



# Transition Support to the Chancellor

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA OMAHA  
FINAL REPORT**

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## A Letter from the Chancellor to the UNO Community

It has been both an honor and a pleasure getting to truly know the UNO community over the past six months. I knew when I accepted this role that UNO's contributions to Omaha and Nebraska were significant, but now I can see the potential is even greater than I could have previously imagined. Getting to know the community through this transition advisory process has been a gift. From the commitment and spirit of the people I've met to what I've learned about what I should be paying extra attention to going forward, this journey has been invaluable to me.

I would like to thank the many faculty, students, administrators, campus leaders and community members who participated in the transition and who helped me to support my transition to effectively take up my role as Chancellor. I recognize that the time commitment was significant, but I can assure you—I was carefully listening and your guidance has influenced my thinking about what we need to do together to further advance UNO's mission and to achieve our place as the pre-eminent metropolitan university in the country.

This report summarizes the work that's been accomplished these past few months. It marks the official end of the transition advisory process and the beginning of our collective work to further strengthen UNO.

I am excited about the future and how UNO will contribute to Omaha, Nebraska and beyond.

Many thanks,

Jeffrey P. Gold, MD



## Overview of the Transition Process

The transition process was established to support Jeffrey P. Gold, MD in his ability to effectively assume the role of Chancellor of University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO), while continuing his responsibilities at University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and Nebraska Medicine. The work was designed to address several questions:

1. What is the **optimal leadership and organizational structure** that would allow the Chancellor to efficiently and effectively lead two campuses?
2. What is the **optimal meeting structure** to ensure that leaders on both campuses could continue their campus-specific work, while taking advantage of new opportunities to collaborate across campuses?
3. What are the **critical issues facing UNO** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to orient the Chancellor to the campus and to shape his thinking about where to focus to further strengthen the UNO campus?

## Optimal Leadership and Organizational Structure

To address the first question, the Chancellor invited the support of CFAR, Inc., a management consulting firm that specializes in issues of organizational and cultural change, leadership, governance and strategy. The CFAR team reviewed extensive documentation related to the strategic, organizational and operational aspects of UNO and UNMC. This analysis was coupled with a series of in-depth interviews with approximately one hundred leaders at both UNO and UNMC, including faculty, administrators, community leaders, students and support staff. The results were translated into a new organizational design built on the premise of “one Chancellor’s office in two locations” and a functional structure designed to:

- ▶ Create efficiencies and eliminate redundancy in places where alignment could support shared strategy across the campuses;
- ▶ Simplify organizational structures and reporting relationships where possible;
- ▶ Establish a reasonable number of reporting relationships where possible;
- ▶ Optimize the Chancellor’s time and the time of all campus leadership, where reductions in direct reports could be counter-balanced with access via meeting structures; and
- ▶ Support UNO and UNMC leadership development to learn from one another.

This work resulted in a new organizational structure for the leadership at UNO, UNMC and across the two campuses, as well as an improved administrative structure to support the Chancellor’s ability to serve the interests and needs of both campuses. This may evolve over time, as current needs change and new needs arise.



## Optimal Meeting Structure

The work described above also influenced an in-depth assessment of the leadership meeting system employed on both campuses. A current state analysis of meetings was conducted across all aspects of academic and operational leadership, looking at the frequency, membership composition, and purpose of each meeting. Recommendations to improve the meetings system were based on several principles derived from best practices and feedback from interviews with approximately sixty UNMC and UNO leaders. These principles included:

- ▶ *Preserve campus identities and cultures*—While it would be important for leaders across both campuses to get to know each other in ways that enhance the quality of their respective relationships and promote potential collaboration, each campus is unique, with different cultures and outputs. These differences should be helpfully preserved.
- ▶ *Look for ways for each campus to learn from one another*—Each campus had examples of how they met that could helpfully inform the other. Take what works well on each campus and align it with the other to create greater consistency.
- ▶ *Reduce redundancies and overlap*—Streamline the number of sessions with overlapping groups of leaders, unless the purpose is unique or the agenda topics are distinctive.
- ▶ *Empower campus leaders*—Create opportunities for the Chancellor to not attend every leadership meeting, thereby empowering others to take the lead and/or engage with their colleagues to get work done.
- ▶ *Share agenda ownership*—Related to empowering leaders, many of the meeting agendas were “owned” by the Chancellor; which required a lot of work, some of which could be helpfully delegated to other members of the leadership teams on each campus.
- ▶ *Set expectations for preparation*—Where possible, share information in advance so that the group time can be spent on questions and dialogue, rather than presentation.
- ▶ *Incorporate a “systems” mentality*—Regular meetings should be viewed as an opportunity to create a system of activity where actions are identified, worked on, and monitored in a cycle. In many ways, it sounds obvious to do this, but without a system mentality, key issues can easily get lost, rather than managed over time.

After an intentional period of approximately six months with many combined and parallel meetings, the new meeting structure was implemented. The result was a refreshed meeting system on each campus, including opportunities for meetings that focus on cross campus collaboration and partnership, while maintaining campus specific identity.

## Critical Issues Facing UNO

The Chancellor developed a process with the goal of engaging members of the UNO community to help him understand the current state of UNO and to get a sense of opportunities for how to further strengthen the campus. This work is the focus of the rest of the report.



