in 1R2 above.

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **111. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Helping Students Learn?**

In the past four years, UNO has planned and implemented many improvements in the area of helping students learn, and four of our recent AQIP action projects have directly related to these improvements. The major initiatives include the development of the new General Educational process, the implementation of the campus-wide assessment system, and revisions in the program-review procedures. Ongoing revisions to student advising also are important to meeting the needs of current and future students. All of these process improvements support Goal 1 of the strategic plan and represent logical, comprehensive revisions that have been and continue to be implemented thoughtfully and efficiently.

### **112. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Helping Students Learn**

Several aspects of UNO's campus culture and administrative infrastructure facilitate meaningful improvements in processes related to helping students learn, including the university's Strategic Plan and corresponding strategic planning process that includes broad-based representation, the administrative structure in which academic and student affairs are directed through the leadership of a senior vice chancellor, the multiple decision-making committees that ensure input from several levels, and an overall culture of meaningful student assessment represented by a systematic campus-wide assessment process.



**AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives** addresses the key processes (separate from your instructional programs and internal support services) through which you serve your external stakeholders—the processes that contribute to achieving your major objectives, fulfilling your mission, and distinguishing yours from other educational institutions.

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## INTRODUCTION

All university-wide objectives, including academic and non-academic objectives, are expected to align with the UNO Strategic Plan, with its emphasis on students, academic excellence, and community engagement. This plan is a dynamic document, with periodic updates managed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, which has representation from students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community.

UNO's established management procedures include direction and oversight from several groups, including the Board of Regents and central administration of the University of Nebraska system, deans, boards of directors, and senior-level administrators. Also, in the spirit of shared governance, Student Government, Faculty Senate, and Staff Advisory Council are included in appropriate decision-making processes.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness assists all campus entities in their processes by providing data and data analysis as appropriate. This evolving service organization is continually developing and delivering products to be more efficient and end-user friendly.

The highest priorities for improvement of this category include communication. Developing effective and understandable communication to meet the numerous needs of various stakeholders is important to the success of our evolving university.

**PROCESSES (P)**

**2P1. How do you design and operate the key non-instructional processes (e.g., athletics, research, community enrichment, economic development, alumni affairs, etc.) through which you serve significant stakeholder groups?**

Individual academic and administrative units design and operate UNO’s key non-instructional processes in accordance with the objectives identified in the institution’s strategic plan, which is developed through a systematic planning process (see 2P2). The following table identifies key non-instructional areas at UNO, organizational units responsible for designing and implementing processes in each area, and the personnel responsible for overseeing each organizational unit.

**Table 2.1: Key Non-Instructional Areas, Organizational Units, and Oversight Personnel**

Non-Instructional Area/Organizational Unit	Reporting/Oversight Personnel
<b>Athletics</b>	
Athletic Department	Director of Athletics (reports to Chancellor)
<b>Alumni</b>	
UNO Alumni Association	26-member Board of Directors
<b>Research</b>	
Office of Sponsored Programs and Research	Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
<b>Service Learning</b>	
Service Learning Academy	Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
<b>Economic Development</b>	
Nebraska Business Development Center	Dean, College of Business Administration
<b>Community Engagement</b>	
Community enrichment activities are in multiple academic and not-academic units and include, for example:	
Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium	Dean, College of Education
Center for Public Affairs Research	Dean, College of Public Administration
Collaborating Center for Community Service	Dean, College of Public Administration
Center for Economic Education	Deans, College of Business Administration and College of Education
Center for Information Assurance	Dean, College of Information Science and Technology, and Director, Peter Kiewit Institute

**2P2. How do you determine your organization’s major non-instructional objectives for your external stakeholders, and whom do you involve in setting these objectives?**

From a broad perspective, our distinctive objectives are guided by the University of Nebraska system’s Strategic Framework, established by our governing body, the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. The framework consists of six inter-related goals emphasizing access and affordability, quality academic programs, workforce and economic development, research growth, engagement with the state, and accountability. Each goal has a number of related objectives, strategies, and accountability measures developed for Board and university-wide monitoring over a multi-year period. Each campus in the University of Nebraska system, including UNO, has established a set of quality indicators that provide a means to evaluate achievement and momentum related to the objectives identified in the Strategic Framework. UNO’s progress toward the goals is reviewed at almost every Board of Regent meeting, and the UNO chancellor reviews the institution’s progress with the University of Nebraska president annually.

The UNO Strategic Plan operates within the broader goals of the system-wide Strategic Framework, and UNO’s quality indicators have primarily been identified through the institution’s strategic planning process. UNO’s Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) gathers and synthesizes information from a variety of sources before recommending action to the administration. All relevant groups across campus are solicited to nominate members to the SPSC, which is traditionally limited to approximately thirty individuals. Membership includes key personnel involved with institutional planning, such as AQIP Action Project leaders; faculty from all colleges; as well as community; staff; students, and alumni. The SPSC recently conducted an environmental scan to link external and internal assessment processes with the Strategic Plan by gathering information on the forces that affect UNO, identifying how these forces have impacted changes over the past several years, and analyzing how these forces might affect future opportunities. The SPSC also conducts numerous focus groups and structured activities during annual strategic planning forums to collect information that facilitates the continued progress of the institution.

UNO employs a collaborative administrative structure, which encourages a variety of constituencies to participate in evaluating feedback and implementing initiatives related to our strategic planning process. The UNO chancellor regularly convenes both the Chancellor’s Cabinet, composed of all senior administrators on campus, as well as the Chancellor’s Council, a large group composed of representatives from all relevant constituencies on campus, in order to obtain diverse perspectives about the direction of the university. Virtually all substantive and strategic decisions are vetted through these groups to determine the appropriate action. Other groups, such as UNO’s Faculty Senate and a variety of additional advisory committees, are also generally consulted on issues that significantly affect the university.

**2P3. How do you communicate your expectations regarding these objectives?**

The Board of Regents issues regular directives related to the Strategic Framework, and information about the framework—including links to quality indicators for each campus, a current Accountability Measure Report, and updated Strategic Framework Dashboard

Indicators—are published on the system website (<http://nebraska.edu/strategic-framework.html>). Similarly, UNO communicates information about its strategic plan and progress on quality indicators on the institutional website. See, for example, the interactive Campus ePortfolio at <http://unoportfolio.unomaha.edu/>. The various planning groups identified above in 2P2—such as the Chancellor’s Cabinet, Chancellor’s Council, Faculty Senate, and other advisory groups—also communicate regularly to the broader campus community. In addition, the Chancellor delivers at least one State of the University address each year. This address, intended for a wide internal and external audience, highlights campus achievements from the previous year and identifies focal points for the upcoming year. The 2012 address is available [http://www.unomaha.edu/news/releases/2012/09/19\\_address.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/news/releases/2012/09/19_address.php). Furthermore, the chancellor, the colleges, and many individual academic units have advisory councils composed of community, alumni, and faculty representatives that allow for the free exchange of ideas and information about UNO activities.

**2P4. How do you assess and review the appropriateness and value of these objectives, and whom do you involve in these reviews?**

At UNO, shared governance, particularly as it relates to faculty, is an expectation that is embraced by the entire campus community. Subsequently, virtually all committees and organizations across campus that are directly or tangentially involved with our non-instructional objectives have significant faculty representation. UNO also supports an active Faculty Senate, which informs the campus community of its recommendations and actions through a system of regular monthly meetings, published agendas and minutes, periodic memos by email, postings to the Faculty Senate website, and the Faculty Senate president’s annual report to the chancellor. The Faculty Senate appoints, elects, and tracks representatives to a wide variety of university-wide committees, as summarized at [http://www.unomaha.edu/facsen/uno\\_comms/01\\_comm\\_index.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/facsen/uno_comms/01_comm_index.php). Also see 5P5.

Likewise, UNO’s Staff Advisory Council (SAC) promotes and facilitates communications between UNO staff and the administration. SAC examines all policies, procedures, and other issues of concern to managerial/professional and office/service employees and makes recommendations to the chancellor. SAC officers also are traditionally represented on entities such as the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Chancellor’s Council to ensure a broad range of perspectives is considered when specific initiatives are undertaken.

Athletics’ Student Services undergoes a review conducted by the Academic Planning Council (APC), designed to monitor the quality and assist in the ongoing development of UNO’s programs and units. The review encompasses all services offered to student athletes and consists of three primary elements: (1) Self-study prepared by the unit; (2) Site visit by a peer review team; and (3) Report prepared by the team. The most recent Athletics review took place in the fall of 2011.

**2P5. How do you determine faculty and staff needs relative to these objectives and operations?**

As described above in 2P4, UNO faculty and staff communicate their needs relative to key non-instructional objectives and operations through the Faculty Senate, the Staff Advisory Council, and various other university-wide committees. In addition, faculty and staff representatives from key areas—including athletics, research, alumni, economic development, and community engagement—serve on the Chancellor’s Council and/or the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

**2P6. How do you incorporate information on faculty and staff needs in readjusting these objectives or the processes that support them?**

UNO’s shared governance structure, as reflected in the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (see 2P2), the Staff Advisory Council (see 2P3), and the Faculty Senate (see 2P3), involves faculty and staff in the process of identifying and evaluating the institution’s non-instructional objectives and related operations. Thus, information about faculty and staff needs is directly incorporated into the planning and adjustment of these objectives and the processes that support them.

In addition, UNO’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) works with campus units and offices to collect, analyze, and disseminate information in support of university strategic planning, policy formulation, decision-making, assessment, and compliance reporting. OIE activities evolve annually to specifically address the information, assessment outcomes, and measurements used to monitor progress towards campus goals as defined by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the university administration. Also, campus-wide surveys are generally coordinated through OIE, as are most comparison studies and benchmarks that are used to help guide decisions. The information available through OIE is distributed to all relevant deans, chairs, and other appropriate unit supervisors across campus, as well as to entities such as the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, in an effort to encourage and inform institutional improvement.

**RESULTS (R)**

**2R1. What measures of accomplishing your major non-instructional objectives and activities do you collect and analyze regularly?**

Related specifically to our distinctive role as a metropolitan university, UNO continually and uniformly collects and analyzes many pieces of information related to our relationship with the community. For example, we track how many service-learning classes we offer, and the service learning department monitors the number and types of outreach activities coordinated by campus units and the economic impact we have on the local community. The units that offer internships or service learning courses to students and other activities collect meaningful data. The campus climate and diversity are analyzed often with various surveys such as the NSSE.

**2R2. What are your performance results in accomplishing your other distinctive objectives?**

Our commitment to community engagement and, specifically service learning, led to the founding of UNO’s Service-Learning Academy (SLA) in the spring of 1999 with a grant from the Nebraska Consortium for Service-learning in Higher Education. The SLA was subsequently institutionalized and is currently being strongly supported by internal funds. Since the establishment of the SLA, service-learning offerings at UNO have grown rapidly. In the 1998–1999 academic year, for example, 133 students in 7 courses participated in service-learning. By the 2011-2012 academic year, this has grown to more than 2,400 students in more than 140 classes. Students participating in service learning courses take both pre and post participation assessment.

As a result of our SLA’s efforts, UNO has established strong relationships with dozens of community entities, a complete list of which can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/servicelearning/communitypartners.php>. Planning has been completed for building that provides a one-stop shop for UNO’s community engagement initiatives. The ground breaking ceremony was held in October 2012.

**2R3. How do your results for the performance of these processes compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

From the spring 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), for example, we know that our students are participating in community-based projects as part of a regular course to about the same degree as students at other urban peer institutions. Among our first-year students, 31% participated in a community based project in comparison to 36% of first-year students at our urban peer institutions. Our seniors progressed to 48% participating in a community based project, a 17% increase, whereas the urban peers only progressed by 12% in the senior year.

**Table 2.2: NSSE Table**

Participated in a community based project		UNO	Urban Peers
	First-Year	31%	36%
	Senior	48%	48%

UNO students are more likely to have participated in community service or volunteer work by their senior years. 34% of our first-year students participated in community service or volunteer work and 35% of Urban Peers first year students did. Our seniors increased to 54% doing community service or volunteer and the urban peers only increased to 53% by their senior year. We expect that the 2013 NSE administration at UNO will show increased participation relative to the 2010 level.

**Table 2.3: NSSE Table**

Community service or volunteer work		UNO	Urban Peers
	First-Year	34%	35%
	Senior	54%	53%

**2R4. How do your performance results of your processes for Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives strengthen your overall organization? How do they enhance your relationships with the communities and regions you serve?**

By their very nature, the collaborations that have been established with area partners enhance the relationships between the university and the external community. The sheer number of our community partnerships has grown over the last several years, and the quality of those relationships has been enhanced through our continued efforts to provide services for community enrichment. Also, UNO’s efforts in recent years to articulate our value to the community has been refined to the point where, recently, an economic impact study commissioned by UNO found, among other things, that:

- The economic activity of UNO and value of UNO graduates’ education accounts for a \$1.6 billion contribution to the Omaha regional economy.
- UNO and its graduates account for approximately 6.2 percent of the total Omaha region’s annual income and productivity.

A complete description of this data collection project can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/docs/economy04-05.pdf>.

**IMPROVEMENT (I)**

**2I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives?**

The non-instructional processes and connections with external stakeholders are well established at UNO. The recent and ongoing improvements in this area have been focused on data collection and communications to make sure that decision makers are data informed. The revisions in the structure of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness are being implemented. Improving internal and external communication is a priority and will continue to be in the near future.

**2I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives?**

The university is a complex and multifaceted institution, and the non-instructional processes are seen as an important part of the system. These processes need to align with the Strategic Plan, and the infrastructure is in place to continually review the direction and effectiveness of these processes. This infrastructure includes input from administration, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the community.



**AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs** *examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs.*

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## INTRODUCTION

As a metropolitan university, UNO places a high priority on understanding the needs of its students and community. The institutional mission is to “...transform and improve the lives of constituents, the region, and the nation,” (3P3) and UNO has been systematic in developing processes to help meet this challenge.

UNO’s fundamental approach to improving its understanding of stakeholder needs is a systematic strategic planning process, which has been continuously improved over the past fifteen years and is fully integrated into the culture of the campus. The thirty-member Strategic Planning Steering Committee has representation from the community, students, staff, faculty, and administration, and the annual daylong Strategic Planning Forum includes participants from all of these groups as well.

UNO is committed to systematically gathering appropriate and useful data, analyzing these data, making decisions based on these data, and effectively communicating assessment outcomes and decisions to meet the needs of various stakeholder groups. These related functions are overseen by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (3P1), which was established in early 2012 to coordinate three existing administrative functions—the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), Decision Support Services (DSS), and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) for academic accreditation. The OIE functions as a division of the Office for Academic and Student Affairs and is charged with helping institutional leaders make quality decisions based on data and data analysis. A recent example of UNO’s continuous quality improvement in this area is the newly developed **Performance Information Gateway** (PING), an evolving information center designed to provide students and other stakeholders with access to important campus data (3P1).

The university’s current priority for improvement in the area of understanding students’ and other stakeholders’ needs is to develop a process and procedures for gathering more data from UNO graduates and their employers to determine the effectiveness of UNO’s programs. Specific focus areas include measuring the degree of students’ preparedness for successful employment and the level of value of the UNO educational experience.

## PROCESSES (P)

### **3P1. How do you identify the changing needs of your student groups? How do you analyze and select a course of action regarding these needs?**

**HLC Core Component 4.C.** The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

UNO collects and analyzes a variety of institutional data to identify and respond to student needs. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), a division of the Office for Academic and Student Affairs, coordinates and analyzes most campus-wide surveys and facilitates the collection, analysis, and interpretation of institutional data to support institutional management, assessment, planning, and decision making.

Among other initiatives, UNO annually conducts several campus-wide student surveys to collect feedback about student experiences at UNO. Student and related surveys conducted in 2011–2012 include the following:

- New student orientation survey
- Entering transfers survey
- Mapworks—freshman survey
- National Survey of Student Engagement
- Graduating seniors survey
- Recent graduates and alumni surveys (conducted by the colleges)

Noteworthy is that UNO regularly participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is a nationwide survey of first-year students and seniors that looks in depth at experiences in the classroom, student engagement outside the classroom, and overall satisfaction with academic programs and student progress.

In addition to campus-wide student surveys, the Office of Academic and Student Affairs continually collects usage data from various student-support units, such as the university library, student recreation, and student health. These data are collected and analyzed as part of the institution's efforts to remain responsive to student needs.

Furthermore, the OIE continually provides enrollment updates and comparative data from the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (the Delaware Study) to relevant deans, chairs, directors, and academic administrators. These data are disaggregated in multiple ways and can be used to identify student needs and adjust policies and actions accordingly. OIE tracks data related to the following:

- Student credit hours
- Faculty FTE
- Student majors
- Degrees awarded
- Instructional productivity ratios

OIE recently launched the **Performance Information Gateway (PING)**, UNO's portal for accountability information, academic and department management indicators, reports, and analytics to support data-driven decision making across our campus. This evolving information center is designed to provide internal and external constituents with access to important campus data.

In addition to the student surveys and institutional data described above, UNO solicits direct student input through several other processes on campus. For example, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee includes at least one student member and many students participate in the annual Strategic Planning Forum. Also, as part of the comprehensive academic program reviews coordinated by the Academic Planning Council (see 1P13), peer review teams meet with students to solicit their input.

### **3P2. How do you build and maintain a relationship with your students?**

Along with typical faculty/student interaction in academic endeavors, UNO also sponsors more than 100 clubs and organizations for students, most of which have faculty sponsorship at some level. UNO's Student Organizations and Leadership Programs office strives to complement academic activities and enhance the overall education experience of the student through development of, exposure to, and participation in social, cultural, governance, leadership, and recreational programs. Participation in co-curricular activities and programs allows students to develop skills that will enable them to be more effective as citizens and leaders in the university environment as well as in the community. A complete list of organizations available for students can be found at <http://studentorgs.unomaha.edu/clubsandorgs/>.

