

## Memorandum

**Date:** August 2, 2017  
**To:** UNO / Transition Advisory Council  
**From:** CFAR / Jennifer Tomasik, SM, FACHE  
**Subject:** **Executive Summary of TAC Brand Meeting**

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This memo captures themes from key discussions, notes, observations, and materials from the third meeting of the Transition Advisory Council (TAC), held on Tuesday, July 25, 2017. The focus of the meeting was on brand at UNO, as seen from the perspective of the three pillars through which the TAC meetings are organized.

The memo is organized as follows:

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## Introduction

### Purpose of the Initiative and the Transition Advisory Council (TAC)

As a reminder, the TAC is part of an overall effort for Chancellor Gold and other UNMC leadership to gain a deeper understanding of the strategic identity of University of Omaha, Nebraska (UNO), and also to begin to see where UNO and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) can 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.

The TAC's role in this effort is to identify and discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for UNO and its environment using the themes of growth, brand, efficiency, culture, and outcomes across the "pillars" of education, discovery and engagement. TAC members have been carefully selected for their perspective and initiative, and grouped into the Pillar Structures according to their expertise and interest. The TAC will engage in a series of participatory sessions to explore the implications of the SWOT throughout the summer and fall. While the focus of these sessions is on "the blatant truth" of UNO's current state, the intent is also to generate a "line of sight" in areas of opportunity and future focus for the campus and its relationship to UNMC.

### Meeting Objectives

Specifically, the objectives of the Brand TAC meeting were to:

- ▶ Gain a 360° understanding of the strengths, opportunities and challenges of UNO.
- ▶ Learn leadership team, faculty, and staff members' perspectives on the university's education, research, and public engagement missions.
- ▶ Develop working relationships with leadership and transition teams, allowing Chancellor Gold to share his core values, expectations, and leadership style.
- ▶ Focus on UNO brand.

According to the evaluation survey findings, participants agreed that these objectives were achieved and enjoyed the interactive nature of the event.

### Chancellor's Remarks

Chancellor Gold reminded the TAC of a helpful model to frame their thinking:

- ▶ Learn
- ▶ Apply
- ▶ Reflect (TAT group will help with this part)

The Chancellor invited TAC members to stay for the Transition Advisory Team (TAT) meeting that would follow the brand session, to launch the TAT and to encourage TAC and TAT team

members to interact and network. He explained that the primary role of the TAT group would be to help with the “Reflect” portion of the process of the learn, apply, reflect cycle. They will review the output of the TAC’s work and have the opportunity to weigh in on questions such as: What are our priorities? What is missing? What has changed? What is the external context? The answers to these questions will help to inform the Chancellor.

The Chancellor also remarked that while there is some priority setting to be done, he sees unlimited potential in this institution. Chancellor Gold also shared his enthusiasm about the outcome from the previous meeting, which was focused on growth.

## **The Importance of Brand in Higher Education**

Erin Owen, Executive Director and Assistant to the Chancellor, UNO University Communications, provided an overview of the increasing importance of brand in higher education. She cited a 2014 study that showed branding in universities is somewhat of a new phenomenon. She spoke to the importance of the marketing department and their role in telling the story of who UNO is at every level. Ms. Owen noted the importance of being consistent in branding, and having a single visual identity.

Ms. Owen described two different mantras that are central to UNO’s brand. The first was about being individuals: taking risks, exploring, serving, growing, being proud, etc., and how all of those characteristics are ones that a Maverick possesses. The second mantra is in regard to the university or campus. This mantra talks about how UNO is dedicated to addressing real issues and providing students with the opportunity to be active members in the community.

## **Themes Across the Pillar Group Presentations on Brand**

Three subcommittees—on Educate, Discover and Engage—presented their analyses for discussion to the full TAC (complete versions of the presentations are included in the appendix). Some overarching themes emerged among the three areas, including:

- ▶ *Importance of storytelling*—There was a strong sense that people felt the need to continue to build one clear, concise message or story about the value that UNO has to offer. It was acknowledged that perhaps effective storytelling has been largely absent at UNO to date, but that in order to thrive in the future, crafting one clear message that people can build on by reaching out to alumni and students is crucial. Telling stories and sharing experiences are vital in communicating the UNO brand.
- ▶ *Continued outreach and engagement are key*—While strides have been taken to improve UNO’s public perception, there is still work to be done. Being brutally honest with one another about UNO’s public perception will be critical to continuing to improve it going forward. It was pointed out that engaging with alumni, current students, prospective students, faculty/staff, and the community would help clarify and strengthen the UNO brand.
- ▶ *Build on excellence*—UNO must continue to change the narrative of the past. Examples of past UNO stereotypes were given, including: “limited budget/resources for brand promotion”, “it’s a commuter school”, “school of last resort”, and “University of No Opportunity”. TAC members pointed out that 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.

- ▶ *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 TAC members believe is critical to UNO’s brand differentiation.

## Themes, Ideas, and Opportunities Surfaced in Plenary Conversations

After each presentation, the TAC held table discussions to explore the following questions:

- ▶ What are our biggest assets regarding the UNO brand?
- ▶ What are our biggest challenges?
- ▶ What are our largest opportunities to strengthen our brand?

The following are highlights from the conversations.

### ▶ **Educate**

- The discussion following the Educate Pillar presentation focused heavily on utilizing brand ambassadors. It was mentioned that UNO will need to identify the areas of focus that will best help it distinguish itself from other campuses. There was also a lot of discussion around telling the stories of students and alumni: “Did they get a job?” “Is it high paying?” Getting young people engaged and having their stories covered by the media will help improve the perception of the brand at UNO. Taking advantage of a social media strategy to spread these stories—beyond traditional print media—will also be important. TAC members can serve as brand ambassadors today!

### ▶ **Discover**

- The importance and value of telling stories of the great research that is being done on the UNO campus is something that was highlighted in the discussion. People in the community and around Nebraska are largely unaware of the research that UNO faculty are doing. There was a suggestion to train faculty about how to engage with the media to get their stories out to the public. There are a number of high-performing, nationally ranked faculty and research programs at UNO—it will be important to communicate and increase the awareness.

### ▶ **Engage**

- There was similar discussion in the groups at the conclusion of the Engagement Pillar presentation. The importance of increased publicity and coverage was again brought up. One suggestion that arose was to get more involved with social media as a way to engage with millennials more effectively. There was also mention of the leadership perception at UNO, and how everyone, not just Chancellor Gold, is responsible for strengthening public perception by working to build trust and reorient beliefs over time.

## CFAR's Observations

As we have reflected on what we heard, these ideas feel most important to share:

- ▶ ***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, your ideas about cultivating brand ambassadors has incredible potential and you can get started quickly.
- ▶ ***Storytelling is incredibly powerful***—We agree that stories should be central to conveying the UNO brand—creating awareness about the value you offer, diversity you bring, and work you are doing to contribute to the community and beyond. Many stories can flow from the core of UNO's brand identity.
- ▶ ***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.