## UNO Transition Process: Transition Advisory Council & Transition Advisory Team

The transition advisory process was part of an overall effort for Chancellor Gold and other UNO and UNMC leadership to gain a deeper understanding of the strategic identity of UNO. The work also focused on discerning where UNO and UNMC could enhance their alignment in ways that create value for the university, its communities, and the state of Nebraska, while making the most of the leadership transition at UNO. Two groups served at the heart of the effort (See Appendix for the full list of participants.):

- ▶ *Transition Advisory Council (TAC)*—The TAC’s role in the transition effort was to identify and discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for UNO and its environment using the five defined themes of growth, brand, efficiency, culture, and outcomes across the core mission “pillars” of education, discovery, and engagement. TAC members were carefully selected for their diversity of experience, perspective and initiative. In addition, President Bounds and CAR also routinely participated.
- ▶ *Transition Advisory Team (TAT)*—The TAT’s role in the transition process was to review the preliminary output of the TAC in order to help identify any potential gaps and to give Chancellor Gold recommendations about the priorities on which to focus. This team was much larger and included a broader group of stakeholders from across the campus and the community. Indeed, all of those expressing a desire to participate in the TAT were included. While students had been included in the initial membership, it was felt that a stronger student voice was needed. This resulted in a number of additional students being invited to join the TAT after the inaugural meeting. In addition, many TAC members and CFAR also routinely participated.

## UNO Transition Process: Approach

Chancellor Gold developed a process that included a series of sequential meetings organized around five consecutive topics:

1. Growth,
2. Brand,
3. Efficiency,
4. Culture, and
5. Outcomes.

Each of these topics was viewed through three different mission lenses: Educate, Discover, and Engage. In each of the meetings, Chancellor Gold urged TAC and TAT members to:

- ▶ *Stay focused on the horizon, while advancing the work in the present.* He acknowledged that the difficulty of the transition work would vary both over time and with the need to understand and align with stakeholder perspectives of what is on the horizon.
- ▶ *Attempt to face the blatant truth,* based on Admiral James Stockdale’s paradox. Chancellor



Gold encouraged TAC and TAT members to face the blatant truth in these conversations in order to support his understanding of UNO as an institution.

- ▶ *Continue to develop relationships through this work*, as it would not only help the organizations align, but also help people increase their willingness to engage together with the challenges of balancing day to day work with the horizon, and with acknowledging the blatant truth.
- ▶ *Listen and let all voices be heard*, in order to ensure that the process would maximally benefit from the many different perspectives that members brought to the discussions.

TAC members were selected to develop presentations that explored the topics through the three lenses. Teams focused on Educate, Discover and Engage shared those presentations, and TAC members engaged in conversations about what felt on track and where gaps might exist. At the end of each session, individuals were also offered the opportunity to complete a “one-minute essay” to ensure that they could provide written personalized anonymous feedback if they felt unable to do so during the meeting itself. The results of those essays were transcribed and organized by theme, and can be found as part of the appendix of the meeting-specific follow-up memos.

Each TAC meeting consisted of an overview of the outcomes from the prior meeting, the observations by CFAR, the Chancellor’s reflections on the pillar group presentations and full group discussions and the one minute essay. The detailed results of the TAC meetings were then reviewed and discussed by the TAT. They reviewed the information, discussed it, identified gaps, and prioritized the results. Each TAT meeting consisted of an overview of the outcomes from the prior meeting, the observations by CFAR, the Chancellor’s reflections on the pillar group presentations and full group discussions and the one minute essay. Presentations were well developed, the discussions were open and focused and the plenary discussions very helpful to weave the overall pillar group presentations together. The following section summarizes their work.

## Key Findings

Based on the work completed by TAC and TAT members, the following themes were identified for each of the five focal areas. They are presented in rank order of importance.

### Themes for Growth

1. *Partnering with key organizations*—A major theme across all growth conversations was the importance of maintaining critical relationships, such as with the Omaha business community, and developing new partnerships or enhancing efforts, such as with K-12 schools as sources for the recruitment pipeline.
2. *Expanding student experiences in their field*—As students and employers look to universities to continually provide additional value for their investment in education or recruitment, respectively, student internships can differentiate UNO.



3. *Strong potential for growth*—UNO has been growing and developing its strengths, and has great potential to continue to grow in almost every way to better serve students, the community, and the state of Nebraska. Presenters mentioned opportunities in growing enrollment, full-time faculty, faculty diversity, partnerships with industry, graduate education, online education, and research portfolios.
4. *Enhance collaboration with UNMC to enable growth*—Many of the groups believe that increased collaboration with UNMC at the infrastructure, administrative and academic levels will create resources, new academic opportunities and growth.
5. *Leveraging community*—Omaha is a close-knit community with a deeply supportive philanthropic community. Making use of existing skills of administration, faculty, and staff in building relationships can make the difference in launching successful partnerships.
6. *Enhance access to UNO to enable growth*—Several groups weighed in on access issues, both in terms of causes and effects of limited access to UNO. The consensus was that addressing some critical access issues will free up the path to growth at UNO such as:
  - a. Enrollment and registration bottlenecks that hinder growth
  - b. Recruitment and retention support systems for faculty and staff
  - c. Mid- or longer-term growth potential ideas for new or expanded academic and research programs,
  - d. Building more flexibility into the UNO academic and administrative systems
  - e. Identifying additional space and qualified faculty available during times that students prefer to attend class
  - f. Targeting increased access to online and dual degree programs
7. *Identified as a metropolitan university*—UNO has taken up leadership in defining the role of the metropolitan university, both for itself and in the broader national conversation. This identity was raised several times in the presentation and discussions, along with an understanding that Omaha itself is a key part of UNO's identity and strategy as it looks to the future.
8. *Finding creative solutions to resource opportunities*—Identifying partners for educational programs or research who need UNO's expertise, students, or other resources to succeed can help launch projects and programs.
9. *Strong collaboration and dedication*—Operating with lean resources and an abundance of dedication to their mission, UNO faculty and staff see their strengths in collaborating and going the extra mile to get things done. Examples emerged in education a diverse student body, in research in targeted areas, and in marketing.
10. *Firming up the research focus*—Several presenters and others mentioned aspects of UNO's research portfolio that could be further developed and communicated. There was also potential for faculty development around research issues, such as tech transfer and working with IP, representing UNO and their fields at conferences, and other topics. In addition, it was mentioned that there needs to be a comprehensive research strategy that connects to the UNO areas of research excellence.