UNO also has developed a number of learning community programs and initiatives that strengthen academic success among specific subsets of students with common goals and interests. Since 1972, for example, UNO has coordinated the Goodrich Program (<http://goodrich.unomaha.edu>), which provides a college education for Nebraska residents who might otherwise find college difficult to afford. The Goodrich Program offers a three-pronged approach, providing the following:

1. Financial aid in the form of tuition and general fees toward a bachelor's degree
2. A specialized curriculum emphasizing the humanities and the social sciences via a multicultural perspective
3. A comprehensive program of academic support, advising, and related student services

Other learning group populations include the UNO Honors Program (<http://www.unomaha.edu/wwwhonor>), the Thompson Learning Community (<http://www.unomaha.edu/thompsonlc>), Young Scholars (<http://stories.nufoundation.org/node/856>), Avenue Scholars (<http://www.avescholars.org>), and Project Achieve (<http://www.unomaha.edu/achieve>).

UNO has also recently expanded its on-campus residency capacity to 2,400 students, and an expanded residence-life program has been designed to improve the relationship with and among resident students.

### **3P3. How do you analyze the changing needs of your key stakeholder groups and select courses of action regarding these needs?**

**HLC Core Component 1.D.** The institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

UNO’s commitment to the public good is reflected in the institutional mission, which states: “As Nebraska’s metropolitan University, UNO is characterized by its strong academic foundations and creative community relationships that transform and improve the lives of constituents, the region, and the nation.” This mission is supported by the institutional values, which are stated as follows:

UNO believes:

- That knowledge enriches the lives of all people and is committed to preparing students to face the challenges of living and learning in an ever-changing world;
- In an educational partnership characterized by the commitment of: students to learning; faculty to the highest ideals of teaching, research, service; and staff to the highest standards of education and service;
- In the welfare, talents, and future of our employees and their expanding professional development;
- In the educational, cultural, and economic strengths of our communities and is committed to enhancing these through teaching, research, service and outreach;
- In the importance of educated and healthy citizens and programs that improve their quality of life;
- In the principles of inclusion, representation, openness, and diversity.

With this mission and these values in mind, UNO is committed to analyzing the changing needs of key stakeholder groups and selecting appropriate courses of action based on those needs. Several of the key stakeholder groups that influence UNO’s decision making are described below.

**University of Nebraska Board of Regents**—The overall direction of UNO is determined by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska system. Directives originating from monthly board meetings are conveyed through regular communications and are generally clear with little ambiguity.

**Parents**—UNO’s New Student Enrollment Services regularly conducts a survey of parents during new student/parent orientation. UNO does not have a structured mechanism for collecting data from the parents of currently enrolled students and, at present, is developing a strategy to improve this aspect of communicating with parents.

**K-12 School Districts**—UNO’s relationship with K-12 school districts in the metropolitan area is facilitated primarily through the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC). This unique collaboration between UNO and the twelve metropolitan area school districts has facilitated close relationships among all participating parties. The consortium is a catalyst for identifying high priority issues common to member organizations and addressing these issues through joint task forces and projects. MOEC provides a forum for professionals from across the educational spectrum and community to share information and work together in the areas of teaching, research, and service. UNO is the headquarters for MOEC and, thus, is integral to the functioning of the organization.

**Alumni**—UNO is fortunate to have a very active and well-connected alumni association to facilitate relationships between the university and its alumni. The president of the UNO Alumni Association is a member of various university committees, including, most importantly, the Chancellor’s Council and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. His membership in these groups ensures that open lines of communication exist between the campus and the entity responsible for cultivating relationships with our alumni.

**Employers**—Along with unit-specific connections with employers within certain fields, UNO also contracts annually with Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. to determine trends in the local and regional economy (referenced in 1P4). UNO uses the trend data to help ensure that its academic programming remains responsive to the realities of the employment market. In addition, the Office of Career Exploration and Outreach regularly collects feedback from employers about UNO students and solicits input from participants in the career fairs it hosts each semester. This information also is used to make decisions about future action items.

**Community Partners**—Community partners feed information back to the campus through forums, advisory boards, and assessment instruments. From internships to service learning, the collaboration of UNO students, faculty, and staff with community leaders and organizations allows the campus to be informed, responsive, and involved at many levels.

### **3P4. How do you build and maintain relationships with your key stakeholders?**

See 3P3.

### **3P5. How do you determine if you should target new student and stakeholder groups with your educational offerings and services?**

HLC Core Component 1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good. Also see 3P3.

UNO is a campus that historically has embraced creativity and has welcomed feedback from both the internal and external communities regarding new initiatives. Thus, many of the new programs involving student or stakeholder groups emerge organically with little centralized direction. The approval of every new initiative, however, progresses through previously established relevant processes, which ensures that any substantive proposal aligns with UNO's Strategic Plan. See, for example, the academic program approval process described in 1P3.

Another example is the current initiative to develop an Enrollment Management and Marketing Plan in support of the chancellor's challenge to increase enrollment at UNO to 20,000 by the year 2020. Student Services is partnering with an external consultant to develop a comprehensive plan, not only to plan for new offering and services, but also to plan for student population growth.

### **3P6. How do you collect complaint information from students and other stakeholders? How do you analyze this feedback and select courses of action? How do you communicate these actions to your students and stakeholders?**

**Academic Disputes**—For students, procedures for resolving academic disputes are included in the university catalog and vary slightly by college. Generally, the procedures progress through the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Students wanting to appeal a grade or other judgment by an instructor shall attempt to discuss the matter directly with the instructor.
- **Step 2:** If the student and the instructor do not reach a satisfactory agreement, the student may submit an appeal in writing to the chairperson of the department/school in which the course is offered.
- **Step 3:** If the student and chairperson do not reach a satisfactory agreement, the student may submit an appeal in writing to the dean of the college in which the course was offered. The decision made at this level, which would include a hearing by a faculty-student appeals committee, is final.

**Non-Academic Complaints**—Non-academic complaints may be resolved through the Office of Academic and Students Affairs on a case-by-case basis or through the office of the UNO Ombudsperson (<http://www.unomaha.edu/ombuds.php>). The Office of Ombudsperson was established at UNO in the fall of 1970. The purpose of the office is to receive and investigate complaints. Students, faculty, administrators, or staff members may request the service. The Ombudsperson has no official authority to impose a

solution to a situation. Rather, it is his or her responsibility to look into the conditions that have caused someone to lodge a complaint in an effort to resolve the difficulty. Ombudsperson powers are restricted to those of inquiry and recommendation.

The Office of Ombudsperson is not a shortcut for normal administrative processes or student-faculty relations. Requests for the service of the Ombudsperson usually occur when the normal bureaucratic processes have failed to function properly and, therefore, cause undue hardship to one or more members of the UNO community.

No person can be penalized in any way for seeking the assistance of the Ombudsperson, and all inquiries are considered confidential. Problems relating to faculty, staff, and student grievances with procedures, parking, residency interpretations, and inadequate or lack of communication are a few of the kinds of problems brought to the office. No problem is considered too small or insignificant for consideration by the ombudsperson, if the individual feels that it is important. The Ombudsperson is ordinarily able to suggest a procedure for pursuing a remedy within the system. But, if no procedure is available or the existing procedure is not adequate, the ombudsperson can provide assistance by making recommendations to appropriate administration offices for resolution in other matters. Although the Ombudsperson cannot assure that everything sought or requested by an inquirer will or should be granted, she/he will try to assure that a fair resolution of a dispute or problem be found, if possible.

The Ombudsperson reports directly to the Assistant to the Chancellor. The Ombudsperson is not considered a part of the administration, but is independent. She/he does work, however, through the administrative processes that have been established in attempting to cut red tape and to provide assistance in obtaining equity to all who bring a grievance to the ombudsperson's attention.

**Feedback from External Stakeholders**—Along with unit-specific initiatives to collect constructive feedback from community partners and alumni, our annual Strategic Planning Forums involve representatives from all of our most important external stakeholder groups. One of the key elements of these forums is to solicit feedback from the various individuals and groups in attendance and to incorporate that feedback into future discussions about the direction of the institution. Furthermore, the forums provide the opportunity to update internal and external communities about what has been accomplished over the previous year, much of which is connected to previously collected feedback.

## **RESULTS (R)**

### **3R1. How do you determine the satisfaction of your students and other stakeholders? What measures of student and other stakeholder satisfaction do you collect and analyze regularly?**

UNO's primary mode of determining student satisfaction is through national and local perception surveys, including the NSSE (3P1). Furthermore, each department and college collects and assesses student evaluation data from each course offered at UNO. College summaries of the data are available for deans, department chairs, and individual faculty for use in determining appropriate action.

For other stakeholders, our Strategic Planning Forums provide ample opportunities to offer feedback regarding the activities of the institution. In addition, most academic units across campus collect information related to their internship programs with local employers, including determining the employers' overall satisfaction with UNO students. Likewise, UNO's Service-Learning Academy holds regular focus group sessions with many of its 200 plus community partners to determine the effectiveness of the service learning activities and to make modifications.

### **3R2. What are your performance results for student satisfaction?**

Overall, students are very satisfied with their experiences at UNO. For example, in our most recent graduation survey, nearly 95% of students indicated they would recommend UNO to other students. Other key areas of inquiry have resulted in similar findings, such as 91% of student indicating they are satisfied with the knowledge and skills required to earn a degree at UNO. In areas related specifically to their academic instruction and intellectual development, our students have indicated the following:

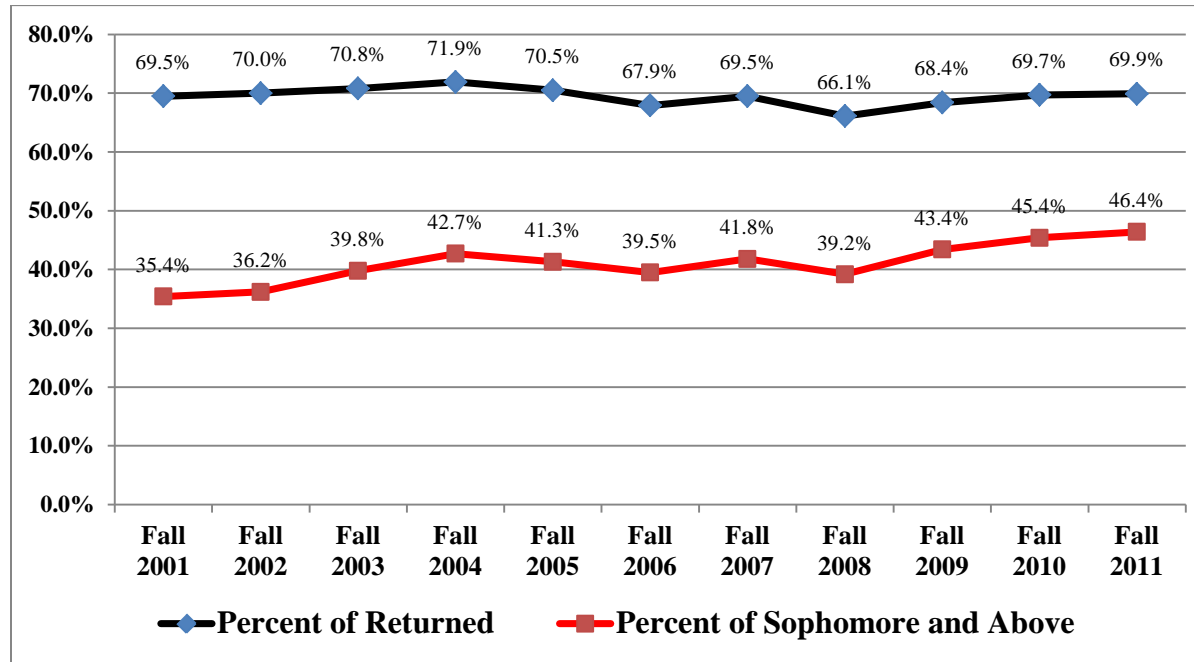
- Over 92% felt satisfied with the opportunities to develop their critical reasoning skills
- Over 84% felt satisfied with the opportunities to develop their writing skills
- Over 87% felt satisfied with the opportunities to develop their quantitative skills

### **3R3. What are your performance results for building relationships with your students?**

UNO's success in building relationships with its students is measured by several indicators. For example, UNO's freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate, illustrated in Figure 3.1 below, is notably higher than many of its urban metropolitan-university peers.



**Figure 3.1: UNO FTFT Degree-Seeking Freshmen First-Year Retention:  
Total Percent of Returned and Percent of Sophomore and Above**



One area of potential improvement involves the total number of students who transfer from UNO to another institution, which averages around 30% each year.

Furthermore, the UNO office of Student Organizations and Leadership Programs has collected data regarding student participation in many of its key initiatives, as summarized in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Number of Participants in Student Organizations and Leadership Programs**

• Organization/Program Name	• Average Number of Students Participating Yearly
• Emerging Leaders	• 60–85
• Fall Conferences	• 75–100
• Cultural Program Events	• 400–600
• Student Programming Events	• 2,500
• Greek Life Programs	• 400
• Student Government and Agency	• 100–300
• Clubs and Organizations	• 1,500
• Community Service Events	• 1,600

Likewise, the establishment of the UNO Thompson Learning Community (TLC) in 2008, modeled largely after the Goodrich Program, is a significant attempt by the university to build relationships with students who are in financial need and have strong academic potential. A commitment by a local foundation allowed UNO to recruit approximately 70 incoming students with financial need and give them full scholarships in the 2008–2009 academic year. In 2011–2012, more than 1,300 students were enrolled in the Thompson Learning Community courses, with 60 sections of classes offered on campus. Most notably, as a metropolitan university that serves a diverse local and regional community, the TLC will provide a substantial boost to our efforts to recruit and retain a diverse and talented student body. More information about the TLC can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/thompsonlc/>.

**3R4. What are your performance results for stakeholder satisfaction?**

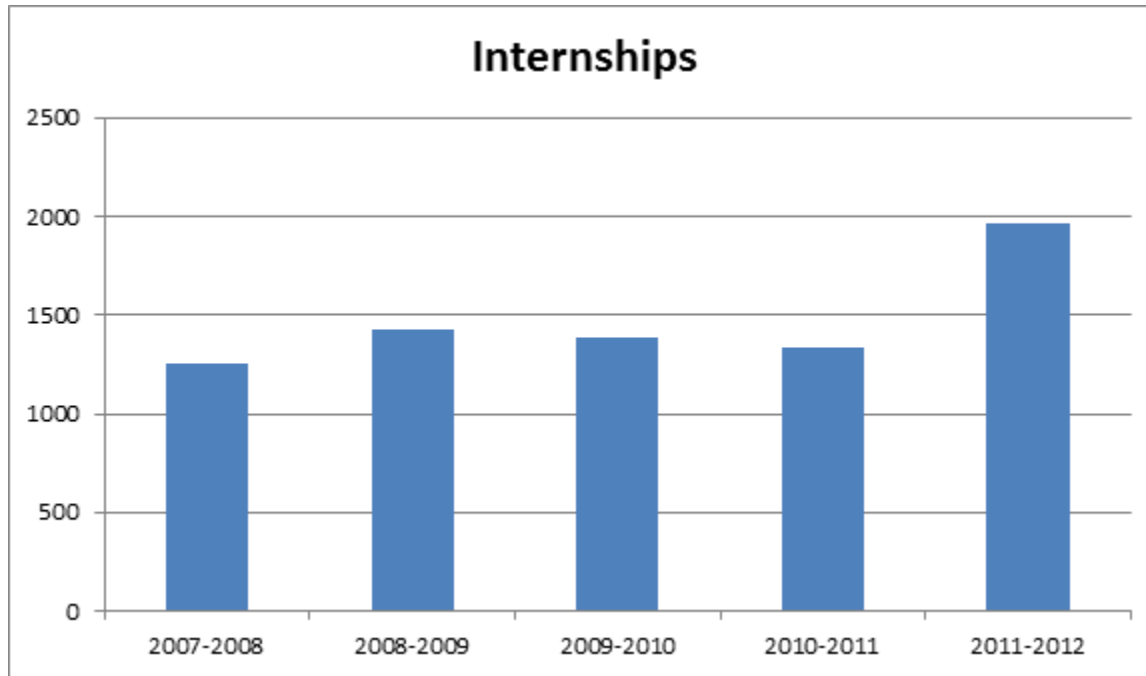
The satisfaction of many of UNO’s key external stakeholders—including area employers and school districts—is reflected in the results of our productive, ongoing partnerships, as summarized in 3R5. A specific area of improvement is measuring alumni satisfaction. UNO does not have any current alumni information, but, with the help of ACT, the institution will be conducting the ACT Alumni Outcome Survey in fall 2012. This survey will help UNO better understand where its alumni are and how they are doing.

**3R5. What are your performance results for building relationships with your key stakeholders?**

Among other things, the number of relationships UNO has built with local employers and organizations has grown tremendously in the last decade. One indication of this is the fact that UNO sponsors, on average, approximately 1,300 internships per year in the local

community, as illustrated in Figure 3.2. An area of ongoing development is to establish a process for centrally collecting and analyzing the numerous focus group and survey results that academic units typically generate for internal improvement purposes.

**Figure 3.2: UNO Internship Enrollment**



In addition, UNO has recently completed a new building for the College of Business Administration, finished remodeling a building for the College of Education, and repurposed another building for various programs to have a home, like the Thompson Learning Community and the Service Learning Academy. Many of these projects were from public support, just one indicator of the strong relationships UNO has built with the local community.

Regarding its relationship with K-12 districts, UNO has recently developed a large and successful dual enrollment program with all of the Omaha area school districts, at their request. Specifically, because of a lack of productive and collaborative partnerships with other institutions in the area that were sponsoring various dual credit opportunities, several metropolitan districts approached UNO about collaborating on a dual enrollment program. Following intensive internal discussions, UNO agreed to begin offering dual enrollment classes in 2003, and, since that time, UNO has worked closely with each of the districts in the area to enhance its partnerships.