## Concluding Remarks

The Chancellor commended the TAC for their presentations and for engaging in frank discussions on the challenges facing UNO. He acknowledged that the discussions are getting closer to the "blatant truths" which is critical for a strong, transparent relationship. He left the TAC members with three of his own themes from the session:

- ▶ ***UNO brand equals value***—UNO offers incredible value for academic achievement, experience, and opportunities for students who can go everywhere.
- ▶ ***Diversifying the message on brand***—There is more work to be done on thinking about where the audience is and how UNO is using them. Rather than always coming back to a single point of pride, it would be beneficial to diversify the elements of the brand message.
- ▶ ***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.

## UNO TAC Brand Meeting One-minute Essay Responses

July 25, 2017

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### What are 1 or 2 insights you had in this session about brand at UNO?

- ▶ People realized the importance of branding and marketing
  - I realized that branding effectively is quite complex and cannot or should not be over simplified.
  - Good information about the UNO evaluation of “marketing”. UNO and its brand. We are so closely tied to “Omaha” – for a number of prospective students is this good? But for Omaha, yes!
  - Need to educate and motivate brand – yes, make an ask of all advocates. Also, need more talking points (diversify points). Also, I liked the idea of more intentional extension of UNO classroom into the community.
  - Stories and experiences are the most important means of creativity and communicating our brand. We know employers want UNO students, that faculty are doing world class research, and that we are deeply engaged with the community, but do we have a strategy for communicating those stories, using our people (faculty/staff, alumni, current students), and supported by clear evidence and data?
- ▶ There was a felt need to build on value
  - Diversify the message on value (finding multiple areas of success). Double down on UCOMM and our story at UNO are headed to grow.
  - Current advancement and value related
- ▶ Miscellaneous
  - Exponential growth in two years

### What are 1 or 2 things we need to do to improve our brand?

- ▶ Engaging a variety of stakeholders was something people valued
  - Getting more folks on campus; have a consistent and concise message/story about the value at UNO.
  - Funding. Deeper drill on observations and suggestions of branding with survey of business/industry leaders, donors, community partners, and other urban/metro leaders.
  - We don’t need to limit what we are actually doing and supporting with resources to certain areas of focus. Rather, we want to encourage many flowers to bloom as a way of retaining flexibility and adaptability. The challenge is then to tie the success stories back to a centrally focused mission, telling the story about how those successes serve our community and meet the needs of our various audiences. We also need to create a stronger sense of campus life for students and visitors by bringing people here to us, and hosting lots of events all around our Omaha campus!
  - We will want to continue the focus on brand and engagement for branding across the city (and nation).

- ▶ Being strategic in this branding effort was noted as being important
  - Research strategic plan is needed (connect to broad ranging strategic communication planning). Also, develop measures and metrics that connect to identified community issues (priority based) – UNO impact should be measured and communicated
  - Need to show our competitive advantage against other local institutions. The gap is not as wide as people may perceive.

### **What didn't we talk about that we should have?**

- ▶ Increasing diversity is key
  - 87% of our students come from two countries. How do we sell our brand to other countries, as well as other states?
  - The increasing diversity of our students – we need to engage them and their families. Our strength in multicultural and international areas can be very helpful here – multiple languages, cultural events and programs.
- ▶ Miscellaneous
  - More about the leadership brand and how that fits into overall branding
  - More strategic conversations. How well connected faculty and alumni with community, and businesses. Weigh and measure education on programs to community outcomes. "What are community needs and how does UNO respond?"
  - We probably needed to talk a bit more about fund raising. We have a relatively small budget for NU Foundation help with an increasingly important role for them.
  - Decentralized command and control budgeting at UNO creates fragmented investments; limiting potential impact

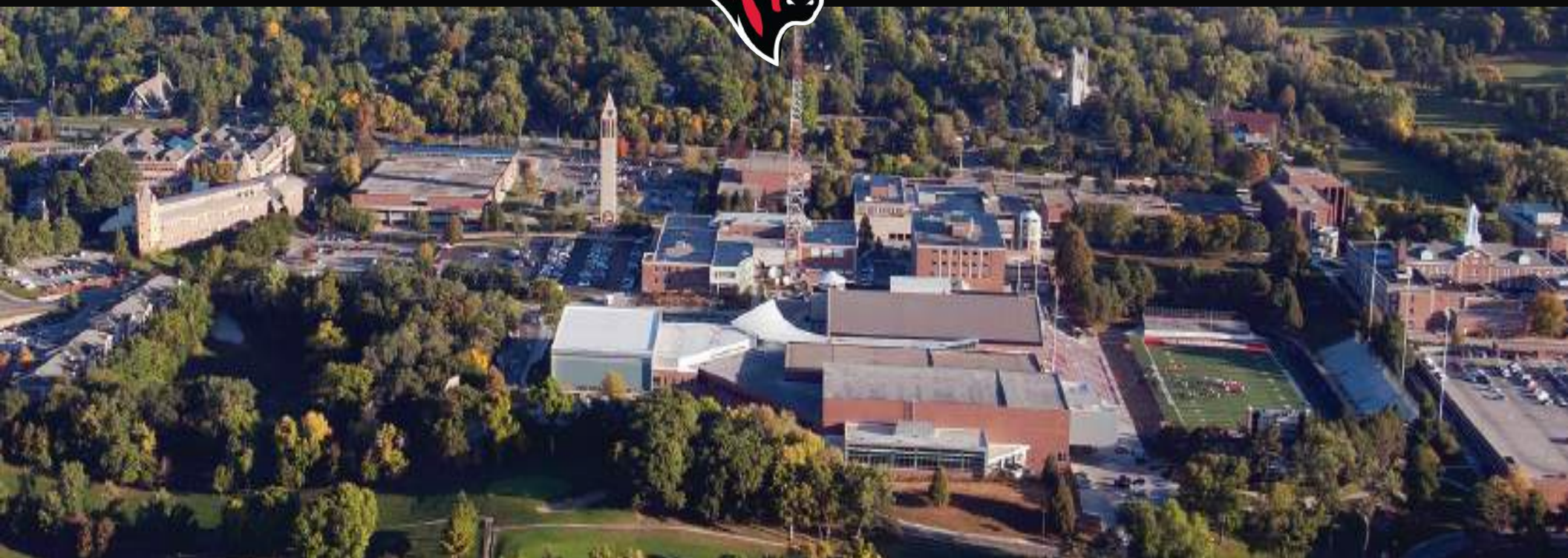
### **What are 1 or 2 other sources of information that we should explore?**

- ▶ Storytelling and engagement are worth pursuing further
  - Alumni and student stories tell the message of brand the best. Research (beyond biometrics) needs to be highlighted in all colleges.
  - Social media. That is where your target audience is.
  - We need data about the value of our students to area employers and grad/professional programs! We also need to reach out to units, colleges, and students seeking to tell and promote their great stories.
- ▶ Miscellaneous
  - Good thoughts re: "value" from Dr. Gold at the end.
  - We will want to continue to build the "Educational Brand"...
  - More focused understanding of priorities links to philanthropy community
  - Deeper surveys regarding our survey advancement





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## UNO TRANSITION ADVISORY COUNCIL





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**UNO TRANSITION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