## Themes for Brand

1. *Build on excellence*—UNO must continue to change the narrative of the past. Examples of past UNO stereotypes included: “limited budget/resources for brand promotion”, “it’s a commuter school”, “school of last resort”, and “University of No Opportunity”. In order to correct these false stereotypes, marketing and branding must be a priority. With more research and resources, UNO has the potential to craft a strong, concise brand that continues to build on its excellence.
2. *Storytelling is incredibly powerful*—Stories should be central to conveying the UNO brand—creating awareness about the value UNO offers, diversity it brings, and work that is being done to contribute to the community and beyond. Many stories can flow from the core of UNO’s brand identity. Students, alumni and faculty should describe their experiences and success at UNO.
3. *Leverage value*—A major theme across all brand conversations was the importance of building and leveraging value as part of the brand. Value is different than “inexpensive” or the “low cost option.” Value represents quality over cost—and this is the thinking that will be critical to UNO’s brand differentiation.
4. *Diversifying the message on brand*—There is more work to be done to think about who the audience is and how UNO should appeal to them. Rather than always coming back to a single point of pride, it would be beneficial to diversify the elements and the conveyers of the brand message.
5. *Unlimited, untapped opportunity*—There are countless individuals who can serve as brand advocates and help tell the UNO story. UNO can provide these individuals with an elevator pitch and get them going to increase brand recognition. Chancellor Gold made it clear that harnessing the force of brand ambassadors is a huge and important opportunity for UNO.
6. *Getting closer to the “blatant truth”*—The quality of the conversations and questions felt like TAC members were getting to the heart of key issues on brand. Being clear with each other about the realities of your situation—no matter the topic—is critical to promote direct, respectful talk on topics that will shape the future of your institution. We look forward to continued conversations in this vein.
7. *UNO has made great strides*—It is clear that communications has made great strides shifting the public perception of the campus. While continued work to strengthen and communicate the brand is essential, the ideas about cultivating brand ambassadors has incredible potential and you can get started quickly.

## Themes for Efficiency

1. *Clear communication is crucial*—There was a strong sense that people felt the need to communicate more often and more effectively, both internally and externally. Silos exist that make communication between colleges challenging. There was also a strongly voiced need for improved communication about the prioritization of the key messages and initiatives. In terms of external communication, the communication department has done a great job of beginning to tell the UNO story, and continuing to do this will be very important.



2. *Better use of data and metrics for decision-making is needed*—Across the presentations, there was a sense that better use of data and metrics for decision-making both within and across colleges and campuses is needed. There is a desire to have clear conversations about efficiency, including identifying metrics, goals, and strategies. Along with the better use of data comes clear and effective communication that translates the data into useful information.
3. *Lean does not equal efficient*—It was clear across each of the presentations that being “lean” is not the same as being “efficient.” Focus is required to ensure that limited resources are being used to invest in clear priorities. TAC and TAT members were conscious of the fact that if things are added to UNO’s plate, that they should also take a close look at what should be removed.
4. *Strategies must be prioritized and communicated*—Further efficiency will come with a clearer sense of prioritization, and those priorities have to be communicated effectively. There is a university strategy and vision in place, but it has not yet been communicated as clearly or as consistently as it should be.
5. *Cross-collaborative culture*—Culture was raised in many of the presentations and discussions. CFAR thinks of culture as “the way we do things around here”—in other words, how people behave shapes an organization’s culture. When an organization wants to adapt its culture, it can look to places inside that are already exhibiting the “new culture” in some way. We heard at this meeting the need to infuse more collaboration into UNO’s culture, and recommend that you find the places where your institution is already collaborating in ways that you would like to see more of in the future. UNO can learn from these examples to further shape and spread collaboration practices and behaviors across UNO.
6. *Flexibility and timeliness are important*—UNO should be more flexible in administrative processes, and as such, being more efficient. It was noted that UNO is a rule-abiding institution, but that it is key to have the flexibility to deal with a \$200,000 grant and a \$5,000 grant differently, for example of an expedited pathway.
7. *Great potential exists in partnering with businesses*—A major theme across all efficiency conversations was the importance of building and leveraging partnerships within the business community. TAC members felt like there were many ways to further partner with businesses for service-based learning, faculty and staff partnerships with research and collaboration, and strengthening applied research opportunities.