Currently, UNO's dual enrollment program has established relationships with 29 high schools and enrolls more than 4,500 students each year. Most importantly, UNO has begun recruiting these students as incoming freshman at a higher rate than it was prior to the existence of the dual enrollment program.

**3R6. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

UNO has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are being tracked. Several KPIs focus on students and are reported in the Student Success (Retention; Timeliness of Degree Completion; Student Persistence to Degree Completion) and Student Opportunities (Fall Semester FTE Enrollment; Total Minority Enrollment; and Underrepresented Minority Enrollment). UNO is tracking its performance on each of these indicators over time, as well as with several peer groups. This information is available to the public at the following location: <https://www.unomaha.edu/infogateway/>. UNO's fall-to-fall semester retention of first-time freshmen exceeds the level of our 10 peers drawn from the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). Our 6-year graduation rate also exceeds the level achieved by our CUMU peers. UNO is seeking to significantly increase its retention rate as a part of the Enrollment Management Planning process that is currently underway.

UNO seeks to be a leader in community engagement as a part of our unique role in a major metropolitan area. One external recognition of our achievement in this area is the selection of UNO to be on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the past 7 years. This is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its civic engagement. The U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service honor the nation's leading colleges and universities for their commitment to bettering their communities through community service and service learning. UNO has been on the honor roll every year since the inception of this national award in 2006.

In addition, UNO was among the first group of universities in the U.S. to achieve the prestigious elective classification for "Community Engagement" by the Carnegie Foundation. The "Community Engagement" classification describes the level of collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources.

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **3I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs?**

As noted in the introduction above, recent improvements in this category include the new Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the recently developed Performance Information Gateway (PING). With the newly organized OIE, UNO is not only collecting more data from students and stakeholders, but it is making the data available to many groups in easy-to-use web-based media. The PING portal is evolving and is already used by both internal and external constituents to better understand the evolving needs of UNO students and other stakeholders.

### **3I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs?**

UNO has established a strong culture of continuous improvement through its inclusive strategic planning process, an administrative structure of shared governance, and the coordinated data collection, analysis, and communication efforts of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The wide-ranging representation of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the well-attended annual public forum give all stakeholders a voice in the strategic planning process, through which the university sets targets for improved performance results. Similarly, a variety of participants engage in the university's decision-making processes, through service on committees like the Chancellor's Council, the Dean's Forum, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Senate, and community advisory groups. These groups make data-driven decisions regarding which specific processes need improvement.

**AQIP Category 4: Valuing People** *explores your institution's commitment to the development of your faculty, staff, and administrators.*

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## INTRODUCTION

UNO's commitment to the development of its faculty, staff, and administrators is explicitly identified as one of the core institutional values, stated as a belief "In the welfare, talents, and future of our employees and their expanding professional development." In support of this commitment, UNO has carefully designed processes related to recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified employees to support its academic programs and support services.

UNO has a well-defined hiring process that is aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the institution. The process respects the decentralized nature of the UNO campus by allowing individual units to determine the specialized skills required of the faculty, staff, and administrators hired within the unit. At the same time, the process includes institution-wide use of a systematic online applicant tracking system that automates paper-driven aspects of the hiring and selection process (4P1, 4P2, 4P3).

To assist employees in completing their responsibilities effectively and efficiently, UNO offers a wide range of professional development resources and activities for its faculty and staff. For faculty, this includes systematic training workshops for new faculty as well as ongoing personal and professional development opportunities for all faculty, including, for example, workshops, one-on-one consultations with professional development staff, and participation in learning communities focused on teaching or research. Staff also have many opportunities for growth, including tuition reimbursement and on-campus and outside professional development activities. UNO offers a wide variety of training classes for both faculty and staff regarding the use of educational technology and university data-management systems. In addition, UNO recently completed a large-scale staff training initiative focused on improving customer service. This successful yearlong program was one of the institution's AQIP Action Projects for 2011–2012.

The performance evaluation process for faculty, staff, and administrators is aligned with institutional and unit goals. Staff and administrators are evaluated annually using an evaluation instrument and a review by their supervisors. Each faculty member is also reviewed annually in a process that usually includes input from peers, chairpersons, deans, and senior-level administrators (4P10).

Recognizing and rewarding employees is another important aspect of valuing people. UNO presents several awards to employees each year (4P11), and hosts events to show appreciation to employees. Furthermore, even though funding has been limited in the past few years, the institution has been able to maintain an excellent employee benefits package, and UNO provides employees with several health, wellness, safety, and financial-assistance services. A challenge to be met in the near future is to develop an enhanced compensation package that will allow UNO to better compete for key staff, faculty, and administrators.

## PROCESSES (P)

### **4P1. How do you identify the specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators?**

For faculty and administrator positions, search committees and/or supervisors generally establish the specific credentials, skills, and values required early in the hiring process. Furthermore, for the last several years, UNO has used the NEOGOV online employment application system for all hiring at the university. UNO implemented this system to automate many of the paper-driven aspects of the employment-application process and to ensure that only qualified applicants are considered for open positions. The NEOGOV system allows users to do the following:

- Create and submit job requisitions
- View applicants' files
- Notify the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (OASA) of decisions regarding the status of each applicant

The system is designed to benefit users by facilitating the following:

- Fast and accurate processing of employment information
- Up-to-date access to information regarding all requisitions
- More detailed screening of applicants' qualifications before they reach the interview stage

For staff positions, an analysis of job descriptions is completed by the Classification and Compensation Manager of the Human Resource Office.

### **4P2. How do your hiring processes make certain that the people you employ possess the credentials, skills, and values you require?**

HLC Core Component 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

At each stage of the hiring process, applicant qualifications are reviewed in accordance with the institution's employment policies to ensure that UNO selects qualified candidates for available positions. A preliminary screening of minimum qualifications is automatically completed in the NEOGOV system. Personnel in Human Resources and the Office of Academic and Student Affairs then check references, conduct background checks, and review applications to ensure that candidates meet all of the advertised qualifications. Further review of applicants' credentials, skills, and values is conducted throughout the selection and interview process. For faculty and administrator positions, this process is overseen by a selection committee and includes having final candidates meet with various UNO groups to solicit input from all campus constituents, including students, faculty, and staff. (Also see 4P1.)

#### **4P3. How do you recruit, hire, and retain employees?**

UNO recruits new employees by advertising available positions in a variety of appropriate print and electronic publications, including, for example, the UNO website, newspapers, discipline-specific list serves, and other related media. Such publications are widely distributed through appropriate organizations and events, including local Workforce Development Offices, approximately 40–50 agencies and schools with diverse constituencies, and job fairs. UNO hiring processes follow guidelines established by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, the state, and the university regarding equity and compliance with the advertised job requirements. There is oversight to ensure that policies and procedures are followed and the university is represented well to applicants. For retention, UNO offers an excellent benefits and leave package and encourages employees to voice their concerns through advertised channels, such as the Faculty Senate, the Staff Advisory Council, the Chancellor’s Commission on the Status of Women, the Ombudsperson’s office, and informal and formal grievance procedures.

All new employees are informed about conditions of employment at UNO through orientation programs, as described in 4P4.

#### **4P4. How do you orient all employees to your organization’s history, mission, and values?**

For new faculty hires, the Office of Academic and Student Affairs coordinates an annual new-faculty orientation. These orientation workshops have been a tradition at UNO for more than 30 years and provide new faculty and teaching assistants with an opportunity to meet one another in an informal setting while learning about UNO. Although significantly revised recently, session topics typically include UNO’s metropolitan mission and strategic goals, advice and skills required for success at UNO, active-classroom ideas, academic support services, and faculty development opportunities. In addition, all new staff and administrative employees are required to attend an orientation session conducted by the Human Resources office. During orientation, employees are introduced to the university and provided information about employment-related policies and procedures, including details about employee benefits.

#### **4P5. How do you plan for changes in personnel?**

The current initiative to develop an institution-wide Enrollment Management and Marketing Plan in support of the chancellor’s challenge to increase enrollment at UNO to 20,000 by the year 2020 includes forecasting the need for faculty and staff to support the expected increase in the number of students. Individual academic and administrative units also plan for changes in personnel. Although this process varies from unit to unit, in general, changes in personnel are anticipated based upon trends such as the number of students served and the number of faculty and staff approaching retirement. (Also see 4P3.)



#### **4P6. How do you design your work processes and activities so they contribute both to organizational productivity and employee satisfaction?**

UNO's culture of shared governance ensures that all UNO employees—including administrators, faculty, staff, and student workers—have the opportunity to provide input regarding policies, procedures, and other issues that affect their work processes and activities, thereby helping to ensure that such processes and activities contribute to both organizational productivity and employee satisfaction. Employees engage in key decision-making processes by serving on key committees, such as the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, the Chancellor's Council, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the Student Senate (see also 2P4).

A 2011-2012 AQIP action project focused on improving customer relations. This training program was designed to help improve relationships with our "customers" as well as with each other. It was also intended to improve employee productivity and satisfaction. In addition, UNO has several recognition and reward programs and follows recognized industry best practices.

#### **4P7. How do you ensure the ethical practices of all of your employees?**

HLC Core Component 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

HLC Core Component 2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

**University of Nebraska Board of Regents Policies**—The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska system is committed to fair and ethical practices and has established a number of policies to ensure the ethical practices of system employees (<http://nebraska.edu/docs/board/RegentPolicies.pdf>). These policies include a code of ethics for board members (Chapter 1, RP-1.1.2), policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of professional staff (Chapter 4) and students (Chapter 5), and policies governing business and financial management activities (Chapter 6).

**UNO Policies**—In alignment with board policies, UNO has established a number of policies and processes to ensure the ethical practices of all of its employees, including, for example, the following:

- UNO Code of Professional Ethics ([http://www.unomaha.edu/policies/docs/UNO\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/policies/docs/UNO_Code_of_Ethics.pdf))
- UNO Code of Fiscal Responsibilities ([http://www.unomaha.edu/policies/docs/Fiscal\\_Responsibilities.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/policies/docs/Fiscal_Responsibilities.pdf))

UNO disseminates established policies, processes, and related compliance information on the UNO website and in the employee handbook (<http://www.unomaha.edu/policies/>; <http://www.unomaha.edu/humanresources/Documents/emphandbook.pdf>), including

conflict of interest guidelines, a Confidentiality Statement for Employees with Access to University Business Systems, and information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Processes within UNO's academic and administrative units and committees are designed to operate in alignment with all stated policies. For example, UNO's Accounting Services department is responsible for recording all accounting transactions, accounts payable functions, fixed asset reporting, and the financial reporting of UNO in accordance with relevant policies. Accounting Services reviews all financial transactions for compliance with statutory requirements and generally accepted accounting principles. All university funds are deposited with and dispersed by the State of Nebraska, and Accounting Services serves as UNO's liaison with the State of Nebraska accounting system.

In addition, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) has been established to ensure the protection of all human subjects in research projects conducted by anyone on the premises of the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and UNO or conducted elsewhere by faculty, students, staff, or other representatives of the university in connection with their institutional responsibilities. All UNO personnel involved with the conduct of research involving human subjects are required to complete Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) training, and new research protocols or continuing review of ongoing projects are not approved until all key personnel have been trained and certified. Likewise, the use of vertebrate animals in research and related training at UNO is closely regulated by UNO and UNMC's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Students, faculty, staff, and other research personnel are required to complete training in the ethics of animal research, occupational health, and the safe and appropriate conduct of specific research procedures. All research and training with vertebrate animals at UNO is supported by protocols that have been reviewed and approved by the IACUC.

**4P8. How do you determine training needs? How do you align employee training with short- and long-range organizational plans, and how does it strengthen your instructional and non-instructional programs and services?**

UNO determines training needs for faculty and staff based on data collected by the units engaged in providing professional development to the campus, including the Center for Faculty Development, the office of Human Resources, Information Services, and the library. Each of these units collects customer satisfaction and use data, queries customers about their training needs, and analyzes the data to determine future professional development initiatives. In addition, UNO compiles data from faculty surveys, staff surveys, and feedback from relevant committees and groups to identify significant areas of concern that could be addressed through future professional development opportunities. For example, based on ongoing needs analysis, the Human Resources office has identified a short-term focus on providing training related to using current software upgrades. For the long term, the focus is on succession planning, developing employees for leadership and supervision, and keeping up to date with technology, including field-specific updates.

**4P9. How do you train and develop all faculty, staff, and administrators to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers with your organization? How do you reinforce this training?**

All UNO employees are offered some form of professional development on a regular basis. Examples of available training and support opportunities are summarized below.

**Center for Faculty Development**—The Center for Faculty Development provides UNO faculty opportunities for personal and professional growth through workshops, consultation, and learning communities and is responsible for FacConnect (<http://www.unomaha.edu/facdevelop/>), a portal that organizes links to campus professional development resources and events. The Center for Faculty Development also provides administrative support for the University Committee for the Advancement of Teaching, Teaching Analysis by Students, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Newspapers in Curriculum.

**Information Services**—With UNO's increasing emphasis on using educational technology, Information Services (IS) has become increasingly active in developing workshops and training sessions to facilitate the effective use of technology on campus. During the last academic year, IS offered more than 75 training sessions on a variety of technology-related topics. The current schedule may be accessed at <http://api.unomaha.edu/calendar.php>.

**Support for New Faculty**—New faculty receive training during their first three years, covering topics such as Reappointment-Promotion-Tenure, available software packages, instructor expectations, research assistance, and employee services. To encourage continued professional development beyond the first several years of university service, faculty with at least six years of university experience are also eligible for Faculty Development Fellowships (FDF), which are awarded on a competitive basis. Once awarded, each FDF recipient must spend at least one year in the employment of the university after completing the FDF and must submit a written report to his or her dean about activities undertaken during the FDF award period. This report is used in the evaluation of future requests for additional FDFs by the faculty member.

**Support for Research and Creative Activity**—Furthermore, most full-time faculty at UNO are afforded official research time within their typical workload. Such a provision allows for the continued development of research projects and allows faculty to fully utilize their academic training and expertise to contribute to their respective disciplines and to inform their teaching. Approval of research allocation time is contingent upon continued evidence of research productivity, which is determined by department chairs and deans.

**Support for Staff Development**—Most staff receive a tuition reimbursement for courses taken. In addition, staff are offered in-house training and outside professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and enable them to be considered for advancement. Training is aligned with strategic plans of the university and departments. A current example is the Customer Service Training, which includes the expectation that newly learned skills and techniques are to be put into practice, with supervisors monitoring and recognizing the successful application of these skills.

**4P10. How do you design and use your personnel evaluation system? How do you align this system with your objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services?**

HLC Core Component 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

UNO conducts annual performance evaluations of all full-time employees, including faculty. For faculty, the annual review includes a summary of activities and accomplishments in teaching, research/creative activity, and service during the previous year along with a set of goals for the upcoming year. The amount of documentation included with the annual review depends largely on the given unit's policies and expectations. Department chairs and school directors are responsible for coordinating the annual assessment of faculty members in their respective department or school, and the deans of each college are responsible for reviewing the performance of all chairpersons and directors in their respective college.

Similarly, full-time staff and administrators are evaluated annually, using either an evaluation instrument provided by Human Resources or one designed by the individual administrative unit. In all cases, the instrument is aligned with the job description and addresses eight competencies—accountability, adaptability, communications, customer service, inclusion, job knowledge/test skills, team support, and leadership. Office and service employees receive their first formal evaluation upon completion of their Initial Probationary Period, which is typically 180 days after hire. Additional performance evaluations are then due on an annual basis from the date of the first evaluation. In addition, supervisors may complete a written evaluation at any time to note specific levels of performance, either favorable or unfavorable.

**4P11. How do you design your employee recognition, reward, compensation, and benefit systems to align with your objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services?**

The annual Chancellor's Strategic Planning Awards—one given for each of UNO's three strategic goals—have been awarded to recognize units that exemplify a commitment to furthering UNO's strategic plan. Our first two strategic goals relate specifically to Category One, Helping Students Learn, and our third strategic goal, community engagement, relates directly to the other distinctive objectives outlined in Category Two. Thus, all of the Strategic Planning Awards are directly tied to those key areas represented in Categories One and Two.

UNO's Service-Learning Academy (SLA) sponsors an annual Faculty, Student and Community Partner Awards event at which it recognizes and honors selected faculty members, individual students, groups of students, and one community agency. The awards presented at this event relate directly to all three strategic goals, since they recognize activities that are student centered, enhance UNO's academic components, and engage the university with the community in a substantive way.

The Business and Finance division has implemented *Bravo!*, a visible place to post written messages about the great things UNO employees are doing to make UNO better every day. Compliments can be for any reason. <http://www.unomaha.edu/bnf/bravo.php>

In terms of compensation, merit raise clauses for faculty are generally inserted into the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) contract that is negotiated every two years. Accordingly, each academic unit on campus has developed a process for awarding merit pay to faculty based on the three areas of evaluation connected to the annual review—teaching, research and service.

For staff, the Human Resources Office continually monitors market analyses and best practices research to identify gaps and opportunities in UNO's compensation and benefits packages.

**4P12. How do you determine key issues related to the motivation of your faculty, staff, and administrators? How do you analyze these issues and select courses of action?**

Primary means of identifying key issues related to the motivation of UNO faculty, staff, and administrators include conducting faculty and staff surveys and soliciting direct feedback through the institution's shared governance structure. The faculty survey from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles (HERI Faculty Survey), for example, provides detailed information about issues affecting faculty motivation, and summarized results of the survey are shared with campus administrators and faculty, who discuss results and plan appropriate actions to address any identified problems. Action plans are determined via existing administrative structures, which include input from executive and academic administrators, the Faculty Senate, and others. Similarly, regularly conducted staff surveys provide feedback on key issues and motivation for staff, and actions are reviewed by appropriate campus constituencies, including the Staff Senate. In addition, exit interviews and focus groups are conducted periodically to assist UNO in identifying gaps and opportunities related to employees' motivation.