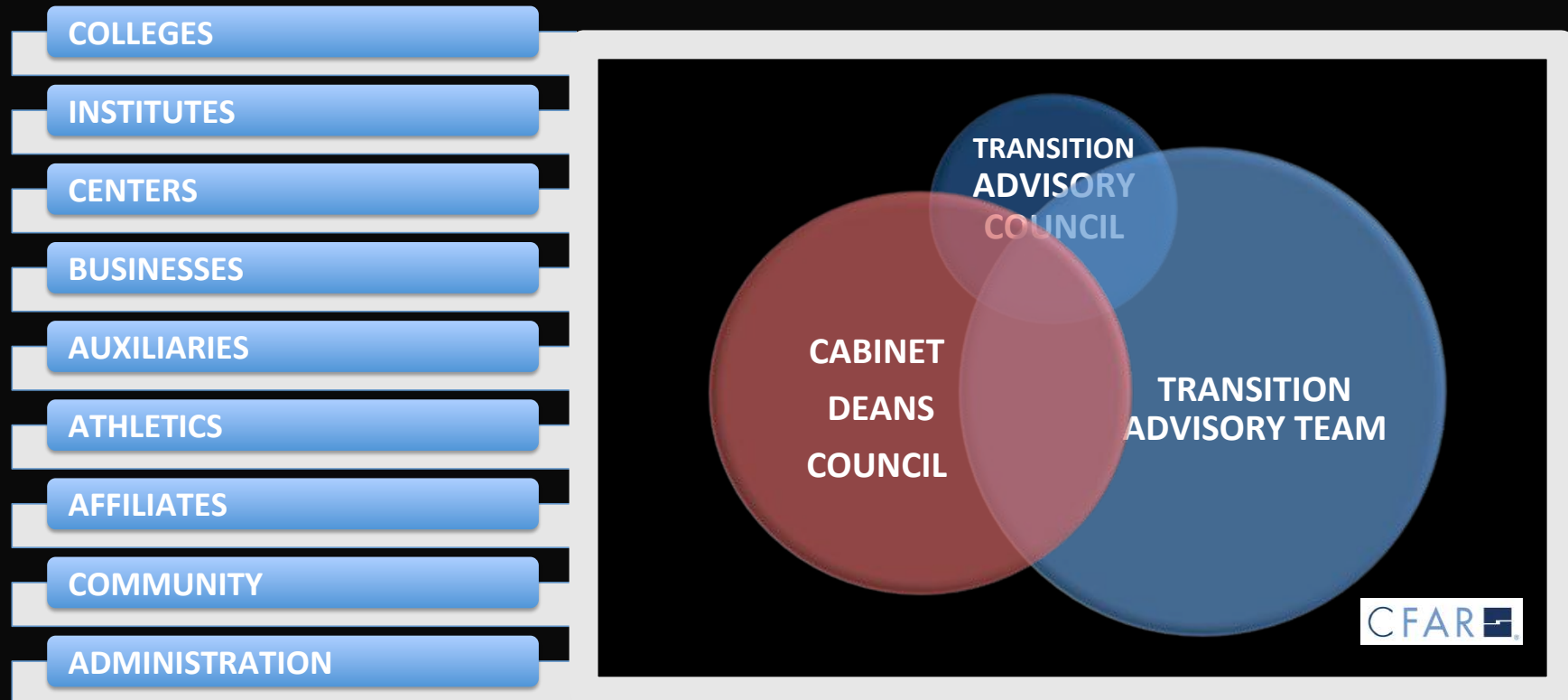


**TRANSITION**



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

## UNO TRANSITION ADVISORY COUNCIL



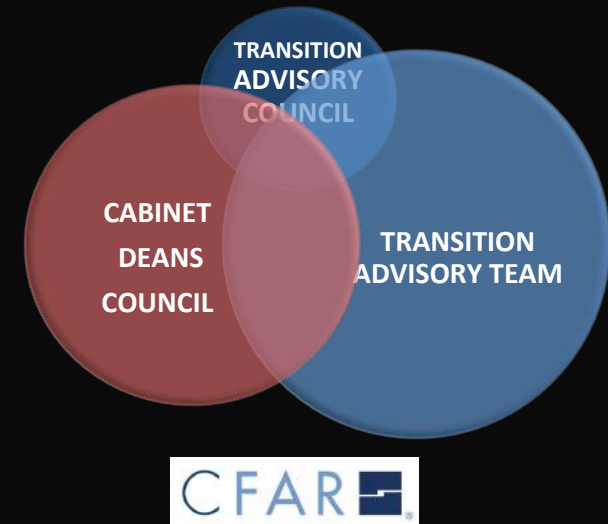


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## UNO TRANSITION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The intent of this transition plan is to help:

- o Gain a 360° understanding of the strengths, opportunities and challenges of UNO in a methodical and expeditious manner.
- o Use regular and strategic meetings with the Chancellor's leadership teams (Vice chancellors, associate chancellors, deans and advisory team members) to help Chancellor gain a deep understanding of UNO
- o Engage Transition Council and Team as widely as possible: Learn from the leadership team, faculty, and staff members' perspectives on the university's education, research, and public engagement missions.
- o Develop working relationships with leadership and transition teams, allowing Chancellor to share his core values, expectations and leadership style.



**Always face the blatant truth  
Always focus on the horizon**



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# **MISSION**

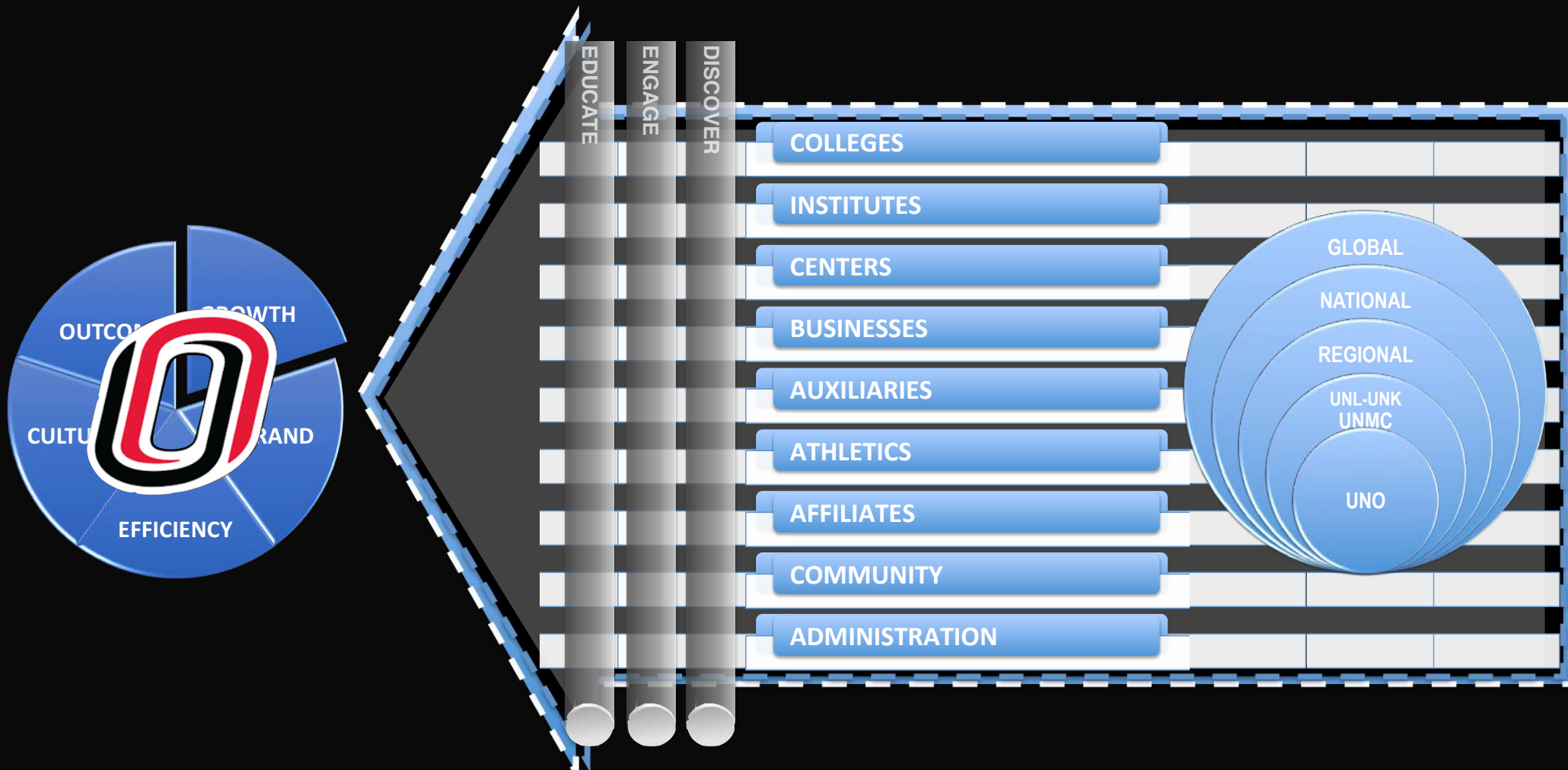
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**The University of Nebraska at Omaha is Nebraska's metropolitan university — a university with strong academic values and significant relationships with our local, regional, national and international communities that transforms and improves life.**





# UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA





## Themes Across the Pillar Group Presentations on Presentations Growth (1)

Three subcommittees—on Educate, Discover and Engage—presented their SWOT analyses for discussion to the full TAC. Some overarching themes emerged among the three areas, including:

- u **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.
- u **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.
- u **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.



**BREAKOUTS**

UNO Transition Advisory Council



## Themes Across the Pillar Group Presentations on Growth Presentations (2)



**BREAKOUTS**

UNO Transition Advisory Council

- **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. A few sub-themes included:
  - **Leveraging relationships**—building skills in establishing partnerships—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.
  - **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.
  - **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.



## Themes Across the Pillar Group Presentations on Growth Presentations (3)



### BREAKOUTS

#### UNO Transition Advisory Council

- U **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.
- U **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:
  - Enrollment and registration bottlenecks that hinder growth
  - Mid- or longer-term growth potential ideas, including building flexibility into the system
  - Identifying additional space and qualified faculty available during times that students prefer to attend class
  - Targeting access to online and dual degree programs
- U **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.



## Themes, Ideas, and Opportunities Surfaced in Plenary Conversations

Table discussions to raise clarifying questions and suggestions. The following are highlights from the conversations, focusing on how to remove barriers and support UNO's growth:

### U **Educate**

- Convene a task force to conceptualize structure and support for adjunct faculty
- Strengthen the marketing function
- Study the alignment between resources, quality, and growth

### U **Discover**

- Enhance and deploy a strategic plan for research
- Carefully consider the future administrative structure

### U **Engage**

- Activate UNO alumni locally, nationally, and internationally
- Understand what employers are seeking by potentially conducting a survey
- Lead the field in embodying UNO's status as a metropolitan university

UNO Transition Advisory Council



**BREAKOUTS**





## BREAKOUTS

### UNO Transition Advisory Council

## Objectives for Today

- ▶ Gain a 360° understanding of UNO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges
- ▶ Learn leadership team, faculty, and staff members' perspectives on the university's education, research, and public engagement missions
- ▶ Develop working relationships with leadership and transition teams, allowing Chancellor to share his core values, expectations and leadership style
- ▶ **Focus on the branding** related opportunities at UNO





## BREAKOUTS

EDUCATE

ENGAGE

DISCOVER

### UNO Transition Advisory Council

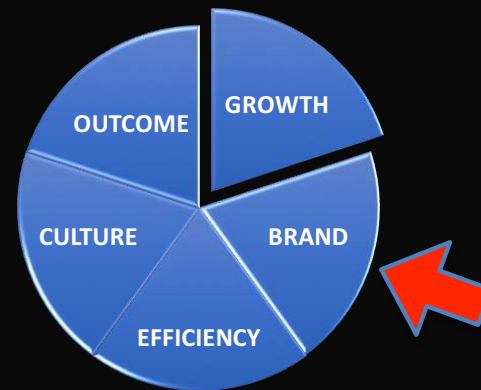
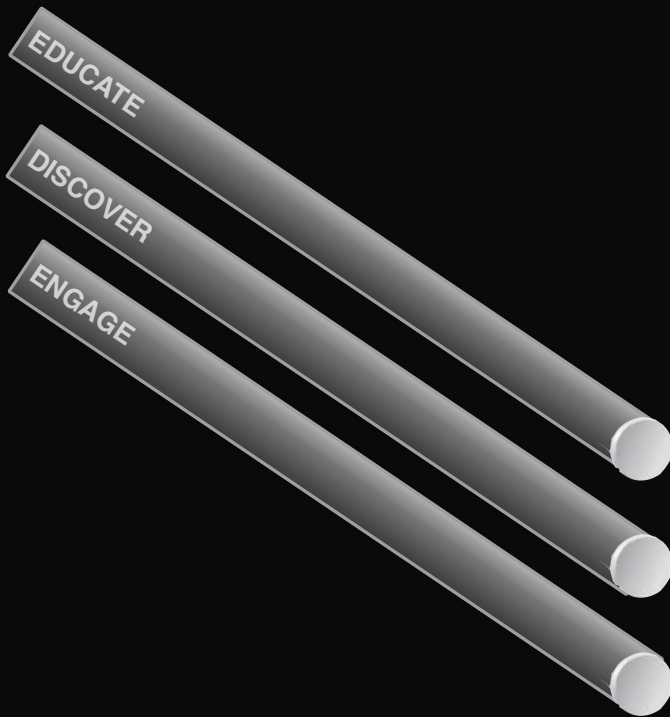
## Today's agenda

<b>1</b>	<b>7:30 - 7:45 AM</b>	<b>Purpose and Overview of the TAC Meeting</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>7:45 - 8:00 AM</b>	<b>The Importance of Brand in Higher Ed &amp; at UNO</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>8:00 - 8:35 AM</b>	<b>Presentation by Educate Pillar Sub-Committee, Followed by Discussion at tables and full group</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>8:35- 9:10 AM</b>	<b>Presentation by Discover Pillar Sub-Committee, Followed by Discussion at tables and full group</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>9:10 - 9:45 AM</b>	<b>Presentation by Engage Pillar Sub-Committee, Followed by Discussion at tables and full group</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>9:45 - 10:00 AM</b>	<b>Reflections &amp; Closing, The One Minute Essay</b>
<b>10:00 - 10:30 AM</b>		<b>Welcome the Transition Advisory Team Members</b>



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

## PILLAR PRESENTATION DISCUSSION ON BRAND



**EDUCATE PILLAR PRESENTATION**

**DISCOVER PILLAR PRESENTATION**

**ENGAGE PILLAR PRESENTATION**



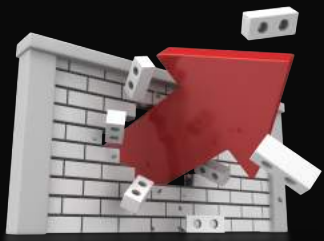
## PILLAR PRESENTATION DISCUSSION ON BRAND

**Please discuss the following questions in your table groups**

- ▶ What are our biggest assets / challenges regarding our brand?
- ▶ What are our biggest opportunities to improve/change our brand?
- ▶ Please capture your full discussion on these questions and be prepared to share one answer to each question with the full group.