## Themes for Culture

1. *Aligning culture and strategy is crucial*—There was a strong sense that formally defining the culture and explicitly linking it to strategy will accelerate UNO’s ability to thrive as an organization. Areas of strength, such as student-centeredness and engagement, are examples of values that could serve as the basis of UNO culture—to help Mavericks know what the “O” represents.
2. *Align infrastructure to support behavioral change to better align with the desired culture*—There are many different types of supports that will be able to help UNO advance behavioral change. For example, facilities and technology can catalyze engagement and support



faculty work with students in the classroom. The Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure process was also identified as an example of where the “words and the music” don’t always match up. While community service is viewed as critical to the work of the institution, faculty are often dissuaded from participating in service activities because it is not consistently valued as part of their performance assessment. Rewards structures are another example of a support, and as an institution it’s important to make sure that the words and the music go together as UNO articulates what it expects of people and how it rewards them for meeting or exceeding those expectations.

3. *Student engagement is a strength at UNO*—There was a sense that UNO’s engagement of students and student-centeredness is a big part of what makes UNO special. The commitment that faculty and staff have to students and the engagement of students with athletics, musical performances, and events were all things that TAC members felt were a particular strength of the UNO culture.
4. *Define UNO’s values and cultural assets*—There is a need to clarify UNO’s values. UNO already has many strong cultural assets to build upon, such as collaboration and engagement with students, faculty, team science, the community; curiosity; and questioning, among others. There are many practices that are already in place that can be spread, and work remains to continue to articulate the values and practices that will support the foundation of UNO’s culture.
5. *Continuing to invest in the culture of education and discovery at UNO is important*—It was acknowledged that the culture of engagement, particularly student engagement, at UNO is a strong one. However, it was also noted that the culture surrounding education and discovery could be stronger and more clearly defined.
6. *Culture has many definitions*—While there are many definitions of “culture,” CFAR thinks about culture as “the way we do things around here.” This was similar to a definition that was put forth—“the water you swim in.” The building blocks of culture are practices—a combination of the behaviors to advance (in alignment with your values) and the supports or infrastructure needed to make it as easy as possible to do those behaviors. If you want to change the culture, you need to focus on practice.
7. *Ongoing pursuit of the blatant truth*—While the conversations throughout the meeting felt candid and comprehensive, one thing in particular emerged as a blatant truth that you must face—the difference between student diversity and faculty diversity. UNO has a real opportunity as you continue to work to close that gap.
8. *Student diversity is a huge strength*—Each presentation explored the value that an increasingly diverse student body brings to UNO’s campus and the community as a whole.
9. *Strategy + Culture = Thriving Institution*—The combination of clear priorities and a strong culture will create a thriving organization. Clear priorities with an overarching theme(s) are key.



## Themes for Outcomes

1. *Better use of metrics is key*— There is strong agreement that UNO lacks a robust set of clearly communicated metrics to gauge progress and success, and the opportunity exists to put a handful of meaningful metrics into place to measure things like the impact of translational research and applied research, graduation rates, job satisfaction, and donor relationships and impact.
2. *Create alignment between priorities and resources*— Identifying priorities and then allocating the necessary resources to achieve those priorities is key. Not everything can be a priority. Difficult decisions will need to be made in order to most efficiently and effectively allocate resources.
3. *Communicating a clear, collective message is crucial*— The importance of having a consistent message so that everyone is on the same page regarding priorities is critical. If communication is clear and consistent internally at UNO, then it will allow for external communication to be stronger. Speak with one voice.
4. *Creating a virtuous cycle*— TAC and TAT members started to identify the elements of a Virtuous Cycle needed to create a thriving UNO:
  - a. Clear mission and vision—your north star (the outcome you are driving toward)
  - b. Clear strategic priorities—aligned with resources
  - c. Collective cultural assets and ways to support them (e.g., collaboration, communication, scholarship)
5. *It is worth it to continue to pursue better communication and collaboration*— There is tremendous value in strengthening communication both within UNO (across the colleges and silos) and beyond in the community (to capture the collective impact that UNO is making in the community).
6. *Brand is essential to a successful future*— The concept and importance of strengthening UNO's brand and creating greater awareness is essential.

## Reflecting on the Transition Process

Both the TAC and TAT members closed out their work by reflecting across the entire set of themes that had emerged throughout the process and shared their thoughts on the following questions.

1. *Advice to the Chancellor*— Reflecting on the Chancellor's overview and your own key takeaways from the Outcomes session, what two to three areas would you focus on if you were the Chancellor? Why?
2. *What Worked Well and Opportunities to Improve*— Consider the process of advising the Chancellor as a member of the Transition Advisory Council. What are one to two aspects of the process that worked best? If you were to launch this process again, what would you change?



3. *Continue the Work*—Should we continue this work? How can we bring this work to the UNO community/beyond?

There was significant alignment in both the TAC and TAT meetings, and the results of those conversations provided guidance to Chancellor Gold about how to move forward.

## Advice to the Chancellor

- ▶ *Declare the transition process to be complete*—Move on, empowered by the process, widely communicate the results, work with the strategic planning group(s) and build upon their relationships and lessons learned.
- ▶ *Focusing on student and alumni experiences is crucial*—There is a strong desire to ensure that students and alumni have the best possible experiences. Doing everything to make students and alumni want to be engaged is important because those relationships are critical to expanding the UNO network. Focusing on alumni and student experiences and then thoughtfully leveraging those relationships will enable success at UNO.
- ▶ *Defining priorities, aligning resources, and using metrics to measure progress against goals will be essential*—The theme about creating this virtuous cycle surfaced time and time again. Wide-spread agreement exists that UNO needs a bold, audacious goal, a concentrated list of priorities, resources aligned behind those priorities, and metrics in place that allow for success to be tracked along the way.
- ▶ *Community engagement is key*—Pursuing new partnerships and leveraging relationships in the Omaha community and beyond should be a focus going forward. Part of engaging the community successfully is speaking with one voice. Groups pointed out the importance of ensuring everyone was on the same page internally so that everyone is “rowing together” to advance community engagement.
- ▶ *Develop and communicate a research/discovery strategic plan that is based upon UNO research strengths*—This plan should be woven into all colleges, programs and centers, and reflected in hiring, facilities, philanthropic support as well as a myriad of academic and administrative decisions.