**4P13. How do you provide for and evaluate employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being?**

UNO provides a wide variety of services intended to support the health, safety, and well-being of its employees, including health risk assessments, counseling services, health services, safety and security programs, wellness and financial programs, retirement planning, and faculty employee-assistance programs. Most of the units providing these services have established processes for evaluating program success based on participant feedback. Also see 4P12.

**RESULTS (R)**

**4R1. What measures of valuing people do you collect and analyze regularly?**

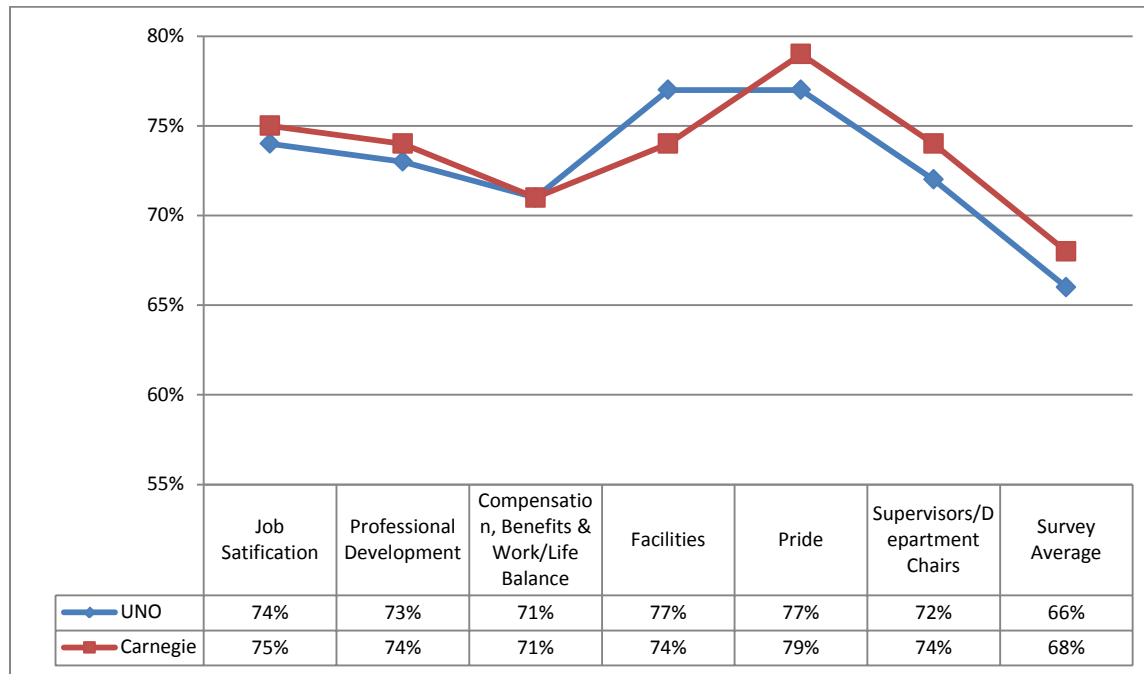
As outlined in 4P12 above, UNO conducts regular faculty and staff surveys, solicits employee feedback through its shared governance structure, and analyzes the resulting data to plan improvements. In 2010, UNO also participated in The Chronicle's Great Colleges to

Work For survey. Surveys were solicited from UNO faculty, administrators, and staff. Approximately 600 surveys were sent out, and 266 people responded, resulting in a 44% response rate. Selected results from this survey are provided below (4R2).

**4R2. What are your performance results in valuing people?**

Results from the Great Colleges to Work For 2010 survey are summarized in the table below, which shows the average percent positive—that is, the percentage of participants who responded with “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to the group of statements that compose each specific theme—for UNO as compared to the overall averages of other schools in UNO’s Carnegie classification. (At the time of the survey, UNO was in the Master’s Large category and has since been reclassified as a Doctoral institution.) As indicated, UNO’s performance results are comparable to those of other institutions in its category.

**Figure 4.1 The Chronicle’s Great Colleges to Work For Survey 2010: Percent Positive Results**



In a recent HERI Faculty Survey, UNO faculty indicated generally positive perceptions about the institution, as follows:

- 89% indicated they felt their teaching was valued by faculty in their department
- 77% reported positive overall job satisfaction
- 89% would choose UNO again if they were starting anew

**4R3. What evidence indicates the productivity and effectiveness of your faculty, staff, and administrators in helping you achieve your goals?**

UNO's achievement of gaining the Carnegie classification of "Doctoral/Research University," is a tangible sign of our commitment to Strategic Goal #2 -- Academic Excellence. The new Community Engagement Center, to be completed in 2014, is evidence of our efforts to be leader in servicing the community, region, and nation through community engagement.

Another key indicator of the productivity of UNO faculty is the number of faculty involved in professional development activities, such as Teaching Circles and Research Triangles, which are sponsored by our Center for Faculty Development. Teaching Circles provide an opportunity for faculty and staff to discuss teaching issues and concerns with their colleagues, with a focus on improving the teaching-learning process. Similarly, Research Triangles allow faculty with overlapping research agendas to pursue scholarly endeavors in a collaborative format. Both programs have seen marked growth over the last five years (see Table 4.1) and have provided multiple opportunities for faculty to contribute to the intellectual environment on campus. More information about Teaching Circles and Research Triangles can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/facdevelop/communities.php>.

**Table 4.1: Teaching Circles and Research Triangles Involvement**

<b>Year:</b>	<b>Number of Circles</b>	<b>Number of Faculty</b>
<b>Teaching Circles</b>		
2004–2005	13	92
2005–2006	15	128
2006–2007	27	234
2007–2008	36	272
2009–2010	43	298
2010–2011	32	201
2011–2012	36	255
<b>Research Triangles</b>		
2004–2005	22	73
2005–2006	17	85
2006–2007	21	83
2007–2008	25	101
2009–2010	22	94
2010–2011	26	114
2011–2012	25	118

**4R4. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Valuing People compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

UNO does not have current information on how our process of valuing people compare to peer institutions. Our application for the “Great Colleges to Work For” for 2010 included a survey, and information gathered through that effort showed our performance results for valuing people were comparable to the result of our peer institutions.



On the most recent HERI Faculty Survey, full-time undergraduate faculty were asked questions about how they feel about their institutions. In the table below, UNO’s results are summarized and compared to results from other public four-year colleges. On all three measures, UNO faculty rate the culture of valuing people more positively than faculty at other public four-year institutions.

**Table 4.2: HERI Faculty Survey Results for UNO and Peer Institutions, 2010–2011**

Survey Category/Statement	UNO	Public 4-yr Colleges
<b>Culture of valuing people—Percent of faculty who agree strongly or somewhat with the following:</b>		
Faculty here respect each other	53.0%	45.5%
Faculty are rewarded for being good teachers	21.3%	14.4%
There is respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs	40.4%	34.6%
<b>Processes related to valuing people—Percent of faculty who agree strongly or somewhat with the following:</b>		
Faculty here are committed to the welfare of this institution	94.0%	88.8%
The criteria for advancement and promotion decisions are very clear	74.3%	71.1%
<b>Productivity and effectiveness—Percent of faculty who have engaged in the following activities:</b>		
Taught an honors course	30.1%	19.4%
Taught an interdisciplinary course	41.3%	45.3%
Taught an ethnic studies course	9.8%	9.6%
Taught a women’s studies course	7.7%	5.2%
Taught a service learning course	25.5%	16.8%
Taught a course exclusively on the internet	21.3%	15.1%
Advised student groups involved in service/volunteer work	47.0%	40.8%
Collaborated with the local community in research/teaching	66.3%	45.0%
Engaged undergraduates on your research projects	48.4%	48.9%
Taught a first-year seminar	16.4%	20.8%

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **4I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Valuing People?**

UNO realizes that people are its biggest strength. In recent years, faculty and staff development initiatives have become more focused, and the training for new faculty has been expanded and extended for the first few years of service. The hiring process for new employees has been streamlined with the addition of the NEOGOV technology system and is currently being reengineered based on user input. The evaluation of faculty teaching by students also has been standardized across the campus.

The 2011-2012 AQIP Action Project focusing on improving UNO customer service was very successful. See 4P6.

### **4I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Valuing People?**

UNO's commitment to valuing people is evident in its mission, vision, and values and is fully supported by fair and ethical policies and processes. Furthermore, UNO demonstrates that it values people by encouraging all constituents to participate in key decision-making processes by serving on university-wide committees, such as the Strategic Planning Steering, Committee, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and various advisory groups, all of which play a role in selecting specific processes to improve.

**AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating** addresses how your leadership and communication processes, structures, and networks guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and communicating decisions and actions to your internal and external stakeholders.

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## Introduction

The mission and values of UNO are established within the campus strategic plan and aligned with the strategic framework of the University of Nebraska (NU) system. Leaders make decisions guided by these established documents, which are reviewed and revised on a regular basis (5P1).

Decision-making processes are focused at appropriate and varied levels. The NU Board of Regents is responsible for overall operations of NU's four campuses, with a central office, including the University President, providing administration of the system. At UNO, decisions are made at appropriate levels with high involvement from individual units and colleges. Most decisions have input from various committees that make recommendation to upper-level administrators (5P5). The campus strategic plan is guided by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, which is composed of students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community members.

Information about the UNO mission and values, the UNO strategic plan, the NU strategic framework, and related processes and procedures is communicated online at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our\\_plan.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our_plan.php) and <http://www.nebraska.edu/strategic-framework.html>. In addition, the campus makes regular reports to the Board of Regents on key quality indicators (5P2). A new venue for communicating information is the Performance Information Gateway (PING), which is a portal for accountability information, academic and department management indicators, reports, and analytics (5P6). Two additional communication venues are the annual State of the University address and Strategic Planning Forum. Various stakeholders attend these events, including students, staff, faculty, and community members.

Continued improvement of communication processes is a current area of emphasis for UNO. Focus areas include the PING portal; the development of dashboard indicators for the strategic plan sub-goals; the development, coordination, and communication of the new student enrollment management and marketing plan; website redesign; and expanding the use of social media.

## PROCESSES (P)

### 5P1. How are your organization's mission and values defined and reviewed? When and by whom?

HLC Core Component 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

HLC Core Component 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

UNO is one of four campuses in the University of Nebraska system, and the governing body is the NU Board of Regents. The board has defined the overall mission and values of the system in its Strategic Framework, which is available at <http://nebraska.edu/docs/StrategicFramework.pdf>.

UNO is committed to the strategic planning process, and the current version of the UNO Strategic Plan, including the mission, is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/>. The contents of this plan are reviewed annually and revisions are planned as needed. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee is composed of representatives from community, students, faculty, staff, and administration, and the annual strategic planning forum is a daylong event that usually has more than 120 participants, including students, faculty, staff, community members, and administrators. See 5P2 for more detail.

Policies, procedures, and guidelines are expected to align with the mission and values of the institution. UNO's administrative structure, although decentralized, is designed to allow for multiple voices in the decision-making process.

### 5P2. How do your leaders set directions in alignment with your mission, vision, values, and commitment to high performance?

HLC Core Component 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations. See also 5P1.

HLC Core Component 2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

HLC Core Component 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

Quite simply, UNO's comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process and the manner in which it is integrated within all levels of the institutional culture is predicated on aligning our institutional activities with the Strategic Plan and the NU Strategic Framework. Thus, all significant campus initiatives are expected to revolve around at least one of the following three overarching strategic goals:

- Goal 1: UNO will be recognized as a student-centered metropolitan university.
- Goal 2: UNO will be recognized for its academic excellence as a metropolitan university.
- Goal 3: UNO will be recognized for its outstanding engagement with the urban, regional, national, and global communities.

The efforts of the entire NU system are centered around the Board of Regents' Strategic Framework, which is intended to guide university-wide and campus planning to help build and sustain the state in a way that offers its citizens educational and economic opportunity and a high quality of life. The framework consists of six overarching goals, which include the following:

1. The University of Nebraska will provide the opportunity for Nebraskans to enjoy a better life through access to high quality, affordable undergraduate, graduate, and professional education.
2. The University of Nebraska will build and sustain undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of high quality with an emphasis on excellent teaching.
3. The University of Nebraska will play a critical role in building a talented, competitive workforce and knowledge-based economy in Nebraska in partnership with the state, private sector, and other educational institutions.
4. The University of Nebraska will pursue excellence and regional, national, and international competitiveness in research and scholarly activity, as well as their application, focusing on areas of strategic importance and opportunity.
5. The University of Nebraska will serve the entire state through strategic and effective engagement and coordination with citizens, businesses, agriculture, other educational institutions, and rural and urban communities and regions.
6. The University of Nebraska will be cost effective and accountable to the citizens of the state.

In accordance with this framework, each campus has established a set of quality indicators that provide a means to evaluate achievement and momentum related to many of these objectives. UNO regularly reports on the following list of indicators:

#### Accreditation and the Student Experience

- Administrative Site Freshman Average ACT
- Admissions Criteria Met by Freshman
- Age Group and Gender
- Average Age of Graduate Students
- Average Age of Undergraduate Students
- Compare All Faculty with Growth of Minority and Women Faculty
- Delivery Site Freshman Average ACT
- Diversity of Graduate Minority Student Enrollment
- Diversity of Graduate Minority Student Enrollment %
- Diversity of Undergraduate Minority Student Enrollment

- Diversity of Undergraduate Minority Student Enrollment %
- Enrollment History Administrative Site
- Enrollment History Delivery Site
- Faculty Engagement in the Community
- Faculty Willingness to Interact with Students
- Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates
- Freshman Average High School G.P.A.
- Freshman High School Ranking
- Full-Time and Part-Time Graduate Trends
- Full-Time and Part-Time Undergraduate Trends
- Full-Time Faculty by College and Ethnicity
- Full-Time Faculty by College and Gender
- Full-Time Minority and Female Faculty History

#### General Education Outcomes

- Graduate School Rankings
- Impact of a College Education
- Impact of International Students
- Impact of Student Service Learning, Internships and Service
- International Students
- National Rankings
- National Recognition for Community Engagement
- Opportunities for Active Learning – Community Partnerships
- Opportunities for Active Learning – Internships for Credit
- Opportunities for Active Learning – Service Learning
- Participation in Teaching Circles and Research Triangles
- President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll
- Retention of Minority Freshman
- Six-Year Graduate Rates and Trend
- Sponsored Grants and Contracts
- Student Ethnicity Compared to Omaha Metro Ethnic Distribution
- Student Involvement as Evidenced by Contact with Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty
- Student-Peer Interaction

- Ten-Year Graduate Rate Trends
- Total on Campus Enrollment by State of Origin

Likewise, UNO's strategic planning efforts are conducted with the NU's Strategic Framework in mind, and all substantive campus initiatives are expected to clearly align with that framework.

The Board of Regents of the NU system consists of eight voting members elected by district for six-year terms and four non-voting student Regents, one from each campus, who serve during their tenure as student body president. The board supervises the general operations of the university and the control and direction of all expenditures. The board also includes a corporation secretary who manages all records, including agendas, minutes, notices, policies, and bylaws. Those documents can be accessed at <http://www.nebraska.edu/board.html>. The board meets regularly, primarily in Lincoln but also in Omaha and greater Nebraska.

### **5P3. How do these directions take into account the needs and expectations of current and potential students and key stakeholder groups?**

HLC Core Component 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly. Also see 5P8.

The broad-based representation of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and participation in annual strategic planning events provide students and other stakeholder groups with a voice in the strategic planning process. In addition, UNO is currently finalizing a new student enrollment management plan that is designed to better meet these needs. See also 3P3.

### **5P4. How do your leaders guide your organization in seeking future opportunities while enhancing a strong focus on students and learning?**

Because of our commitment as a metropolitan university, all of our senior leaders on campus seek to facilitate the building of relationships with the external community in an effort to enhance the learning environment. Most notably, UNO has been very active recently in acquiring resources and property and cultivating support that will positively affect student learning on campus, as represented by the funding of over \$200 million in new and renovated facilities over the past four years. Recent examples include the following donor-funded building projects: 1) the construction of the College of Business Administration's Mammel Hall, 2) the complete renovation and expansion of the College of Public Administration and Community Service's Building, and 3) the complete renovation and expansion of the College of Education's Roskens Hall.

Other recent construction projects have included new instructional and office facilities, student parking, and campus recreation. In addition, UNO has acquired over 74 acres of land for development in an area in close proximity to its two current campuses, which will be utilized primarily for athletic and recreation facilities, community outreach programs, and additional student housing and parking. This project is being completed in conjunction with a private development that will feature an eclectic mix of shops, offices,

and private housing units. This private initiative is expected to unite this new campus location with UNO's other two, offering those residing on and commuting to all three locations with increased access to entertainment, shopping, and services.

UNO has made several efforts to further enhance its effectiveness and meet the needs of our students. These include setting the following five campus priorities—Doctoral/Graduate Research, Early Childhood/Child Welfare, Global Engagement, Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM), and Sustainability. A summary of these priorities is available at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/documents/campus\\_priorities\\_022012.pdf](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/documents/campus_priorities_022012.pdf). In addition, the campus has several student learning communities that are housed in one building. See 1P10.

**5P5. How do you make decisions in your organization? How do you use teams, task forces, groups, or committees to recommend or make decisions, and to carry them out?**

HLC Core Component 5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

The entire University of Nebraska system, including UNO, is governed by an elected Board of Regents with a system president responsible for the overall operations of NU's four campuses. The regents meet nearly every month and are elected from each of eight districts across the state. The student body presidents of the four campuses also serve in an ex-officio capacity on the board. See 5P2.

Each of NU's four campuses is guided by its own chancellor, who reports directly to the system president. At UNO, the chancellor is responsible for all academic and non-academic campus operations. UNO currently employs two vice chancellors—the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (SVCASA)—both of whom report directly to the chancellor and are responsible for all activities within their specific domains. UNO has identified the SVCASA as the senior administrator on campus reporting directly to the chancellor primarily because the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, and the various units reporting to the office, are responsible for the vast majority of UNO's operating budget.