**BREAKOUTS**





## UNO Transition Advisory Council

### Reflections on the day: One-minute essay

Take a minute to jot down your answers to the following questions:

#### Question 1

**What are 1 or 2 insights you had in this session about our brand at UNO?**

#### Question 2

**What are 1 or 2 changes we might make to improve our brand at UNO?**





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# The Brand of UNO Education





# What is our current brand in EDUCATION?



TAC Committee thoughts: Brand of Education is Multi-dimensional

- Affordable excellence
- Accessible: strive to admit wide range of students
- Elevated Carnegie classification to Doctoral Universities: Moderate Research Activity (from Master's Granting)
- Diversity of our student body
- Range of student services we offer on campus
- Faculty as mentors/relationships with students
- Private education in public setting/small classes
- The jobs are here in Omaha
- Mission-driven engagement is a main educational artery to community
- Locally owned and operated
- Urban housing / campus life



# What is our current brand in EDUCATION?

➔ 2014 & 2016 Statistically representative perception survey of Nebraskans and Western Iowans

- **2014 Baseline Perception Study**

- *N* = 676
- Nebraska Residents (88.8%)
- Western Iowa (11.2%)
- Avg Age = 49.75
- 57.1% College degree or higher
- Avg Income = \$60k - \$80k
- 93% White/Caucasian

- **2016 Perception Study**

- *N* = 665
- Nebraska Residents (86.9%)
- Western Iowa (13.1%)
- Avg. Age = 51.91
- 54.8% College degree or higher
- Avg. Income = \$60k - \$80k
- 94% White/Caucasian



## 2016: Top 10 Perceptions about UNO

Question	2014	2016
UNO is an asset to the Omaha Community	5.79	5.88
UNO is an asset to the Nebraska Community	5.63	5.73
UNO is a traditional 4-year school	5.56	5.48
UNO offers a variety of strong academic degrees	5.45	5.47
UNO offers programs accommodating all students	5.26	5.40
UNO has an excellent academic reputation	5.22	5.28
UNO graduates are well prepared for careers	5.16	5.26
UNO encourages diversity when recruiting	5.11	5.18
UNO has a safe campus	5.07	5.08
UNO encourages community engagement	5.02	5.08

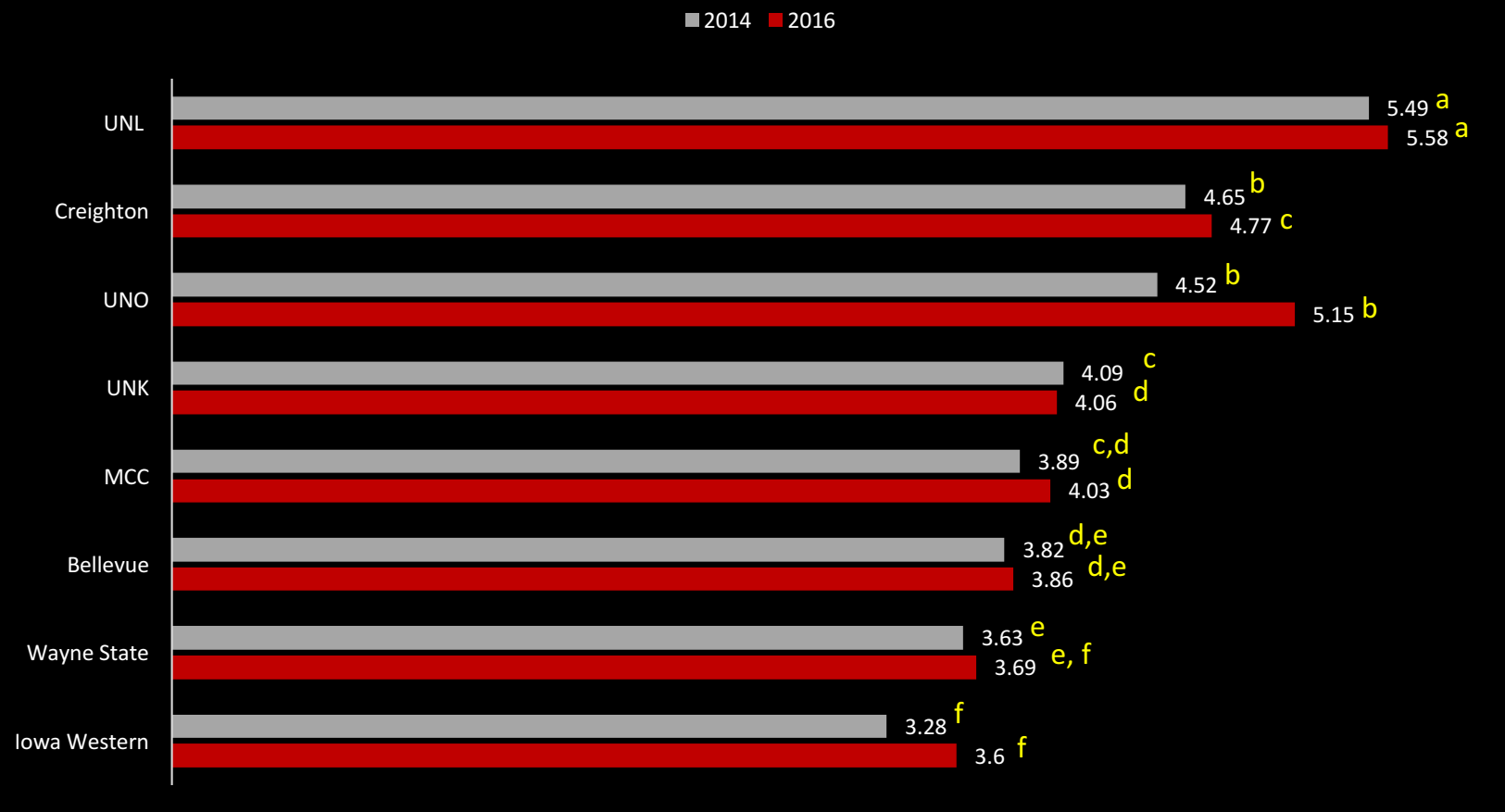
Please tell us how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following: (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*)





## Standing Among Regional College/University

How familiar are you with each college or university?