## What Worked Well and Opportunities to Improve

- ▶ *The small groups and diverse mix of perspectives worked well*—There was broad agreement that having a diverse mix of individuals discussing issues in small groups was something that worked really well throughout this process. The methodology of breaking down the topics by the three pillars of educate, discovery and engage was very effective and led to rich discussions.
- ▶ *The interplay between the TAT and the TAC was effective*- The connection between the work of the TAC and the TAT was important, minimizing duplication and overlap, yet surfacing differences, validation and focus.
- ▶ *Perhaps the timeline could have been shorter*—Some felt that the process timeline could



have been shortened as a way to help lessen the inherent anxiety that goes along with change. Participants expressed an eagerness to move forward and take next steps.

- ▶ *Involving an even broader group of people could have been beneficial*—While many diverse perspectives were present in the process, even more representation and engagement could have been useful. Creating awareness and obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders will be critical, and one way to do that is to involve as many people as possible and to be totally transparent about the process.

## Continue the Work

- ▶ *Continue this work with a smaller group*—TAC and TAT members would like to see this work continue in some form. Some suggested creating a smaller group of community leaders as an advisory board or “kitchen cabinet.” Others suggested creating smaller task forces to help take some of the ideas and work forward. There was also strong agreement that the transition process should link up with UNO’s strategic planning process.
- ▶ *Thoughtfully communicating the results of this process will be important*—The theme of communication came up in every meeting, and participants stressed the importance in their final sessions. Examples of ways to share the results of the transition process included a final report and a campus and community-wide event to present a summary of the results, as a way to share information and garner buy-in. TAC and TAT members noted the importance of clearly and concisely communicating the results of this process and articulating what UNO aspires to be.

## Observations About the Process

Chancellor Gold invited CFAR to share observations about the discussions and the process at the end of each meeting. Reflecting back on the work as a whole, a few points seem important to share.

- ▶ The relative consistency between the TAC and TAT conversations, suggests that both groups have largely centered on the importance of the issues on which Chancellor Gold should focus.
- ▶ A positive arc emerged across the cycle of meetings. In the beginning, conversations felt more embedded in the past, drawing largely on old stories related to negative stigmas. By the end of the process, discussions were more consistently focused on a bold, inspiring future for UNO as the “pre-eminent” metropolitan university.
- ▶ TAC and TAT members strongly agreed on the need to use resources in a focused and efficient way. They also made an important distinction that will contribute to future thinking about priority setting and resource allocation—lean is different than efficient. As one individual said, “We cannot reach our full potential if we are consistently under-resourced.” Establishing clear priorities with a clear rationale for the time, attention and dollars to support them will go a long way toward demonstrating the value of a UNO education.
- ▶ Tremendous potential exists to have current faculty, administrators and students share



stories to help the community “Know the O.” Many stories emerged over the course of the various meetings, and those stories serve as examples of many others that could be shared in ways that support the UNO brand.

- ▶ The potential for growth raised important questions about what kind of growth will be most desirable for UNO. Not all growth is equally valuable. To get bigger generally may not be the end goal and in fact may be detrimental to success (i.e., if growth negatively impacts quality). Future conversations about growth will helpfully inform the strategic planning work.
- ▶ Related to brand was the importance of identifying UNO’s cultural assets and values. Some of this work seemed to begin in the transition process, during which some of the elements of the culture you want to advance already started to emerge. For example, scholarship and innovation, collaboration and effective communication are all features of a UNO culture that will help the institution thrive.

While this process was not intended to be a strategy project, the results will helpfully inform future strategic planning efforts. As of the last session, it was clear that TAC and TAT members are ready for the transition process to end and for the action to begin. They believe that setting priorities, identifying metrics to measure progress against the priorities and aligning resources and leadership to achieve them will create a virtuous cycle that helps UNO advance its mission and achieve its potential.

## The Chancellor’s Reflections on the Transition Advisory Process

At the close of every TAC and TAT meeting, the Chancellor reflected on what he had heard and learned from each session. He was particularly grateful for the time and energy that TAC and TAT members spent preparing for and participating in their respective meetings, as their hard work dramatically accelerated his ability to get to know the campus and the many stakeholders that make up the Maverick community. In this section, we look at some of the broader take-aways from the process.