UNO also regularly convenes both the Chancellor's Cabinet, composed of senior campus administrators, and the Chancellor's Council, composed of a larger group with many different constituencies represented, as mechanisms for communicating and gathering feedback. Related to academic matters, although approval at the campus level and, occasionally, approval at the system level is required, UNO has historically been a relatively decentralized campus with individual colleges initiating and directing many of the affairs in this area. Subsequently, UNO employs two active committees, as follows, composed of the deans of each college and other relevant administrators that offer insight into and feedback on many of the key decisions affecting the campus:



- **Deans' Forum** (monthly)—Composed of all of the academic deans, the dean of the library, the dean of graduate studies, the dean of international studies, the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, and a selected group of senior administrators within the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, including the accreditation liaison officer.
- **Academic Deans' Council** (monthly)—Composed of all of the academic deans, the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, and a selected group of senior administrators within the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

In addition, along with typical unit- and college-level committees, UNO employs a wide variety of campus-wide groups with many areas of oversight. First among these is the Faculty Senate (<http://www.unomaha.edu/facsen/>), which is involved in virtually all functions of the campus. The list of current Faculty Senate standing committees can be accessed at <http://www.unomaha.edu/facsen/senators/chart.php>. Also see 2P4.

When appropriate, many of the other campus-wide committees also include faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community partners. Following is a partial list of these campus-wide groups:

- Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee
- ADROCA Committee (Award for Distinguished Research or Creative Activity)
- Alumni Association, Board of Directors
- (APC) Academic Planning Council
- Articulation Task Force, UNO/UNMC/MCC
- Athletics, University Committee on
- Campus Safety Committee
- Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Inclusiveness and Diversity
- Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women
- Educational Policy and Advisory Committee (EPAC)
- Excellence in Teaching Award Committee, College
- Excellence in Teaching, University Committee on
- Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate
- Facilities Planning, University Committee on
- Faculty Grievance Committee
- Graduate Council
- Honors and Awards, University Committee on
- Judicial Committee
- Library and Learning Resources Committee
- (ORCA) Outstanding Research and Creative Arts Award Committee

- (OTICA) Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creative Activity Award Selection Committee
- Parking Advisory Committee
- Professional Conduct Committee
- Professorship Committee (Kayser and Isaccson Professorships)
- Staff Advisory Council (SAC)
- Strategic Planning Steering Committee
- Student Activities Budget Committee
- Student Affairs Committee
- Student Government
- Student Publications Committee
- Technology Resources and Services Committee
- (UCAT) University Comm. for the Advancement of Teaching,
- (UCRCA) University Committee on Research and Creative Activity
- UNO Distance Education Advisory Committee
- University-Wide Fringe Benefits Committee
- UNO Spirit Committee
- Wellness Stampede Advisory Committee

**5P6. How do you use data, information, and your own performance results in your decision-making processes?**

HLC Core Component 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

UNO is fortunate to have an active Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) that collects, disseminates, and maintains important data elements about virtually all aspects of campus operations. Significant items, such as academic department indicators and peer-comparison instructional costs from the Delaware Study, are reviewed at least annually by department chairs, deans, and other relevant administrators in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. Key data elements that are reviewed include the following:

1. History (Summary)—A nine-year summary of SCH, faculty FTE, majors, and degrees by department
2. Reports—Academic department indicators
3. Interdisciplinary Programs—Special reports of interdisciplinary majors and degrees
4. Service Courses List—Standing list of service courses taught by each college\department
5. List of Majors by Student Name—The list of majors by name in the college and department of the student’s major; this list represents the count of majors as of Day 6 census in the fall terms and ties to the total count of majors reported in the Academic Department Audit Indicators.

6. List of Degrees by Student Name—The list of students receiving degrees in the August, December, May timeframe as reported in the Academic Department Audit Indicators
7. Student Majors, History by Department—A ten-year count of students by major and degree
8. Degrees Awarded, History by Department—A ten-year count of degrees awarded by major and degree

Other summary reports are distributed regularly to relevant administrators related to items such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the UCLA HERI Faculty Survey. In addition, OIE maintains a secure website that allows for access to a variety of data by relevant university personnel. Much of these data can be disaggregated down to the unit level, which provides opportunities for supervisors to examine the effectiveness of their areas.

Finally, OIE, in conjunction with our Strategic Planning Steering Committee, maintains the UNO Performance Information Gateway (PING) as the portal for accountability information, academic and department management indicators, reports, and analytics that support data-driven decision-making across our campus (<https://www.unomaha.edu/infogateway/>).

#### **5P7. How does communication occur between and among the levels and units of your organization?**

Related to communication, UNO's most direct means of disseminating information is through a daily electronic publication, *eNotes*, which is the primary news source for the campus community. In addition, annual Strategic Planning Forums provide the opportunity for a more detailed presentation on key campus initiatives. Information about the 2012 Strategic Planning Forum, including many of the PowerPoint presentations shared at the event, can be found at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/spring\\_2012.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/spring_2012.php). Annually in October, the chancellor reports the status of the campus in his State of the University address. In addition, each college has a general faculty meeting at least twice annually, and many colleges send out newsletters.

As a campus with a commitment to shared governance, UNO has historically developed mechanisms for communicating recommendations and decisions within the institution. The list of active committees and groups referenced in 5P5 provides some evidence of this effect. However, as with any complex organization that is relatively decentralized, UNO has continually tried to improve methods to ensure that all relevant groups and individuals receive adequate consideration for all decisions and that communication is effectively coordinated across the campus.

#### **5P8. How do your leaders communicate a shared mission, vision, and values that deepen and reinforce the characteristics of high performance organizations?**

HLC Core Component 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

The university mission, vision, and values (posted publicly at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our\\_plan.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our_plan.php)) are the overarching umbrella for making institutional decisions. While virtually every substantive campus activity coordinates with the UNO Strategic

Plan, which is regularly communicated to multiple audiences, on a more practical basis, the process of evaluating all faculty, staff, and administrators annually ensures the alignment of institutional goals and objectives with individual goals and objectives. Along with a review of the previous year's performance, annual evaluations typically include a section for each employee to articulate their goals and objectives for the subsequent year, with supervisors retaining the ability to offer feedback on the goals and objectives listed. Thus, employees that have not performed in a manner that aligns with institutional expectations, or who have set goals and objectives that do not align appropriately, can be notified of this discrepancy and allowed to correct it.

**5P9. How are leadership abilities encouraged, developed, and strengthened among your faculty, staff, and administrators? How do you communicate and share leadership knowledge, skills, and best practices throughout your organization?**

HLC Core Component 5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission. Also see 5P5.

Although many of UNO's activities in this area are informal, several more formalized mechanisms for developing internal leadership have been organized recently on campus. For example, UNO has held a Leadership Institute every other year over the past several years that has involved approximately sixty faculty, staff, and administrators. These institutes have provided opportunities for leadership development through multiple workshops and yearlong programs that connect participants with mentors.

UNO's Center for Faculty Development (CFD), which provides opportunities for personal and professional growth through workshops and consultation, regularly addresses issues related to leadership development. In addition, the campus has a long tradition of cultivating leaders internally through administrative fellowship programs. These programs typically involve a faculty member serving in a leadership capacity for a semester or year.

For each of the past 15 years, UNO has funded a faculty or staff candidate to Leadership Omaha, a program of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. This program is designed to develop effective community leaders who will strengthen and transform the community.

**5P10. How do your leaders and board members ensure that your organization maintains and preserves its mission, vision, values, and commitment to high performance during leadership succession? How do you develop and implement your leadership succession plans?**

UNO does not currently support a formalized leadership succession plan, though informal processes of preparing individuals for leadership positions have worked relatively well, primarily because UNO is somewhat decentralized and is an institution that believes in shared governance. Within the last two years, UNO has had an interim Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs,

as well as other interim leadership positions. Despite this instability, the institution has moved forward on many important initiatives and has filled all open positions with permanent selections.

**RESULTS (R)**

**5R1. What performance measures of Leading and Communicating do you collect and analyze regularly?**

UNO regularly collects and analyzes data through participation in UCLA’s HERI Faculty Survey. Many of the questions in the survey deal, at least tangentially, with institutional leadership and direction. In addition, UNO also sponsors a local staff survey that includes several questions dealing with leading and communicating.

Each chairperson, director, dean, and other administrators undergo an annual review process that includes surveys of faculty and staff. In addition, a comprehensive review of deans is conducted every five years.

**5R2. What are your results for leading and communicating processes and systems?**

The most relevant results from the 2010–2011 UCLA HERI Faculty Survey indicated the following:

- 55.2% of faculty believe they are sufficiently involved in campus decision making
- Only 14.4% of faculty believe they were at odds with the administration

**5R3. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Leading and Communicating compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

Selected results from the 2010–2011 HERI Faculty Survey reflect the relatively effective components of UNO’s campus leadership processes as compared to peer institutions.

**Table 5.1: HERI Faculty Survey Selected Results for UNO and Peer Institutions, 2010–2011**

Survey Statement	UNO	Peer Group #1	Peer Group #2
<b>Percentage of faculty who:</b>			
Believed they were sufficiently involved in campus decision-making	55.2	54.4	60.3
Felt faculty on their campus were typically at odds with campus administration	14.4	21.3	22.5

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **5I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Leading and Communicating?**

The processes in this area have been long-standing, and only small revisions have been made in the past four years. Communications are constantly being improved, with a more effective web presence and increased use of social media and cell phone technology. The evolving Performance **IN**formation **G**ateway portal also improves communication to all administrative and academic units and other stakeholders. The newly formed Enrollment Management and Marketing Office will bring systematic improvement to both leading and communication related to UNO's ongoing growth.

### **5I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Leading and Communicating?**

The culture of shared governance and multiple decision-making processes and committees provides for effective leadership and communication back to the represented entities. Leadership comes from many individuals at many different levels.

**AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations** *addresses the institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.*

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## INTRODUCTION

UNO designs and delivers institutional support services that respond to specific needs of the university's various stakeholder groups, creating an environment that supports student learning. The basic administrative structure—led by the UNO chancellor, Senior Vice for Academic and Student Affairs, and Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance under the policy setting direction of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska system—has been in place for over a decade and provides excellent support for institutional operations. Administrative teams and advisory groups consisting of students, faculty, and staff meet regularly to facilitate communication and decision making related to institutional operations and related support services.

The university is continuously making improvements in its support structure to better meet the needs of its various stakeholders, especially students. Earlier this year, for example, the Student Affairs division was reorganized. The offices of Admissions, Registration and Records, Financial Aid, Recruitment, and Undergraduate Admissions became units of the newly formed Enrollment Management and Marketing (EMM) division, which reports to the Associate Vice Chancellor for EMM. This change was recommended by Noel-Levitz, the consulting group UNO hired to assist in the creation of a strategic enrollment marketing plan. The remaining offices in Student Affairs—Housing, Counseling/University Division, Services to Students with Disabilities, Career Services, Judicial Affairs, Health Services, Campus Recreation, Student Organizations and Leadership Programs, Testing, Multicultural Affairs, and Veterans Services—continue to report to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. This reorganization is in the early stages of implementation, and outcomes of this change will be reported in the 2016 systems portfolio.

## **PROCESSES (P)**

### **6P1. How do you identify the support service needs of your students and other key stakeholder groups (e.g., oversight board, alumni, etc.)?**

Each of the institution's key operational support functions has one individual clearly identified as the responsible supervisory authority for that function, and this reporting structure helps ensure that all information relevant to a particular support area is shared with the appropriate supervisors. Thus, repeated questions or concerns raised by students as part of the institution's normal operational processes are addressed promptly. An example of this structure is the Information Services Unit, which has students serving on their advisory committee, has scheduled meetings with Student Government, and uses Help Desk request information, all to better identify student needs. In addition, UNO conducts annual student surveys to gather data about students' experiences. The results of these surveys are then disseminated widely to the appropriate individuals responsible for specific areas.

The UNO alumni association has a board of directors that meets quarterly. In addition, the board has an executive committee that meets monthly and other subcommittees that meet on a regular basis. These committees help determine the support service needs of alumni based on feedback solicited from alumni through online forms and social media inquiries. This year, the alumni association also will be using the ACT Alumni Outcomes survey that includes questions related to work force, graduate school, and plans beyond UNO.

### **6P2. How do you identify the administrative support service needs of your faculty, staff, and administrators?**

As described in 6P1, the reporting structure for UNO's key operational support functions helps ensure that questions or concerns that arise as part of the institution's normal operational processes are addressed promptly. Individual operational units are responsible for recognizing support service needs based on input from institution-wide committees, such as those identified in 5P5, as well as college- and department-level committees, which collectively provide many opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators to raise concerns and make recommendations. The Chancellor's Cabinet approves all requests for new support services positions.

In addition to gathering feedback through its shared governance structure, UNO regularly conducts faculty and staff surveys that contain questions related to support needs and expectations, and the results from those surveys are shared widely. Lastly, regular monthly meetings of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska system and frequent communications with their representatives ensure that UNO provides the support and information necessary for informed decision making at the system level.



### **6P3. How do you design, maintain, and communicate the key support processes that contribute to everyone's physical safety and security?**

Annually, UNO performs an enterprise risk-management evaluation. This process identifies priority risks that the campus then focuses on managing, mitigating, or correcting. These priority risks are presented to and discussed with the University of Nebraska Board of Regents' Audit Committee and UNO management.

The 2012 campus risk-assessment process used the following five methods to identify and validate priority risks for the UNO campus:

- Review and follow up on risks identified in 2011
- Site assessment visit by a team from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (April 2012)
- High-level information security assessment by Dell SecureWorks
- Review and discussion by UNO leadership team and use of "Worksheet for Oversight of Systematic Risk Assessment" provided by Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and United Educators
- Identified risks from UNO Internal Audit operations

A key aspect of risk management and general safety on the UNO campus is our close working relationship with local, regional, and national law enforcement organizations, including the Omaha Police Department, the Douglas County Sheriff, Nebraska State Patrol, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. UNO personnel are members of the Homeland Security School/College Threat Information Network, which is an additional tool to monitor campus safety risks locally and nationally.

In accordance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1990, 20 U.S.C. Sec 1092, the University of Nebraska provides information relating to crime statistics and policies concerning campus security to current students, faculty, and staff. Crime statistics and policies concerning campus security are provided to applicants for enrollment or employment upon request.

UNO's Support Services Division performs regular campus fire and safety inspections, evaluating campus lighting and other aspects of the campus to seek and eliminate safety risks. In addition, the UNO Facilities Management and Planning division works diligently to ensure the physical environment—including sidewalks, stairs, landscaping, and any construction activity—is free from undue risks.

UNO has updated its Emergency Response Plan (ERP). As stated in the strategic plan, UNO will "provide a learning environment that promotes academic success." Establishing and maintaining an ERP supports this objective and the welfare of UNO students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The plan also demonstrates the institutional commitment to preserve its facilities and critical information should a disaster occur.

The purpose of UNO's ERP is to provide guidance and to assist in directing emergency management resources in the event of an emergency or crisis, with the intent of stabilizing any incident that threatens life, injury, property, disruption of operations, or the environment. The UNO ERP predetermines, to the extent possible, actions to be taken by the responsible elements of UNO and local agencies to achieve the following:

- Minimize injuries to university members or visitors
- Prevent and minimize property damage
- Preserve vital records and information
- Respond effectively to the actual occurrence of disasters
- Communicate effectively with the media
- Meet regulatory obligations
- Provide for the well-being of the Omaha community
- Provide for rapid recovery from the emergency
- Coordinate emergency plans with university departments and outside agencies
- Provide for psychological services to meet trauma needs after the emergency

UNO uses an Incident Command Organization and System (ICO) for managing incident response until command is transferred to an external emergency response agency. UNO's ICO process is formalized, with back-up personnel identified for each key role, and ICO members receive training and meet regularly.

The UNO ERP is summarized on the UNO website at <http://emergency.unomaha.edu/>, with tabs for health, weather, threat, contact, fire, pandemic, and maintenance.

Within every UNO building, in major hallways and near emergency phones, Emergency Preparedness Procedure flipcharts (Figure 6.1) are mounted on the wall. These flip charts provide information regarding what to do in the case of various possible emergencies.



Figure 6.1: Emergency Preparedness Procedure Flipchart

To communicate to the campus community regarding any situation that poses a potential safety threat, including inclement weather, UNO uses multiple channels, including the following:

- Mobile phone (as SMS text message) via the e2Campus Notification System
- Overhead audio notification system (100% of the UNO campus has speaker coverage)
- E-mail
- Social media
- UNO website
- Pop-up notices on all computers on the network
- Local news media

Day-to-day campus safety and security are monitored by the UNO Campus Security Department, which has 21 non-sworn officers. This team is supplemented with off-duty law enforcement officers on the weekends and at other times, as warranted. The Omaha Police Department often has a presence on and around the campus.

In addition, UNO has an anonymous text messaging tip system, enabling anyone to send a text message about possible criminal activity directly to Campus Security. In student housing, UNO stresses safety and provides information and workshops to the student residents regarding preventative measures and staying safe.

The Information Services Unit has implemented a IT Business Continuity Plan, which allows for campus system operations remotely and for the learning process to continue during bad weather or other incidents that inhibit students or faculty from meeting physically on campus.

**6P4. How do you manage your key student, administrative, and organizational support service processes on a day-to-day basis to ensure that they are addressing the needs you intended them to meet?**

UNO relies on two vice chancellors, who report directly to the Chancellor, to supervise virtually all aspects of institutional operations. This leadership structure includes the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. The unity of academic and student support areas within the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (OASA) provides a platform for effectively addressing most issues related to the support service needs of students and other key stakeholder groups. OASA holds weekly senior staff meetings during which information is freely shared and issues are addressed. These weekly meetings include the following individuals:

- Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Marketing
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Technology and CIO
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity
- Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Accreditation Liaison Officer
- Assistant to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Budget
- Assistant to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Personnel
- Web and Communications Coordinator

In addition, other regular interactions with groups both within OASA and outside of the office provide the opportunity to share data and other forms of information on a consistent basis. On a practical note, the offices of OASA are all located in close proximity to one another in the same office suite. This arrangement facilitates the types of periodic and often informal interactions indicative of effective communication and collaboration.