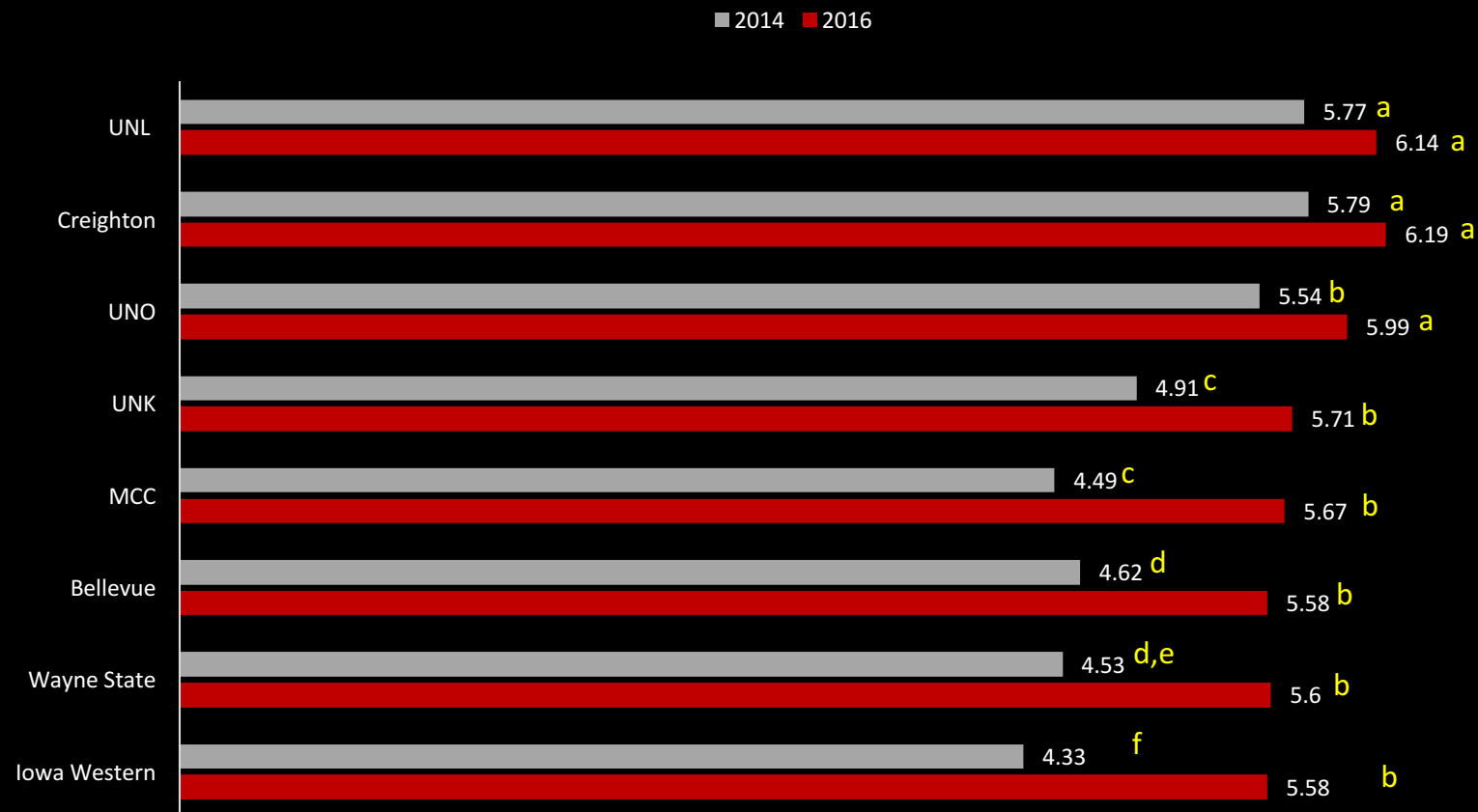


In 2014, respondents were more familiar with Creighton than UNO. That changed in 2016, respondents were more familiar with UNO than Creighton.



## Standing Among Regional College/University

How favorable do you feel about each of these colleges or universities?

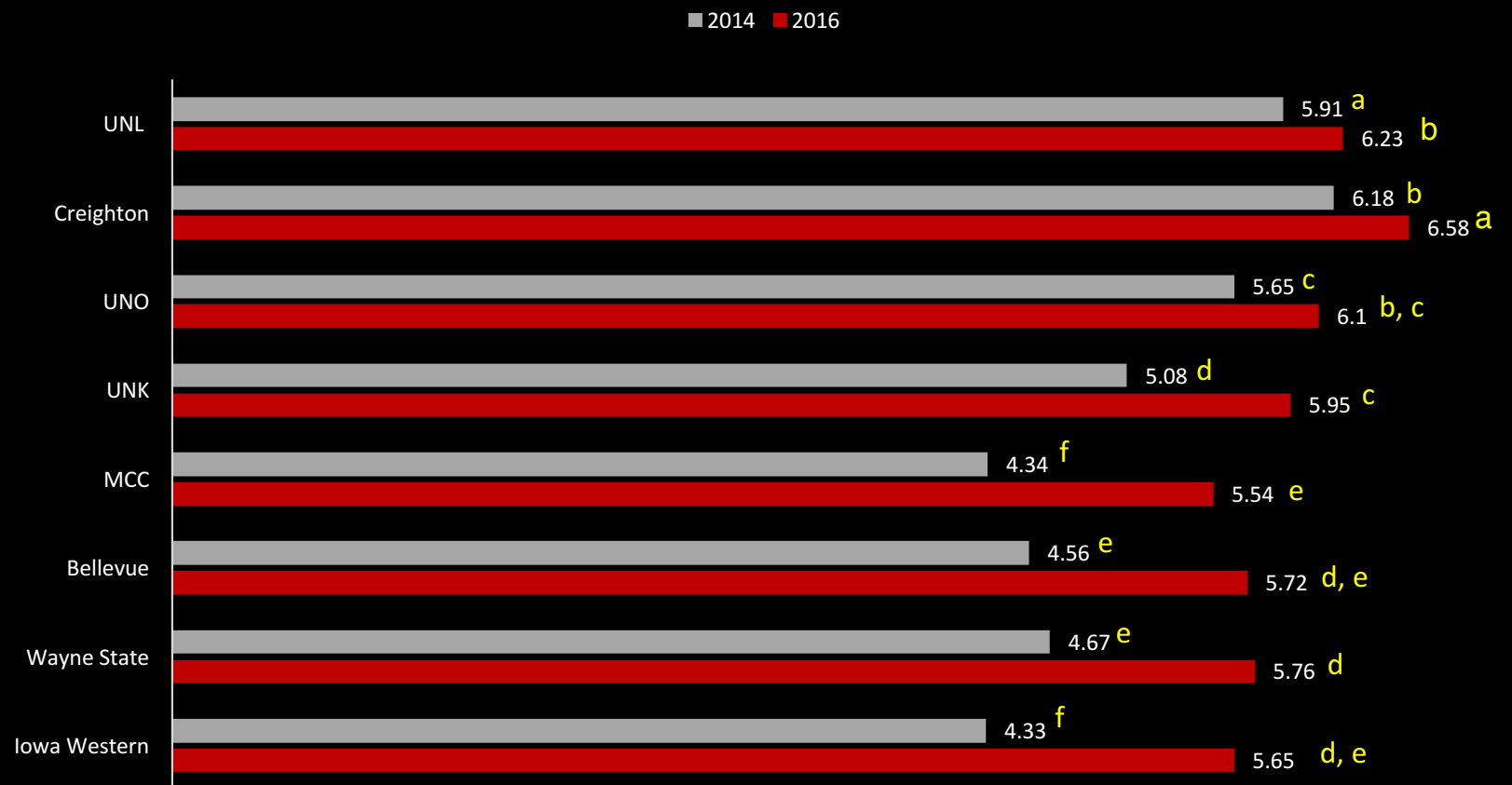


UNO's favorability increased over two years, moving UNO into the same level of statistically significant favorability as Creighton and UNL. It had previously been in a lower statistically significant group in 2014.