- ▶ *Growth*—The high priority areas that the Chancellor noted related to growth included the great potential in education, research, and engagement; staying true to the metropolitan university identity; leveraging relationships (especially the one with UNMC); enhancing and leveraging the experience of the students; working on facilities and the student environment; and diversifying resource and revenue streams.
- ▶ *Brand*—By the second meeting, the Chancellor acknowledged that both the TAC and TAT discussions were getting closer to the “blatant truth,” which is critical for strong, transparent relationships. Key take-aways included: the UNO brand equals value; there is more work to do to diversify elements of the brand message; and there are countless opportunities for individuals to serve as brand advocates to tell the UNO story. Chancellor Gold made it clear that harnessing the force of brand ambassadors is a huge and important opportunity for UNO, and invited TAC and TAT members to promote the brand, become UNO storytellers, and “live the O.”
- ▶ *Efficiency*—The Chancellor’s major take-away from the efficiency meetings was the point



that “lean does not equal efficient,” meaning that it is important to work within resource constraints, but too much constraint may negatively impact quality and innovation. The Chancellor also reflected on several other ideas, including that the more siloed UNO is, the less effective and efficient it is; flexibility and timeliness are important; bureaucracy frequently stifles efficiency; organizational and individual accountability for efficiency is unclear; enhanced use of data and metrics across the units will enhance efficiency; data needs to be communicated with context to obtain maximal benefit; and strategies must be prioritized and communicated. There is a university strategy and vision in place, but it has not yet been communicated as clearly or as consistently as it should be.

- ▶ **Culture**—It was clear from the Chancellor’s perspective that culture will play an essential role in UNO’s future. Cultural assets, such as scholarship and innovation together form a key pillar of UNO culture. Other reflections included the need to clarify and then expand upon the culture of “critical thinking”; there should always be room for multiple voices on a given issue; there are better ways to deal with and communicate the tough issues; there is a need for maintaining an open mindset and valuing flexibility; enhanced resources are needed to materially change; strong leaders are key to the culture of UNO; and there is a need to “get our own story straight” on the UNO culture. Another positive that Chancellor Gold noted was that UNO has a culture that creates real opportunities for students. Beyond providing learning and granting degrees, UNO creates career opportunities for its students and helps them get placed into jobs and assimilate into society.
- ▶ **Outcomes**—Chancellor Gold reflected on outcomes in each of the three mission areas, including:
  - **Educate**—Chancellor Gold noted that accountability in the organization is key to the outcomes process; everyone is obligated to create well informed strategic thinkers; everyone should be globally and locally aware; there needs to be thought put into what it means to be a part of the Maverick community and owning the mission; and there needs to be an effort to help the community understand the value of a UNO education—that it is much more than a degree, it is an experience that creates a capable young woman or man who should be highly sought after.
  - **Discover**—The Chancellor’s takeaways focused on the need to create a single definition of discovery so that it can be quantified and rewarded; applying the idea of translational research to social sciences and community engagement; connecting the RPT process to research and creating dashboards, ensuring the RPT is more collaborative and that recruiting language explicitly calls that out; connecting and measuring undergraduate research done by a student to their career success; leveraging UNMC infrastructure; the importance of the co-creation of knowledge; and the need to prioritize in a clear manner.
  - **Engage**—When reflecting on the discussions about Engagement, Chancellor Gold had these takeaways: it is important to quantify and capture the sharing of engagement data, not just internally, but externally as well; there is strong momentum around engagement, but not all students have experienced what it means to be truly engaged; there is work to be done to define service learning and student experimental learning; specific engagement goals need to be defined; developing an engagement scorecard is vital; and community engagement needs a way to be defined and supported.





At a broader level, the Chancellor shared a number of key words to summarize his major thoughts from the outcomes sessions. We captured these ideas in the following word cloud:



### Looking Ahead

Perhaps some of the biggest take-aways from the Transition Process were focused on creating opportunities to improve communication with all audiences; strengthening UNO’s brand identity; improving the way priorities are identified, resourced and executed; and incorporating ways to better capture and use data and key metrics. In addition, the opportunity to strengthen the access and maintain affordability is important. The Chancellor would like to explore a number of actions to incorporate the results of the transition work into the existing processes and flows of day-to-day life at UNO, including by

- ▶ *Refining the Mission*—There appears to be consensus on a mandate to refine UNO’s mission, possibly incorporating research and thinking more boldly about UNO’s role in the community and in the world.
- ▶ *Establishing a Unifying Goal*—There was a strong request to develop a stand, a declaration, “Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal” for the campus. This is something that could serve as a north star and to which every part of the campus could contribute and align.



- ▶ *Linking the Results of the Transition Process to Strategic Planning*—A “Reflection Group” will be created to partner with the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure that this important work informs UNO’s strategy.

Chancellor Gold will convene a final meeting of the TAC and TAT members on December 14 to share his reflections on what he has drawn from the transition process and to explore the potential of the ideas described here. He looks forward to continuing to hear from and partner with stakeholders from across the UNO community, as all work together to take UNO into the future.



Appendix

Transition Advisory Team and Transition Advisory Council Members

Chancellor Gold thanks those who contributed their time, energy and ideas to the Transition Process. Members of the Transition Advisory Council and the Transition Advisory Team are included in the table below:

Table with 3 columns: Name, Title, TAT or TAC Member. Lists 17 members including Randall Adkins, Hamediah Alsafwani, John Amend, Gaylene Armstrong, Dhundy "Kiran" Bastola, Bianca Bautista, Candice Batton, Melissa Berke, Bret Blackman, David Boocker, Larry Bradley, Katrina Brooks, Jason Buzzell, Rex Cammack, Omar Correa, and Michael Crawford.