Similarly, the Office of Business and Finance holds regular weekly meetings during which information is shared and issues are addressed. Those attending these weekly meetings include:

- Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance
- Director of Facilities Management and Planning
- Director of Finance/Controller
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Milo Bail Student Center
- Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Legislative and Risk Management
- Administrative Assistant
- Director of University Relation

The one notable addition to the administrative structure listed above is UNO's Director of Athletics, who reports directly to the Chancellor.

**6P5. How do you document your support processes to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment?**

Information about UNO's support services is publicly available on the UNO website. Links to key student support services are provided at <http://www.unomaha.edu/current.php> and <http://registrar.unomaha.edu/catalogs.php>, and links to key support services for faculty and administrators are available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/facstaff.php>. An alphabetical list of links to general services, including those for students, faculty, and staff, is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/services.php>.

**RESULTS (R)**

**6R1. What measures of student, administrative, and organizational support service processes do you collect and analyze regularly?**

UNO's administrative and service units all track basic data relevant to their operations, including, for example, usage, participation, and financial data. In certain areas, such as financial aid and human resources, detailed demographic data is collected and analyzed to identify trends and help determine constituents' needs. In addition, individual units consistently organize focus groups to collect detailed information related to their functions.

The Information Technology Service Desk tracks the number of contacts, the number issues and requests resolved in the first level contact. In addition, the unit surveys the users of any contact for support or service request.

Finally, UNO regularly participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and conducts other student, faculty, and staff perception surveys that help inform institutional understanding of the support service needs of various stakeholders for decision-making purposes.

**6R2. What are your performance results for student support service processes?**

As noted in 6R1, each support unit collects data relevant to its function. For example, academic support centers and other widely used student services, such as campus recreation and food services, generate monthly headcounts that are disaggregated in appropriate ways to identify effective service opportunities. In examining the NSSE survey data and the results from locally administered surveys, UNO students indicate a relatively high satisfaction rate with areas such as the following:

- Faculty/sources
- Co-curricular activities (campus organizations, student government, intercollegiate athletics, etc.)
- Overall class size
- Campus atmosphere

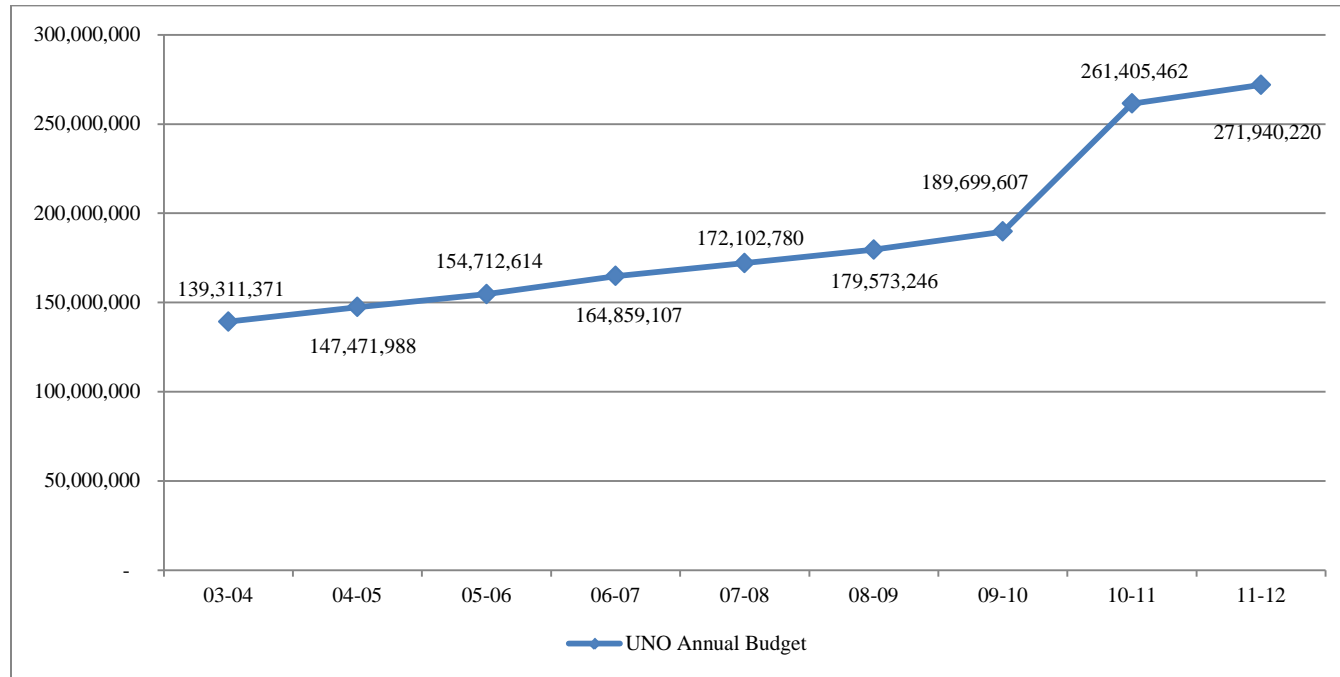
- Food court
- Student health
- Shuttle service
- Library facilities
- Recreation center
- Housing

UNO students have reported slightly lower than average satisfaction levels in a limited number of areas, including parking and advising. To address the parking issue, a new parking structure was added in 2010. The main issue identified with student advising was the varying general education requirements among colleges and departments. In spring 2010, UNO created a general education committee that defined clear and consistent general education requirements across colleges. The committee continues to meet to facilitate ongoing review, assessment, and modification of the university's general education curriculum. In addition, UNO has established an Advising Task Force to improve undergraduate advising, which has been the focus of two of UNO's recent AQIP Action Projects (see also 1P7).

### **6R3. What are your performance results for administrative support service processes?**

Two measures of success regarding UNO's operational support services are the institution's ongoing financial health and continued enrollment growth. UNO's operational budget has steadily increased over the last nine years, and overall enrollment has also continued to climb. UNO's annual budget increased from \$139 million in 2003–2004 to over \$270 million in 2011–2012, as indicated in Figure 6.2, and enrollment increased by 5% over that same period. Outside of perpetual challenges related to securing public funding for the university system as a whole, UNO sees no significant issues related to the long-term financial health and viability of the institution. Even with the hard economic times, UNO has been able to continue offering the same academic and student services without having to make any significant reductions in staff. In recent years, UNO has updated the email, registration, and billing systems and has improved other student services, such as the student ID services.

**Figure 6.2: UNO's Annual Budget**



**6R4. How do your key student, administrative, and organizational support areas use information and results to improve their services?**

While individual operational units are responsible for implementing service improvements, the process of analyzing results, determining needs, and planning improvements most often involves input from various institution-wide committees, such as those identified in 5P5, as well as college- and department-level committees, which collectively provide many opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators to participate in the decision-making process. For example, UNO supports an active student government with more than 60 members, which acts as the official voice of the student body. UNO's student government regularly communicates with UNO administrators and specific committees to offer feedback about and transmit recommendations on university activities, policies, and procedures.

A representative example of this process is found in our library facilities and services, which have undergone a radical transformation over the last several years. Following an examination of usage data, library hours of operation and staffing levels were changed to coincide with student demands. Also, before initiating a significant renovation, library officials consulted with student government and other campus constituencies to solicit input for the renovation project. These consultations resulted in new library amenities, such as group study rooms and a coffee bar/café, as well as the adoption of a new policy banning smoking from the vicinity of the library's entrance. Another example includes recent efforts to enhance the on-campus atmosphere, particularly for residential students. UNO has historically been a commuter campus and, according to various surveys, students found the on-campus atmosphere to be lacking. Recent improvements made in response to this feedback include adding more dorms on campus and creating "Midnight MoJo," a new effort focused on providing late-night student programs on campus.

**6R5. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Supporting Organizational Operations compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

Comparisons generated from the IPEDS Executive Peer Analysis Tool found at the IPEDS public website are widely used. Several comparison groups are used to evaluate how UNO compares on key IPEDS indicators, such as graduation rates, tuition rates, financial aid, funding for instruction, research, public service, student services, administrative services, and faculty salaries. Based on the IPEDS data summarized in Table 6.1 below, and the high student satisfaction rates cited previously, UNO is confident that it delivers a quality education and student experience at a lower cost than similar institutions.



**Table 6.3: Comparison of UNO to Board of Regents Peer Group (10 Institutions)**

	UNO	Peers
Six-Year Graduation Rate (2004 cohort)	45%	42%
Core Expenses per FTE enrollment, FY 2010, in the following areas:		
• Instruction	\$7,596	\$8,625
• Research	\$671	\$2,865
• Public	\$843	\$1,593
• Academic Support	\$1,239	\$2,117
• Institutional Support	\$1,142	\$1,942
• Student Services	\$638	\$1,129
• Other core expenses	\$1,178	\$1,481

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS: Spring 2010.

**IMPROVEMENT (I)**

**6I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Supporting Organizational Operations?**

The UNO campus has a well-established organizational structure for supporting institutional operations, as outlined in 6P4. Recent improvements include the formation of the Office Enrollment Management and Marketing and the establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The addition of these entities improves coordination of effective processes on campus.

Campus safety plans and procedures have been revised to reflect new requirements. The office of Information Security has improved information security awareness and operation effectiveness to protect electronic data resources.

**6I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Supporting Organizational Operations?**

With an institutional culture and organizational structure that encourages systematic input from many stakeholder groups, UNO routinely identifies needed improvements. In addition, the systematic strategic planning process has created a strong campus culture of continuous improvement that enables the UNO to consistently focus on improving processes to better meet the needs of students and other stakeholders.

**AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness** *examines how your institution collects, analyzes, distributes, and uses data, information, and knowledge to manage itself and to drive performance improvement.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In addition to its identity as an institution focused on educating students, UNO sees itself as a learning organization. Measuring effectiveness is a central process within any learning organization. Consistent with our campus leadership and decision-making culture, UNO has developed multiple processes for collecting, analyzing, distributing, and using data and information for assessing its effectiveness and making improvements.

Academic units collect and analyze information from a variety of sources to assess progress toward goals, identify needs, and plan and implement improvements. These sources include annual assessment planning; student feedback from course evaluations; annual personnel and tenure reviews of faculty; and interactions with alumni, students, and the community. To expand the amount and accessibility of information available to academic units, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is preparing academic department dashboards. Academic units also participate in regularly scheduled formal and comprehensive reviews of the overall functioning and success of their majors and degree programs (see also 1P13).

Every college maintains a strategic plan that is aligned with the three broad goals of the UNO Strategic Plan. In addition, the college strategic plans allow a focus on the unique student, disciplinary, and community issues faced by each college and its academic units. At the campus level, the broad strategic planning process outlined in section 2P2—coupled with the strategic priority setting carried out by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and the deans—provides overarching guidance for various initiatives. The campus-wide Strategic Planning Steering Committee has a data and measurement task force that is actively updating and refining indicators for tracking UNO’s progress toward the broader strategic plan goals and sub-goals. The work of this task force is one of UNO’s 2012-2013 AQIP Action Projects.

Measuring progress toward goals in these various areas is supported by several units, including the new Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). In 2012, OIE worked with UNO’s Information Services and other campus partners to launch a new portal for accessing business intelligence about UNO’s progress toward academic, student, and community goals. The portal—Performance INformation Gateway (PING)—includes a broad array of information, including the following: a set of key performance indicators, academic department indicators, enrollment management indicators, and several different reporting applications for use by academic and student management personnel.

UNO is seeking to become an institution that is more data-driven in both its goal setting and its decision making. Developing and adapting processes and the culture to better support and enhance learning is a primary focus. Broadening our measurement work; educating our students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders on using information for decision making; and making information more accessible and understandable are critical needs that we are actively addressing.

## PROCESSES (P)

### **7P1. How do you select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support your instructional and non-instructional programs and services?**

Regarding the use of information and data as they relate to AQIP Categories One, Two, and Eight and overall improvement, UNO has traditionally embraced a collaborative approach to sharing and using data. UNO's encompassing strategic planning process (described in 2P2) ensures that data is viewed from multiple perspectives and can be used to suit the needs of various campus units. A relatively new source for UNO data and information, published online by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, is the PING portal (<https://www.unomaha.edu/infogateway/>). This comprehensive and dynamic website provides information on key performance indicators, academic and department indicators, student lists, and enrollment management indicators. Further updates will include additional dashboards and reports as well as reporting on strategic planning goals and sub-goals. See also 7P2.

UNO Human Resources completes a monthly HR Dashboard that includes data such as employee totals, payroll/benefit costs, employee turnover, diversity, leave used and associated costs, employee absences, jobs posted, and applications received. On an as-needed basis, HR will compile data from SAP, which is UNO's financial, procurement, and human resources database, and from nulook, which is the University of Nebraska system's data warehouse. These data are typically used to assist campus management with understanding and making decisions related to a variety of issues, including, for example, performance, discipline, attendance, and employment trends.

### **7P2. How do you select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support your planning and improvement efforts?**

HLC Core Component 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance. Also see 7P4.

UNO has historically maintained a relatively decentralized administrative structure with the deans of each college maintaining an active role in the operations of schools and departments under their supervision. Large volumes of relevant data, such as information related to the performance indicators referenced in 7P1 (see 5P2 for a detailed list), is typically shared directly with each dean, and deans are subsequently responsible for ensuring that academic units utilize the information appropriately. The student assessment process is slightly different, with a campus-wide Assessment Committee and a Director of Assessment coordinating the collection and analysis of student assessment data and ensuring that units are closing the loop in assessing student achievement. More information about this process is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/assessment/>. Non-academic units also rely on the data and information that is available to the academic units, using it in different ways. Campus Security, for example, often relies on enrollment statistics available through UNO's Student Information System to determine parking needs and traffic flow dynamics. Likewise, our office of Facilities Management and Planning uses data from a variety of campus resources to help determine space utilization needs.

**7P3. How do you determine the needs of your departments and units related to the collection, storage, and accessibility of data and performance information?**

First, the need to be responsive to the information required by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents is a driving force behind many of our policies related to data collection, storage, and accessibility. For those departments, schools, and colleges that are professionally accredited (see <http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/tabs/accreditation/acprog.php>), additional demands for the kinds of data and information necessary to retain accreditation provide the impetus for action. Lastly, for the units that are not professionally accredited, AQIP and its emphasis on continual improvement has become a catalyst for formalizing processes and data collection across campus. UNO recognizes this as an area of ongoing development and welcomes recommendations for improvement.

**7P4. How, at the organizational level, do you analyze data and information regarding overall performance? How are these analyses shared throughout the organization?**

HLC Core Component 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance. Also see 7P2.

As mentioned above in 7P3, UNO is regularly required to report on key performance measures to the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. Therefore, these performance measures are clearly defined and continually analyzed by appropriate administrators at the system level. In addition, administrators at the campus level routinely evaluate the status of these and additional data for institutional purposes. Broad-reaching data is shared with all relevant units across campus through disseminated reports, while annual events, such as our strategic planning forums (detailed in 2P2) and the State of the University addresses by the chancellor (see 2P3), enable the campus to highlight areas of achievement and development. Also, many of the key data elements collected by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and other areas of the university are disaggregated down to the department and program level. Also see 7P1.

**7P5. How do you determine the needs and priorities for comparative data and information? What are your criteria and methods for selecting sources of comparative data and information within and outside the higher education community?**

Since UNO is part of the NU system, which is governed by a unified Board of Regents, much of the information presented to the board is, by its nature, comparative with the other NU campuses. The BOR has also identified a list of ten peer institutions that are routinely used for comparison purposes, as follows:

1. Cleveland State University
2. University of Arkansas at Little Rock
3. University of Northern Iowa
4. University of Missouri at St. Louis
5. University of Colorado at Denver
6. University of Texas at San Antonio
7. Northern Illinois University
8. Portland State University
9. Wichita State University
10. University of North Carolina at Charlotte

The Board of Regents has historically requested comparisons to this peer group in areas such as the following:

- Graduation rates
- Retention rates
- Faculty salaries
- Tuition and mandatory fees
- Faculty workload
- Survey results
- Business practices

In addition, UNO routinely constructs and participates in comparison models involving urban and metropolitan campuses and institutions that share our Carnegie classification. The sources of data for such comparisons are usually public datasets, such as IPEDS. The comparisons with urban and metropolitan institutions most often resonate with external stakeholders because these institutions are situated in urban settings similar to Omaha.

**7P6. How do you ensure department and unit analysis of data and information aligns with your organizational goals for instructional and non-instructional programs and services? How is this analysis shared?**

As outlined in 2P2, UNO employs a comprehensive strategic planning process that, in its current form, has existed for fifteen years. Regarding campus-wide goals and objectives, our Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) ensures the alignment of unit and campus activities through SPSC subcommittee initiatives and through regular communications with faculty, staff, and administrators. Every senior administrator, dean, and chair is regularly updated on the status of our strategic plan and the priorities the SPSC has identified. Likewise, virtually every college, department, and unit on campus has developed a strategic plan that aligns directly with the UNO Strategic Plan. Regular interactions with supervisors, such as deans, directors, and chairs, help ensure that data analysis and, most importantly, improvement strategies are implemented.

**7P7. How do you ensure the timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of your information system(s) and related processes?**

Central information systems managed by UNO's Information Services (IS) utilizes industry best practices for managing information systems, including, but not limited to the following:

- Data Center inventory, security, and performance monitoring standards for systems
- Automated vulnerability scanning, management, and patching standards
- Network management and security devices such as firewalls, intrusion prevention systems, and bandwidth management
- Policies related to privacy and the storage of restricted data, such as social security numbers and credit card numbers
- A contingency plan outlining the institutional response to a disaster effecting information systems including the use of off-site system backup and alternative site operations
- Partnerships with campus data stewards to ensure data and software validation

IS's effectiveness is monitored by a campus advisory group, the Technology Resource Services Committee. In addition, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Technology and CIO provides information to several administrative groups each month.