## Standing Among Regional College/University

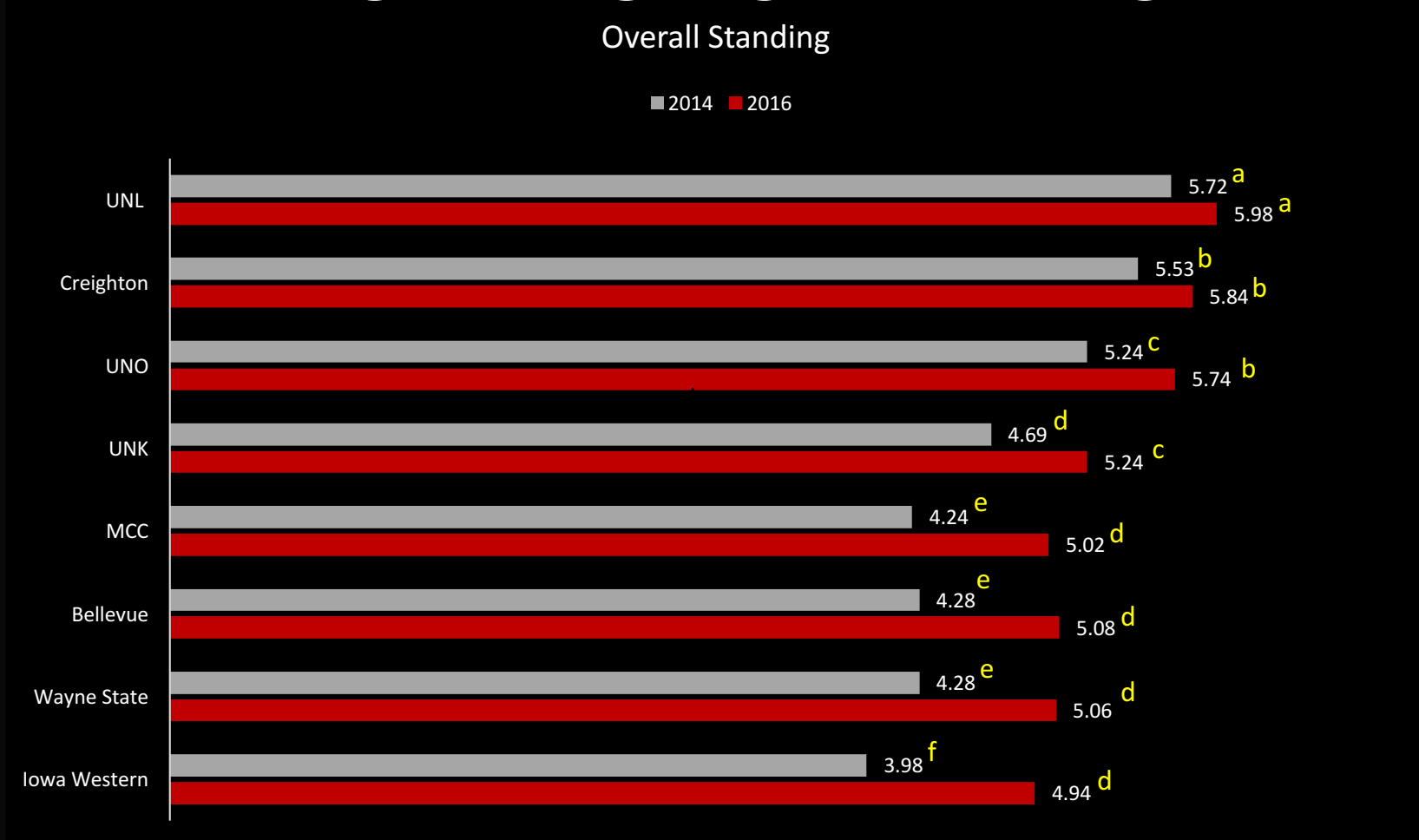
How would you rate the academic quality of each college or university?



In 2016, UNO's academic quality rating increased moving it into the same statistically significant group as UNL.



## Overall Standing Among Regional College/University



In 2014, UNO had an acceptable overall perception, but it lagged behind UNL and Creighton. In 2016, UNO had an acceptable overall perception, and closed the gap with Creighton. Yet, it lagged behind UNL.



## How well do goals describe UNO?

### How well does each goal describe UNO?

1 = Does not describe to  
7 = Describes completely

- \* = significant increase from 2014 to 2016

- $p < .05$

How Well Each Goal Describes UNO	2014	2016
Provides high quality Bachelor education	5.49	5.56
Creates a well-trained workforce in the state	5.26	5.33
Provides high quality Masters and PhD education	5.25	5.31
Engages with the Omaha metropolitan area	5.20	5.29
Offers night and weekend classes	-	5.29
Provides a good value education for tuition dollars	5.14	5.26
Offers flexible options for working adults*	5.09	5.22
Attracts a diverse student body	5.09	5.21
Is a good manager of financial resources	4.99	5.09
Offers online degree options	-	5.06
Expands premier facilities*	4.93	5.06
Offers affordable tuition rates*	4.86	5.03
Has world-class professors*	4.88	5.02
Conducts cutting edge research*	4.82	4.96



## What are the challenges with EDUCATION brand?

- **Continuing to change mythology of our past**
  - Limited budget/resources for brand promotion and protection
  - Commuter school (housing is an option now)
- **Institutional processes**
  - Data collection of the needs in Omaha region/Nebraska to align to programs offered (How do colleges align to needs?)
  - Are current academic priorities widely known and best fit?
  - “Not sure we know what we want to be the very best at, what space do we want to claim?”
- **Lack of storytelling in recent past**
  - Activating and educating a disengaged Alumni base
  - Lack of exposure in central and Western Nebraska regionally



## Best opportunities to strengthen EDUCATION brand?

- Be the best example of a Metropolitan University mission in country, formalize a plan with measureable steps
- Formalize process to understand/survey Omaha and Nebraska needs and align to education programs and academic priorities
- What areas of excellence do we want to be associated with UNO? General? Specific?
- Be national leader in identified academic priorities
- Increase allocation of resources to promote UNO locally, central and western Nebraska, regionally and nationally





## Best opportunities to strengthen EDUCATION brand?

- Promote UNO's top 25 nationally ranked BGS online degree
- Leverage partnerships with NU system and sister campuses
- Continue new tradition of data based decisions: segmented surveys to align with priorities
- Build a proud and connected UNO Alumni Network worldwide (brand ambassadors)
- Expand strategic Internal Communications to build faculty, staff, student, NU system, and Board of Regents brand ambassadors



Key questions that influence how we move forward with further brand development in education:

- Currently, 87% of our student body comes from 2 counties surrounding UNO: Douglas and Sarpy Counties. Will local students continue to be our main focus?
- Will we market UNO, generally, as a university known for a range of 200+ programs of study? Or, for our five academic priority areas? Or, specialize, promoting a certain area of study?
- Will online learning be a part of UNO's long-term strategy? We will seek to expand and grow our online offerings? (BMS is top 25 in country.)
- What is our process and commitment to looking to the future to evolve and innovate? How do we stay relevant?