<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>TAT or TAC Member</b>
Paul Davis, Ph.D.	Associate Professor, UNO Department of Biology	TAT
Doug Derrick, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor, UNO School of Interdisciplinary Informatics	TAT
Susan Eldridge, Ph.D.	Accounting Department Chair, UNO College of Business Administration	TAT
Charlotte Evans, M.A.	Director, UNO Public Safety	TAT
Janice Fink, M.S.	Business Manager, UNO College of Information Science & Technology	TAT
Anthony Flott, M.A.	Director, Alumni Communications, UNO Alumni Association	TAT
Gabbrielle Foxx	Student	TAT
James Freeman	Senior Director, Inclusion, UNO Office of Multicultural Affairs	TAT
Jeffrey French, Ph.D.	Professor and Director, UNO Neuroscience Undergraduate Program	TAT
Matthew Galardi	Senior Security Analyst, UNO Information Technology Services	TAT
John Gunning	Supervisor, Grounds/Landscaping, UNO Facilities Management and Planning	TAT
Eric Hager	Manager, UNO Bookstore	TAT
Karen Hein, Ph.D.	Director, UNO Center for Faculty Excellence	TAT
Cecil Hicks, M.B.A.	Assistant Vice Chancellor, UNO Human Resources	TAT
Jessi Hitchins, Ph.D.	Director, UNO Gender and Sexuality Resource Center	TAT
Nikitah Imani, Ph.D.	Professor and Department Chair, UNO Department of Black Studies	TAT
Jerilyn Kamm, M.A.	Director, UNO Graduate Studies	TAT
Alan Kolok, Ph.D.	Director, UNO Nebraska Watershed Network and UNMC Center for Environmental Health and Toxicology	TAT
Elizabeth Kraemer, M.P.A.	Director, Alumni Programming, UNO Alumni Association	TAT



Name	Title	TAT or TAC Member
Alexey Krasnoslobodtsev, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor, UNO Department of Physics	TAT
Melanie Krings, M.B.A.	Director, UNO Executive Master of Business Administration	TAT
Max Kurz, Ph.D.	Associate Professor, UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute	TAT
Steve Langan, M.F.A.	Program Coordinator, Seven Doctors Project	TAT
Jaci Lindburg, Ph.D.	Director, UNO Digital Learning	TAT
Cameran Logsdon, M.A.	Instructor and Assistant Director, MavForensics	TAT
Harmon Maher, Ph.D.	Professor, UNO Department of Geography	TAT
Susan Kraft Mann	Director, UNMC Strategic Planning and Budget	TAT
Caleb Moyer	Student	TAT
Sara Myers, Ph.D.	Assistant Vice Chancellor, UNO Research and Creative Activity	TAT
Jody Neathery-Castro, Ph.D.	Associate Professor and Department Chair, UNO Department of Political Science	TAT
Joyce Neujahr, M.A.L.S.	Director, Patron Services, UNO Criss Library	TAT
Dave Nielsen, M.S.	Assistant Dean, UNO College of Business Administration	TAT
Charlene Patterson, Ph.D.	Director, UNO Counseling and Psychological Services	TAT
Cathy Pettid, M.S.	Assistant Vice Chancellor, UNO Student Affairs; Director, UNO Academic Career & Development Center	TAT
Bill Pickett, M.Ed.	Director, UNO Student Involvement; Director, UNO Milo Bail Student Center	TAT
Emily Poeschl, M.B.A.	Director, Marketing and Strategic Indicatives, UNO Office of University Communications	TAT
Joseph Price, Ph.D.	Special Projects Coordinator, UNO College of Arts and Sciences; Administrative Coordinator, UNO MACCT	TAT
Sajda Qureshi, Ph.D.	Professor and Graduate Chair, UNO Information Systems and Quantitative Analysis	TAT



Name	Title	TAT or TAC Member
Vanessa Rath	UNO Parking and Transit Manager	TAT
T. Hank Robinson, Ph.D.	Director, UNO Office of Institutional Effectiveness	TAT
Jim Rogers, Ph.D.	Associate Professor and Department Chair, UNO Department of Mathematics	TAT
Charlotte Russell	Assistant to the Chancellor, UNO Office of Equity, Access and Diversity	TAT
Jill Russell, Ph.D.	Assistant to the Senior Vice Chancellor	TAT
Renat Sabirianov, Ph.D.	Department Chair and Professor, UNO Department of Physics	TAT
Luke Schnepel	Student	TAT
Janae Smith	Student	TAT
Deborah Smith-Howell, Ph.D.	Associate Vice Chancellor, UNO Academic Affairs; Dean, UNO Graduate Studies	TAT
Scott Snyder, Ph.D.	Associate Vice Chancellor, UNO Office of Research and Creative Activity; Interim Executive Director, Peter Kiewit Institute	TAT
Richard Stacy, Ed.D.	Professor, UNO Health Education	TAT
Nicholas Stergiou, Ph.D.	Assistant Dean; Director, UNO Biomechanics Research Building	TAT
Rosemary Strasser, Ph.D.	Associate Professor and Director, UNO Neuroscience & Behavior Graduate Program	TAT
Katie Sup Rezac, M.Ed.	Assistant Director, UNO Division of Continuing Studies Academic Advising	TAT
Gina Svendsen, M.A.	eCommerce Coordinator, UNO Bookstore	TAT
Peter Szto, Ph.D.	Associate Professor, UNO Grace Abbott School of Social Work	TAT
Bill Tappich, Ph.D.	Sophie and Feodora Kahn Professor of Biology, UNO Department of Biology	TAT
Scott Tarry, Ph.D.	Distinguished Professor, UNO Aviation Institute and School of Public Administration	TAT
Regina Toman, Ph.D.	Assistant Dean, UNO College of Public Affairs and Community Service; Director, UNO Division of Continuing Studies	TAT