**RESULTS (R)**

**7R1. What measures of the performance and effectiveness of your system for information and knowledge management do you collect and analyze regularly?**

UNO relies on several interrelated processes to collect, manage, and share institutional information and knowledge. The performance and effectiveness of these processes are reflected in UNO's success in reaching its strategic goals, as measured by the key

performance indicators mentioned above (see 7P1; a detailed list is provided in 5P2). In addition, UNO relies on qualitative feedback collected students and other key stakeholder groups through various processes, including, for example, the following:

- Course evaluations
- Student surveys
- Staff/faculty evaluated annually from supervisors
- Performance evaluations of staff, faculty, and administrators
- Community advisory groups

**7R2. What is the evidence that your system for Measuring Effectiveness meets your organization’s needs in accomplishing its mission and goals?**

According to a recent UCLA HERI Faculty survey, less than 10% (in most cases, much less than 10%) of UNO faculty who utilize systems related to data collection express dissatisfaction with the systems. UNO’s new **Performance INformation Gateway (PING)** is providing broader and easier access to a variety of campus-wide, college, and department indicators for use in decision-making and program improvement.

Additional analytics and data mining capabilities are being developed to support campus growth and quality goals included in the 20,000 students by 2020 plan. These tools will provide information for additional specific enrollment management planning initiatives.

**7R3. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Measuring Effectiveness compare with the results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

UNO’s processes for measuring effectiveness are undergoing rapid change. Movement is in the direction of increased availability of tabular and visualization information for decision making. Our Business Intelligence leadership group has been monitoring peer campus’ efforts and we believe that although UNO is a late-comer to this are, our efforts place us in the middle of the pack out this point.

Reorganization of UNO’s business analysts to achieve better communication and collaborative work; creation of the Enrollment Management and Marketing Unit; and the establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness are all major steps toward improving our performance in this area. These actions align with the Information Service Department that has on-going quality improvement and monitoring capabilities in support of campus-wide decision-making.

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **7I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Measuring Effectiveness?**

The development and implementation of the new PING portal by the recently reorganized Office of Institutional Effectiveness is a substantial improvement in the processes related to measuring effectiveness of the university. This online portal provides information on key indicators to appropriate decision-makers, stakeholders, and the campus community.

The academic assessment process has also improved with the restructuring of the Assessment Committee, the addition of a director of assessment, and improvements in the systematic collection and analysis of student assessment data. Information about UNO's academic assessment process is available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/assessment/>.

Also see 7R2 and 7R3.

### **7I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Measuring Effectiveness?**

The campus culture of “continuous improvement” requires various decision-makers and advisory groups to have access to current data in order to establish improvement priorities. The development of PING allows UNO to provide data to a wide audience in a simple-to-use format. As continued infrastructure changes are implemented, the availability of pertinent data will remain a high priority.



**AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement** *examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans help you achieve your mission and vision.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Most of the continuous improvement processes of the university are mature and have been integrated into the culture of the campus. The strategic planning process has been effective in helping to focus the direction of the entire campus around three overarching goals. The dynamic strategic plan influences most decision-making processes, and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, which includes students, alumni, community, staff, faculty, and administration, works well together and with the chancellor. Efforts to align programs, processes, priorities, and funding with the three goals of the strategic plan are evident in the university's short- and long-term improvement strategies and related action plans (see 8P2 and 8P3).

The campus has a culture of continuous improvement. Even during the recent years of economic downturn when UNO, much like other institutions, faced difficult budgetary decisions, the campus continued to make progress and plan for future improvements.

During 2012, the Office of Institutional Research, referenced in 8P5, was reorganized into the current Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). This office is committed to not only collecting important data, but to analyzing and sharing data in new ways to help facilitate data-informed decisions. In addition, OIE is now coordinating the campus accreditation processes.

Another outcome of UNO's continuous improvement processes is the very recent establishment of the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing (EMM). Currently, EMM is providing leadership to the campus in developing a comprehensive student management and marketing plan in support of the chancellor's challenge to increase enrollment to 20,000 by 2020. This major realignment of leadership, vision, and processes has been efficient and systematic.

## **PROCESSES (P)**

### **8P1. What are your key planning processes?**

UNO believes strongly in the concept of shared governance and, because of this, employs numerous committees. These committees, both ad hoc and standing, participate in the planning of institutional priorities, strategies, and activities. The active strategic planning process described in 2P2 provides comprehensive campus input for all substantive elements of university operations. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) consistently examines the university from a variety of perspectives and offers guidance to faculty, staff, and administrators. The SPSC is also the entity responsible for modifying the strategic plan, including the revision of goals, sub-goals, and objectives.

As described in 5P5, each administrative committee, including the Chancellor's Cabinet, Chancellor's Council, Deans' Forum, and Academic Deans Council, is an integral part of the planning process and helps define initiatives in support of the strategic plan. A recent example of this is the identification of the campus priorities (Also see 8P3 and 5P4). Also, our processes are decentralized in a way that allows us to address the needs of program-specific accreditation.

In addition, along with typical unit-based academic planning, UNO regularly relies on key standing committees for institution-wide planning, such as the University Committee on Facilities Planning (UCFP), which is composed of faculty, students, senior administrators, and a key staff member. The UCFP is responsible for reviewing plans and making policy-level recommendations regarding the physical development of the campus, including space utilization, long-range planning, development of physical facilities, the campus master plan, and proposed capital construction projects. Also, the Faculty Senate's Goals and Directions Committee, which is composed entirely of faculty, regularly communicates with UNO administration and provides faculty insight on the current and future direction of the university. Lastly, entities such as UNO's Assessment Committee provide direction for the assessment of academic activities and generate an overall mission for student learning across campus.

### **8P2. How do you select short- and long-term strategies?**

The UNO Strategic Plan provides the framework for both short- and long-term strategies for the campus. In alignment with this plan, the various committees referenced in 8P1 provide input to key administrators on strategies for improvement and change. The University of Nebraska Board of Regents and the central system administration also influence the selection of strategies in key areas. The Board of Regents, for example, has indicated that they expect an annual increase in enrollment, and in alignment with that expectation, the UNO chancellor has communicated a goal of 20,000 students by the year 2020. Because UNO is part of a system that includes two other undergraduate institutions, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL) and the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), any key initiative UNO launches must be considered within the larger system. Overall, our efforts in dealing with the

demands of a rapidly changing student body while operating within a larger university system have been relatively successful, as reflected in the substantive changes referenced in 5P4.

### **8P3. How do you develop key action plans to support your organizational strategies?**

First and foremost, the UNO Strategic Plan is continuously scrutinized and evaluated for relevancy and is updated on a regular basis by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. The institution has just completed a revision of the sub-goals and objectives in all three goals of the strategic plan. Also, regular communication between the SPSC and various groups, such as the Faculty Senate, and the annual strategic planning forums allow for the sharing of information related to modifying and implementing the strategic plan. Furthermore, the key committees related to planning referenced in 5P5 issue reports that are disseminated widely among faculty, staff, administrators, and other stakeholders. An example of a recently implemented action plan is the identification of campus priorities. The Deans Forum initiated the plan, and then input was gathered from faculty, staff, and the Faculty Senate, with subsequent approval by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, the Chancellor, and the University President.

Primarily because UNO is a public institution and our constituents expect transparency, virtually all of UNO's planning reports and other related data are openly accessible via the web and in other formats. See, for example, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness page on the institutional website (<http://www.unomaha.edu/oie/>).

In addition to standing committees, UNO commissions ad hoc committees related to important improvement issues. Recently, these have included committees focused on enrollment management and marketing, graduation, and advising.

The university also uses outside resources to help develop key action plans. For example, UNO recently used the services of Noel-Levitz to help develop the Enrollment Management and Marketing Plan. Noel-Levitz is highly regarded as the nation's top enrollment management firm with a proven record of success.

### **8P4. How do you coordinate and align your planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across your organization's various levels?**

The integral nature of UNO's strategic planning process ensures the alignment of institutional strategies and action plans across campus. Generally, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, administrators, and other committees are responsible for facilitating coordination across all levels of the institution. In addition, UNO's comprehensive annual performance review process and compensation policies (described throughout Category 4) ensure that employees understand they are expected to perform in a manner that aligns with current strategies and action plans.

**8P5. How you define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets for your organizational strategies and action plans?**

UNO established an Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) in March 2012. OIE's mission is to support the educational and student service improvement efforts of campus departments, programs, and offices through collaborative work focusing on high-quality, focused institutional research; making information widely available for data-driven decision making; and accreditation support. In addition, UNO's campus-level strategic planning team maintains and continually revises a list of important quality indicators that help the institution determine its effectiveness in many areas, including defined campus priority areas. One area of development for the campus is the concept of setting performance projections. UNO has tended to identify data trends and respond to those trends appropriately, rather than focusing on performance goals. Virtually all of our performance projections originate at the University of Nebraska system level and are very broad, with minimal specificity as to how those projections should be addressed. The newly initiated enrollment management and marketing planning process includes goals for student recruitment, admissions, retention/persistence, and graduation, as well as future faculty, staff, and facility needs, while continuing our commitment of a high level of quality.

**8P6. How do you link strategy selection and action plans, taking into account levels of current resources and future needs?**

HLC Core Component 5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Academic and administrative units throughout UNO use long-range planning. The Strategic Budget Advisory Committee was reorganized in fiscal year 2012 into a sub-committee of the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure that budget issues are considered from a strategic standpoint and that budget planning is not a short-term fiscal-only reaction. Currently, UNO is updating its long-range facility master plan and has hired an outside consultant to facilitate campus-wide input and discussions. This effort is tightly linked to the campus growth strategy to ensure that the physical UNO campus in 2020 is well positioned for the larger university that is envisioned.

In terms of the operating budget, recent years have seen flat state funding for the University of Nebraska system, including UNO. Slight growth in tuition revenues has not exceeded operating-expense increases in utilities, wages, and other areas. Thus, budget reallocations have been common over the past several years. UNO leadership has taken on budget challenges to ensure that valuable dollars are invested in the institution's highest priority areas.

Comparative information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) shows that UNO falls below its peers in virtually every resource-related statistic, including core expenses per FTE. The University of Nebraska system currently generates

much of its funding through biannual requests to the state legislature, which have usually taken the form of incremental increases (previous base budget with a negotiated percentage increase each year). Because of the relative lack of state resources in recent years, UNO has developed a number of successful strategies to identify needs and allocate resources appropriately. In addition to discussions among our senior administrative team, many of our standing campus committees, such as those identified in 5P5, serve in an advisory role to UNO administrators regarding the evaluation of resource allocation.

The University Committee on Facilities Planning, for example, is responsible for making policy-level recommendations regarding UNO's physical development and determining space allocation among the various units across campus. Many of the members of this committee served on the larger, more comprehensive Facilities Planning Steering Committee, which generated our master plan for physical development. Furthermore, the University Committee on Technology Resources and Services, composed of a wide range of campus constituencies, is responsible for reviewing and recommending policies, procedures, and strategic planning affecting computing services and resources. This committee reviews the level of computing services available to students, faculty, and staff and regularly evaluates computing policies and the distribution of hardware and software across campus.

### **8P7. How do you assess and address risk in your planning processes?**

To comply with university risk management requirements, as well as to assist UNO in addressing risks on campus, the institution has conducted the following activities in fiscal 2012 to identify priority risks for the UNO campus:

- Review and follow up on risks identified in 2011
- Site assessment visit and review by a team from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- A review and discussion of campus risks by the Chancellor's Cabinet (UNO leadership)
- Noted areas of possible risk through the work of UNO's Internal Audit operations

As a result of the above efforts, eight priority risks were identified for fiscal 2013 and will be further assessed. Efforts to mitigate or eliminate the risks will be pursued, and the UNO Internal Audit Department will target these priority risks within their fiscal 2013 audit plan.

The UNO Information Services Unit follows a typical project lifecycle that includes risk analysis throughout all phases. Key risk indicators include those that prohibit project goals and success, including specific risks related to IT and data security. Projects that involve protected data, as defined in university policies such as the Restricted Data Policy, have higher risk levels, so appropriate project scope is included to reduce risk.

**8P8. How do you ensure that you will develop and nurture faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities to address changing requirements demanded by your organizational strategies and action plans?**

Because of UNO's embrace of shared governance and our reliance on advisory committees, virtually any employee that seeks to pursue a campus leadership role in some capacity has the opportunity to develop his or her skills in this area. Additionally, UNO has a strong record of offering professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators throughout the year on a variety of topics, many of which are related to our institutional strategies and action plans. See also 4P9.

**RESULTS (R)**

**8R1. What measures of the effectiveness of your planning processes and systems do you collect and analyze regularly?**

The effectiveness of UNO's planning processes and systems is evaluated in terms of the institution's success in meeting its strategic goals, as measured in part by the key performance indicators listed in 5P2. In addition, UNO relies on the feedback it receives from students, faculty, staff, administrators, and other key stakeholder groups through their participation in campus-wide committees (see 5P5), as well as on feedback collected through formal surveys, course evaluations, and performance evaluations.

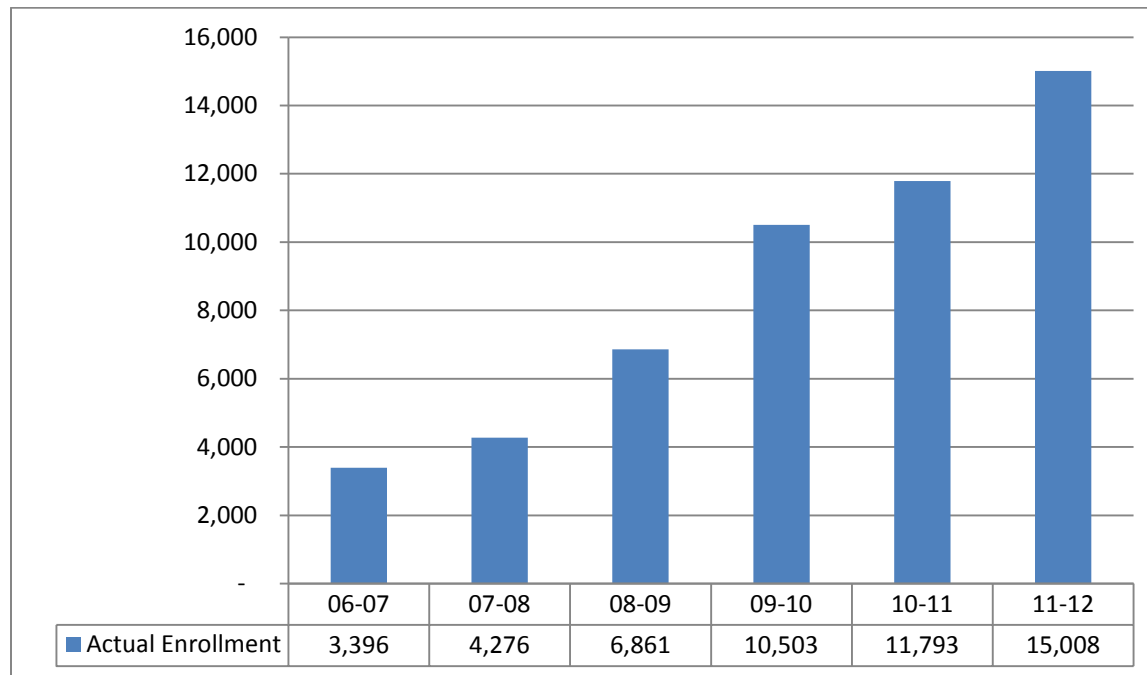
**8R2. What are your performance results for accomplishing your organizational strategies and action plans?**

Two indicators of UNO's success in accomplishing its organizational strategies include recent campus facility enhancements and an increase in distance-education course offerings, both of which reflect and support improvements in UNO's academic programs. As part of the process of academic program assessment, departments and colleges continuously improve the courses and programs they offer. To support these changes, academic units sometimes require more space or a different type of space, especially with technology advancement. Since 2008, numerous changes in facilities on campus reflect the changing needs of UNO's colleges, departments, and programs, including the following:

- Kayser Hall renovations to house various related programs that were previously segregated among multiple buildings
- Roskens Hall repurposing for the College of Education
- New parking structures to address parking issues
- Additional student housing
- Criss Library renovation and addition
- Health, Physical Education and Recreation building renovation/addition
- Mammel Hall as the new home for the College of Business Administration
- Construction of athletic facilities on Center Street campus

In addition, UNO has been effective at increasing the accessibility of its courses by embracing distance education as a mode of delivery. As indicated in Figure 8.1 below, the number of student credit hours offered through distance education has increased rapidly over the last several years as UNO has responded to improvements in technology and student demand for this type of delivery method. Distance Education enrollment has grown from 3,396 in 2006–2007 to 15,008 in 2011–2012.

**Figure 8.1: Actual Enrollment for Distance Education**



**8R3. What are your projections or targets for performance of your strategies and action plans over the next 1-3 years?**

As noted in 8P5, setting performance projections is an ongoing area of development at UNO, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is working in collaboration with university planning committees to ensure that all new initiatives, such as the new enrollment management and marketing plan, include specific performance goals. In addition, the Strategic Planning Steering

Committee has begun to revise the objectives associated with each of the strategic plan's sub-goals to establish clear performance targets. Following, for example, is one of four sub-goals under Goal 3 of the strategic plan and its associated objectives:

Sub-Goal A: UNO will expand its community connections by engaging with partners in instructionally based academic and educational activities.

- Objective 1. Each of the UNO colleges will increase the number of undergraduate and graduate courses with service learning components.
- Objective 2. UNO will establish dual enrollment course agreements and offerings with all the public school districts in the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium.
- Objective 3. UNO will expand its curriculum and transfer articulation agreements with all community colleges in Nebraska and southwestern Iowa.
- Objective 4. UNO will expect that all students complete a minimum of 20 hours of service or community engaged scholarship, such as volunteering, service learning experiences, and/or internships.
- Objective 5. UNO will, in collaboration with schools, businesses, and other community partners, increase the number of joint courses and joint continuing learning/professional development.
- Objective 6. UNO will increase its commitment to working with students, countries, and institutions around the world.

The full strategic plan is available at [http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our\\_plan.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/plan/our_plan.php).

**8R4. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Planning Continuous Improvement compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

In comparisons with peer institutions nationally, UNO generally does very well, as indicated by the examples summarized here.

**U.S. News America's Best Graduate Schools 2013 (released March 22, 2012)**—U.S. News Graduate Rankings are based upon peer data collected through surveys. The lists of program rankings encompass those programs and institutions most frequently mentioned by peers at colleges and universities nationally on the U.S. News surveys. U.S. News does not report the total number of programs nationally in any discipline. In the U.S. News best graduate school rankings for 2013, UNO's graduate programs compared favorably, as follows:

- Nine graduate programs, two schools, and one college at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) are cited in U.S. News and World Report's 2013 edition of America's Best Graduate Schools.



- UNO's ranked programs, including two top-10 rankings in the School of Public Administration (SPA), were determined by peer assessment surveys sent out nationally by U.S. News and World Report between 2008 and 2011.
- Overall, UNO's SPA ranks 33rd among 266 similar graduate-level public administration institutions. The ranking places UNO's SPA in the top 15 percent of schools nationally.
- According to its academic peers, UNO ranks sixth nationally in Information Technology Management and Public Finance and Budgeting.
- UNO ranks 11th nationally in Nonprofit Management, 14th nationally in City Management and Urban Policy, and 21st in Public Administration Management. UNO's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Grace Abbott School of Social Work, which are part of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) along with SPA, are also nationally ranked. Criminal Justice was ranked in 2009 as 17th out of 36 doctoral programs, while Social Work ranks this year at 103rd out of 206 programs.
- Outside of CPACS, the Part-time Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from UNO's College of Business Administration is included in the top third of all MBA programs in the country, ranking 98th out of 326 peer programs.
- The UNO College of Education (COE) ranks nationally for its Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) graduate program. The SLP program ranks in the top third of all speech language programs in the country, placing 73rd out of 250 peer programs.

**President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll**—UNO has been admitted to the 2012 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with distinction. UNO was one of 110 schools to receive the honor with distinction. The distinction is an indication that UNO displays a strong institutional commitment to service and has formed compelling partnerships that produce measurable results in the community. UNO has been on the Honor Roll since 2010.

#### **8R5. What is the evidence that your system for Planning Continuous Improvement is effective? How do you measure and evaluate your planning processes and activities?**

UNO fosters an inclusive culture in the area of planning and campus-wide decision making that has been very successful to this point. One indication that institutional processes in the areas of planning and continuous improvement are effective is the fact that UNO is in the midst of positive change in the physical development of campus and, likewise, is proceeding with a number of other significant academic and co-curricular initiatives that will likely enhance the student experience at UNO. The physical development of the campus is advancing rapidly and, because of this, UNO is confident that these changes will benefit student engagement and, ultimately, student learning. Also, efforts to explore a more consistent 12-month academic calendar and the increased use of distance education as a mode of academic delivery are currently paying dividends through, at the very least, a vigorous reexamination of UNO's academic and student service processes as we pursue our options in these areas.

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **8I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Planning Continuous Improvement?**

In all campus operations, UNO strives for continuous improvement. Formal and informal policies and procedures have been implemented to ensure such improvement. Recent changes include the formation of the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing and the restructuring of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. In addition, UNO has recently hired the Noel-Levitz consulting firm to help with development of the enrollment management and marketing plan.

### **8I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Planning Continuous Improvement?**

Continuous improvement is threaded into the fabric of the university. The inclusive and dynamic strategic planning process that has been in place for fifteen years identifies the campus mission, vision, values, and three strategic goals. In addition, the institution's administrative structure is coordinated and allows input from many and various stakeholders to set appropriate targets for the future. Regularly scheduled administrative communications support continuous progress toward campus goals.

**AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships** *examines your institution's relationships—current and potential—to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission.*

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## INTRODUCTION

UNO strives to be a metropolitan university of distinction, and major characteristics of a metropolitan university include collaboration and connections with stakeholders in the community. UNO is continually improving and expanding relationships important to the university and the greater Omaha metropolitan area, and UNO's collaboration strategies are mature and integrated into the culture of the institution.

Examples of UNO's community engagement efforts include the university's 24-year formal connections with area P-12 school districts represented by the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC), one of the longest running university-school partnerships in the country. In addition, UNO has a longstanding connection to the Omaha Chamber of Commerce that is important to both the business community and the university. Collaborations with regional nonprofits and governments have also been essential for the university, its students, and the community.

Internal activities of UNO administration, faculty, staff, and students also demonstrate the collaborative nature of the campus community. Two examples include the Institute for Collaboration Science, with representation from all six UNO colleges, and the formation of the Office of STEM Education, which includes administration, faculty, and staff from four UNO colleges.

Another significant indicator of UNO's commitment to building collaborative relationships is the Community Engagement Center, a \$24 million facility that is being constructed in the heart of UNO's campus. For a metropolitan university, community engagement refers to the collaboration between the university and local, regional, national, and global communities for the exchange of knowledge and resources. The new 60,000-square-foot facility will support and allow for expansion of university-community partnerships, help meet growing demands for community meeting and planning space, and extend the campus' logistical resources to its community partners. Specifically, the new facility will house the Service Learning Academy, American Humanics, the Civic Participation Project, nonprofit incubator and collaborative space, MOEC, and Building Bright Futures initiatives related to preschool to 12th-grade educational outreach and truancy abatement.

Building on UNO's strong foundation in collaboration and community engagement, plans for improvement include strengthening connections with the employers who hire UNO graduates. The university is developing an ongoing process for collecting data on employed UNO graduates and employers' requirements for future graduates.

## PROCESSES (P)

### 9P1. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the educational organizations and other organizations from which you receive your students?

Key collaborative relationships with P-12 and two-year educational institutions have been created by identifying the primary entities from which UNO receives the majority of its students and developing formalized mechanisms for sharing information and constructing mutually beneficial policies. Three focal points in this area include the following:

- **Metropolitan Area Educational Consortium (MOEC)**—MOEC is model collaboration between UNO’s College of Education, twelve metropolitan area school districts, and two educational service units.
- **Dual Enrollment**—UNO’s Dual Enrollment program is an early-entry program that allows talented high school juniors and seniors to enroll in UNO courses while still in high school. The governance structure of this program is collaborative with the participating P-12 districts, which encourages regular communication.
- **Articulation Agreements**—A variety of groups at UNO work with local and regional postsecondary institutions to articulate transfer agreements.

UNO is currently an institutional member in more than twenty educational associations and community groups, ranging from the American Association of Colleges and Universities to the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. All memberships and participation in the activities of external groups by the university are reviewed annually before renewing commitments. As a metropolitan institution, UNO has placed a particular emphasis on participating in groups and organizations that enhance the institutional mission in the area of community engagement. Therefore, UNO has made a concerted effort to participate fully in groups such as the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), which often focuses on issues related to collaborative relationships between institutions and the community. UNO’s Chancellor Christensen is the past president of this sixty-eight member organization, and UNO will be the host site for the 2015 CUMU International Conference.

Community engagement is the theme of Goal 3 of UNO’s Strategic Plan, and a very visible product of this commitment is the upcoming construction of the UNO Community Engagement Center, which will be in the center of the Dodge Street campus (<http://www.unomaha.edu/facilities/architecture/Current/CEC.php>). Additionally, UNO’s emphasis on service learning enhances our ability to build effective relationships with community partners (<http://www.unomaha.edu/servicelearning/>).

Finally, as UNO has become more cognizant of its role as an agent of change in the Omaha area, the university has begun to participate more fully in larger initiatives that relate to the overall intellectual, cultural, and economic development of the community. For examples, UNO has a strong presence in a recently founded local organization, Building Bright Futures, which was created as a

public/private partnership intent on supporting low-income metropolitan area residents from birth through postsecondary education (<http://buildingbrightfutures.net/>).

**9P2. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the educational organizations and employers that depend on the supply of your students and graduates that meet those organizations' requirements?**

Our primary collaborations in this area include a strong relationship with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), which is part of the NU system and is a logical partner in the area for outgoing student transfers. In addition, UNO maintains several formal and informal relationships with employers in the area that hire many of our graduates. An example of this commitment is the inclusion of an Omaha Chamber of Commerce executive on the UNO Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Along with unit- or program-level relationships with employers that are typical in a number of academic disciplines, UNO's Office of Career Exploration and Outreach maintains communication with dozens of local employers and routinely collects survey data from them regarding the preparedness and performance of UNO graduates. Furthermore, most of our program reviews, which are required for every undergraduate degree program at UNO, include community and employer sessions during which the performance of our graduates following their transition into the work force is a point of discussion.

**9P3. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the organizations that provide services to your students?**

The process of creating relationships with service organizations in the Omaha area generally begins in one of two ways—the university either seeks out organizations for specific services and materials or responds to calls from organizations seeking to do business with the university. Once relationships are created, the university generally will get multiple quotes and samples from the various organizations to see which ones best fit our needs. Thus, prioritizing those relationships depends on quality of services and materials as well as costs, which must fit the institutional budget. If the university receives consistent quality service and products from one organization, it will continue to build a mutually beneficial relationship with the organization.

**9P4. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the organizations that supply materials and services to your organization?**

University-wide or by campus, the institution adds major vendors using a bidding process. The university is working with major suppliers to add their catalogs to the university's eSHOP purchasing site, which started live in April 2012. See also 9P3.

**9P5. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the education associations, external agencies, consortia partners, and the general community with whom you interact?**

UNO's key collaborative relationships for academic programs fall into one of the following two categories, which help to ensure that the varying needs of all involved entities are being met:

- Consortium relationships, in which UNO and one or more other parties are involved in a collaborative program with a joint governance structure, which ensures that multiple perspectives are considered.
- Collaborative relationships, with UNO managing some element or all of a program with regular informal and formal feedback from all entities involved in the program. Such feedback generally includes consistent forums, meetings, focus groups, and surveys to facilitate improvement strategies.

Also, please see 9P1.

**9P6. How do you ensure that your partnership relationships are meeting the varying needs of those involved?**

In addition to informal methods of collecting data from partners, UNO conducts surveys and uses advisory groups to determine the health of partnerships. Examples include surveys of our Learning Service Academy partners, internship hosts, and schools that host UNO student teachers. Examples of advisory groups include area businesses for the College of Business Administration and the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium for the College of Education.

**9P7. How do you create and build relationships between and among departments and units within your organization? How do you assure integration and communication across these relationships?**

UNO has made a commitment to collaboration, not only outside of campus, but also within the campus. Selected examples of internal collaborations that facilitate integration and communication across campus include the following:

- **Engagement Links, Research Triangles, and Teaching Circles**—These learning communities are intended to facilitate collaboration among small groups of faculty and staff who make a commitment to work together over a period of time to address questions, concerns, and topics related to community engagement, research, or teaching.
- **Institute for Collaboration Science (ICS)**—The ICS has been used effectively by various units on campus to facilitate collaboration. The ICS, for example, was employed to coordinate a key element of our general education review, which involved all of the academic units across the campus. Using specially developed software and a unique group collaboration process, the ICS was able to solicit input and discussion from a wide range of campus constituencies in a relatively short time. This process allowed for a shared understanding of our overall academic goals and cultivated a sense of group ownership in the evolution of our general education curriculum.

**Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Learning**—The recent priority areas articulated by the campus involved extensive collaboration among all Colleges and service areas of Business & Finance. For example, one of the five priority areas, STEM Learning, involves faculty from all colleges and several service units. The same is true of Sustainability, Global Engagement, and to a lesser extent, Doctoral Programs and Research and Early Childhood/Child Welfare.

## RESULTS (R)

### **9R1. What measures of building collaborative relationships, external and internal, do you collect and analyze regularly?**

Following is a representative list of the types of measures UNO regularly collects and analyzes related to collaborative relationships:

- Number of K-12 districts participating in the Metropolitan Omaha Area Educational Consortium (MOEC)
- Number of students enrolled in Dual Enrollment courses, number of K-12 districts participating, and related survey information
- Number of service learning classes and students as well as survey results from student participants
- Number of business clients serviced through the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) and the NBDC's economic impact
- Number of community citizens using the Biomechanics Laboratory
- Number of partners involved with the Nebraska University Consortium on Information Assurance (NUCIA)
- Number and amount of external grants awarded that relate to community engagement

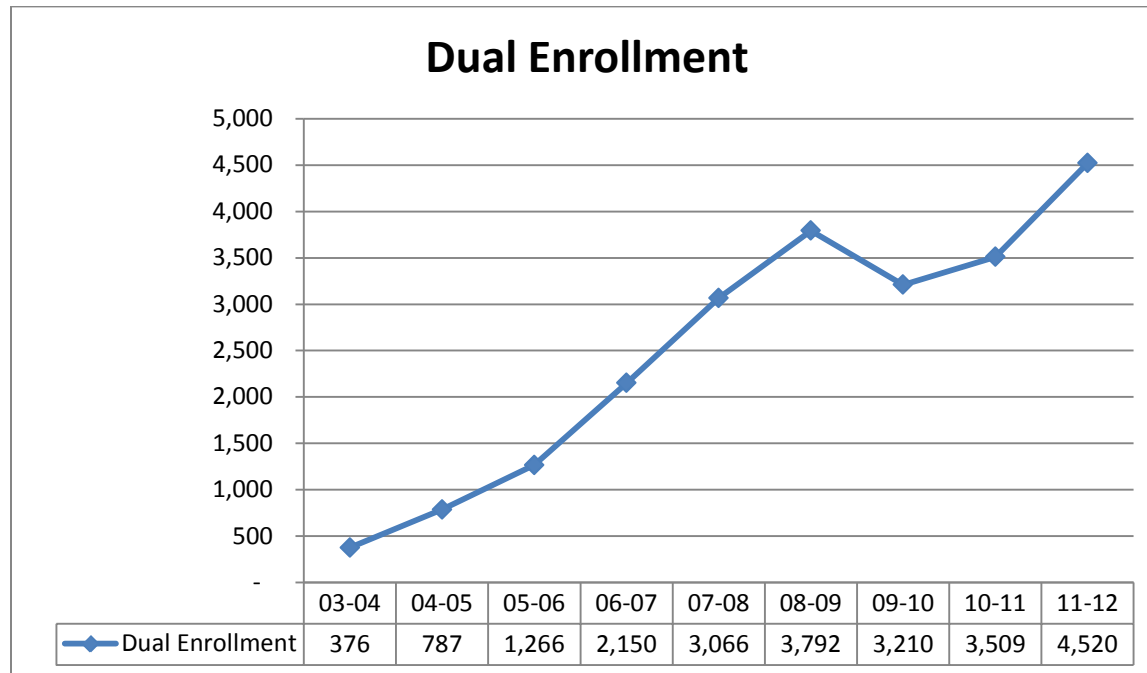
### **9R2. What are your performance results in building your key collaborative relationships, external and internal?**

Performance results are summarized below for several of UNO's key collaborative relationships.

**Metropolitan Omaha Area Educational Consortium (MOEC)**—The UNO College of Education is a longstanding member of MOEC, and the participation of area school districts has grown from 9 member school districts in 2000 to 13 member school districts in 2012.

**Dual Enrollment**—UNO has recently developed a large and successful dual enrollment program with all of the Omaha area school districts and, as a result, participation in dual enrollment courses has increased significantly in recent years (Figure 9.1). Currently, UNO's dual enrollment program has established relationships with 29 high schools and enrolls more than 4,500 students each year.

**Figure 9.1: Dual Enrollment Headcount**



In addition, surveys of Dual Enrollment students, parents, and partnering K-12 teachers indicate high satisfaction with the program. In the most recent survey cycle, on a general question relating to their overall satisfaction with Dual Enrollment, the following results were collected:

- Students—87% very positive or positive
- Parents—80% very positive or positive
- K-12 teachers—93% very positive or positive

**Service-Learning**—UNO has continuously increased the number of service-learning courses it offers—7 service learning courses were offered in 1998–1999, more than 110 were offered in 2007–2008, and more than 140 were offered in 2011–2012. Over the last several years, surveys of students involved in service-learning courses have indicated the following:



- 95% of surveyed students believed they would be able to make use of what they learned in service-learning courses in daily life
- 87% reported an enhanced sense of responsibility to serve their community
- 91% reported being more aware of community needs
- 93% indicated they had been shown effective means to be involved in community betterment efforts

In addition, more than 75 community partners have participated in focus group discussions to facilitate enhanced communication between UNO and our community partners.

**Nebraska University Consortium on Information Assurance (NUCIA)**—The University of Nebraska created the NUCIA to establish an international presence in the information assurance community. Current partners in this collaboration include the following:

- U.S. Department of Defense
- Air Force Office of Scientific Research
- National Security Agency
- National Science Foundation
- STRATCOM
- Department of Housing and Urban Development

**9R3. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Building Collaborative Relationships compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education?**

UNO is nationally recognized as a leader in building collaborative relationships. The university is classified as a Carnegie Community Engagement Campus, with designations in both Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships, and UNO's service learning efforts have been recognized and featured in *The Guide to Service Learning Universities and Colleges*.

## **IMPROVEMENT (I)**

### **9I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Building Collaborative Relationships?**

External and internal collaboration is a key component of UNO. Recent examples include the design and funding of the UNO Community Engagement Center Building, the development of five campus-wide priorities, and the expansion of the dual enrollment program.

### **9I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Building Collaborative Relationships?**

UNO's mission states that the institution "is characterized by creative community relationships that transform and improve the lives of constituents, the region, and the nation," and this concept guides day-to-day expectations and processes related to internal and external collaboration. Community engagement is the focus of Goal 3 of the UNO Strategic Plan, and the institution's inclusive, dynamic strategic planning process ensures that appropriate improvement strategies and corresponding performance objectives are defined and implemented.