Name	Title	TAT or TAC Member
Rachel Tomcak, Ph.D.	Director, UNO College of Arts and Sciences Academic Advising	TAT
Adam Tyma, Ph.D.	Associate Professor and Graduate Program Chair, UNO College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media	TAT
Marsha Vance	Business Manager, UNO College of Education	TAT
Laura Wakefield	Manager, Employee Relations, Development & Recruiting, UNO Human Resources	TAT
Tony Wilson, Ph.D.	Associate Professor, UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences; Scientific Director, UNMC Center for MEG	TAT
Suzanne Withem, M.A.	Advisory/Program Coordinator, UNO College of Arts and Sciences	TAT
Sara Woods, M.P.A.	Executive Associate to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Engagement; Director of Weitz CEC	TAT
Robert Woody, Ph.D.	Professor, UNO Department of Psychology	TAT
Trev Alberts	Vice Chancellor for Athletic Leadership and Management Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, UNO	TAC
Gail F. Baker, Ph.D.	Executive Associate to the Chancellor and Dean College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media, UNO	TAC
Theresa Barron-McKeagney, Ph.D.	Associate Dean, Professor, College of Public Affairs and Community Service, UNO	TAC
Robert Bartee, M.A.	Vice Chancellor for External Affairs, UNMC	TAC
Ann L Anderson Berry, MD, Ph.D	Associate Professor, UNMC Department of Pediatrics, and President, Faculty Senate	TAC
Mike Bird	Vice President and Director of Development, University of Nebraska Foundation	TAC
Melanie Bloom, Ph.D.	Associate Professor and Department Chair, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, UNO	TAC
Anne Bowen	Senior Assistant to the Chancellor, UNMC	TAC



Name	Title	TAT or TAC Member
John E. Christensen, Ph.D.	Chancellor Emeritus, Chancellor from 2007-2017, UNO	TAC
Dele Davies, M.D.	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UNMC	TAC
Carlo Eby	Student Body President/Regent, UNO	TAC
Angela Eikenberry, Ph.D.	Professor, College of Public Affairs and Community Service, UNO	TAC
Ann Fruhling, Ph.D.	Professor and Director, School of Interdisciplinary Informatics, UNO	TAC
Washington Garcia, D.M.A.	Professor and Director of the School of Music, College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media, UNO	TAC
Laura Grams, Ph.D.	Associate Professor, Philosophy Department Chair and Faculty Senate President, UNO	TAC
Nealy Grandgenett, Ph.D.	Professor, STEM Outreach Coordinator Supervision, College of Education, UNO	TAC
Sara Howard, J.D.	Nebraska Senator, District 9	TAC
Carol Kirchner, M.B.A.	Associate Vice Chancellor, Business and Finance, UNO	TAC
Melissa Lee	Director of Communications, University of Nebraska	TAC
Emiliano Lerda, J.D.	Executive Director, Justice for Our Neighbors Nebraska	TAC
James Linder, M.D.	Chief Strategist, University of Nebraska	TAC
Sue Morris	President, Heritage Services	TAC
Erin Owen	Assistant to the Chancellor and Executive Director, University Communications, UNO	TAC
Lou Pol, Ph.D.	Dean, College of Business Administration, UNO	TAC
B.J. Reed, Ph.D.	Senior Vice Chancellor, Office of Academic and Student Affairs, UNO	TAC
Randy Schmailzl, M.A.	President, Metropolitan Community College	TAC
Bev Seay, M.S.	Executive Director, Nebraska Applied Research Institute, UNO	TAC





Name	Title	TAT or TAC Member
Dan Shipp, Ed.D.	Vice Chancellor Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, UNO	TAC
Jim Sutfin, Ed.D.	Superintendent, Millard Public Schools	TAC
Deb Thomas, M.P.A.	Vice Chancellor, Business and Finance, UNMC	TAC
Thomas Walker, M.Acc.	President, Staff Advisory Council, UNO	TAC
Bob Whitehouse, Ed.S.	Chairman, University of Nebraska Board of Regents	TAC

**UNO Transition Support for the Chancellor: Core Team Members**

The individuals below partnered with Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, MD to create and implement the transition process.

Name	Title	Location/Role
Anne Bowen	Senior Assistant to the Chancellor	Chancellor’s Office
Robert Bartee, M.A.	Vice Chancellor for External Affairs	Chancellor’s Office
Erin Owen	Assistant to the Chancellor, Executive Director University Communications	Chancellor’s Office
Jennifer Tomasik, SM, FACHE	Vice President and Principal	CFAR
Carey Gallagher, MBA	Senior Manager	CFAR
Barry Dornfeld, Ph.D.	Principal	CFAR
Kyle McCracken	Analyst	CFAR
Bob Goeman, Ph.D.	Executive Director, Client Services, IT	Meeting Support
Kelly Jefferson	Events Assistant	Meeting Support



## About CFAR

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CFAR began as a research center inside the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and was established as a private management consulting firm in 1987. We combine a deep understanding of business with insights into the human systems that comprise organizations. Our mission is to help clients achieve their highest aspirations by unlocking the potential in their organizations.

We partner with leaders of corporate and not-for-profit organizations to provide customized support on issues of strategy, change, collaboration, leadership, succession and governance. Our clients are mission-driven organizations, including universities, academic medical centers, health systems, family enterprises, foundations and professional societies.

## The CFAR Team

Jennifer Tomasik, SM, FACHE, Vice President and Principal

Barry Dornfeld, Ph.D., Principal

Carey Gallagher, MBA, Senior Manager

Kyle McCracken, Analyst