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

# DISCOVER PILLAR-BRAND

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ann L. Anderson Berry

Angela Eikenberry

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B.J. Reed

Deb Thomas

Herbert Davies

James Linder

Washington Garcia

Theresa Barron-McKeagney



## DEFINITIONS

- **BRAND:** UNIQUE DESIGN, SIGN, SYMBOL, WORDS, OR COMBINATION OF THESE TO CREATE AN IMAGE THAT IDENTIFIES A PRODUCT AND DIFFERENTIATES IT FROM ITS COMPETITORS
- **DISCOVERY:** THE ACTION OR PROCESS OF DISCOVERY (FINDING, REALIZATION, REVELATION)



## STRENGTHS

- LOGO “O” IS STRONG IDENTIFIER WITH UNO
- UNIQUE MISSION-
  - COMMUNITY SEES GOOD RETURN ON INVESTMENT
  - NATIONAL REPUTATION IN “ENGAGEMENT” WITH COMMUNITIES
  - DONOR SHARED MISSION
- NATIONALLY RANKED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (EX: COLLEGE OF: PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE-Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies-Online, MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice, School of Public Administration-4 programs in top 25, Emergency Management; EDUCATION- Biomechanics, Special Education and Communication Disorders; INFORMATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- Cybersecurity
- PHYSICAL FACILITIES



## WEAKNESSES

- LACK OF COMMUNICATION ABOUT UNO'S ACHIEVEMENTS TO CONSTITUENTS
- LACK OF ATTENTION TO ALUMNI (BRANDING CAMPAIGN)
- INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT
- LACK OF RETENTION OF GRADUATES IN AREA (MAY BE RELATED TO SALARY DIFFERENTIALS, WORKFORCE NEEDS, ETC.)





## OPPORTUNITIES

- ENGAGEMENT WITH DONOR BASE (EX: ACQUISITION OF FIRST DATA RESOURCE BUILDING)
- GLOBAL SUPPORT FOR PARTNERSHIPS (EX: DIGITAL GOVERNANCE, GOVERNMENT FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, etc.) IN NEBRASKA AND BEYOND
- OUT OF STATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT
- CONNECTION WITH ALUMNI (LARGEST ALUMNI GROUP- 70,000-80,000 IN AREA)
- MORE BRAND RECOGNITION (EX: NARI, ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, BIOMECHANICS)
- INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT



## THREATS

- PERCEPTIONS REGARDING-
  - BUDGET CUTS AT THE STATE LEVEL
  - UNCERTAINTY ABOUT UNO'S FUTURE-NO CLEAR MESSAGE
  - LACK OF TRANSPARENCY
  - NO CHANCELLOR AT TABLE WHO IS COMPLETELY FOCUSED ON UNO
- DECLINING NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NEBRASKA
- LACK OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT FACULTY RECRUITMENT FOR STUDENT GROWTH



# ASPIRATIONAL GOALS

- LEAD THE NATION IN KEY AREAS (EX: CYBER PHYSICAL SECURITY SYSTEMS-NARI)
- BEST QUALITY EDUCATION IN OMAHA AREA AND BEYOND
- RECRUIT AND RETAIN THE BRIGHTEST FACULTY, RESEARCHERS, STAFF, AND STUDENTS
- INCREASE RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH, STUDENT, FACULTY AND STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



# ACTION ITEMS NEEDED TO MOVE FORWARD

- COMMUNICATE MORE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY WITH FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS
- INCREASE TRANSPARENCY IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES
- CREATE-
  - BRANDING CAMPAIGN TO ADVERTISE UNIQUE AREAS
  - DEVELOP METRICS TO SUBSTANTIATE CLAIMS OF UNIQUENESS
  - STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC PLAN TO USE BRANDING TO ACHIEVE RECOGNITION AND GROWTH

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

# Engagement and the UNO Brand



## Engagement Enhances UNO's Brand

- Community engagement (students, faculty and staff)
- Attendance at athletic events
- Hosting special events
- Visits (parents and prospective students, school counselors and other community members)
- Media coverage (preferably good)
- Collaboration with community partners
- Students, faculty and staff
- Alumni





## Blatant Truths

- Within our lifetimes, UNO has not been regarded as having a good brand (school of last resort, West Dodge High, University of No Opportunity).
- The brand has undergone considerable building, but is still under construction.
- The development of PhD programs, the construction of the biomechanics laboratory, the introduction of on-campus housing, and the opening of Baxter Arena, and transition into Division I Athletics have helped re-shape and extend our brand.



## Blatant Truths

- Until very recently, marketing activities have been almost non-existent. Even with an improved marketing plan and enhanced communication including social media presence, efforts to provide information to support the brand fall short of goals.
- Our marketing efforts should be more data driven.
- Our marketing budget is \$80K.



## Blatant Truths

- There is a shortage of press coverage, and some of that coverage is negative.
- Some faculty and staff do not embrace the connection between their work and the UNO brand.
- Students, faculty and staff appear to be having more pride in our institution.
- Our brand is seen differently within UNO and the NU system (e.g., athletics, NU Foundation, alumni association, staff...)



## Blatant Truths

- We continue to be largely a commuter school, thus student attendance at on-campus events is challenged, but has improved.
- Recent leadership transition, and subsequent reactions and press coverage, have changed our image (at least in the short term) in unknown ways.
- Building the brand is different for faculty (even among colleges and departments), staff, and administration.



## Blatant Truths

- Leader in the country for UNO's Metropolitan University mission
- Ex: Carnegie Community Engagement classification in 2006  
*UNO one of just 74 institutions in first class*
- Ex: Carnegie Community Engagement re-classification in 2015  
*UNO one of 361 institutions*
- Ex: Listed on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll every year since inception of the Federal award. National winner in 2014 for *Economic Opportunity Engagement*
- Ex: Weitz Community Engagement Center: Built first-of-its-kind in the nation community facility
- Ex: CUMU selects UNO chancellor to serve as president
- Ex: CUMU selects UNO to host national conference in Omaha
- Ex: Engagement Scholarship Consortium selected UNO to host the international conference in Omaha
- Ex: Military Engagement: #1 in nation, twice, for being top military friendliness university by Military Times (CBA #1 Business School)



## The Horizon

- In part through engagement, the attitudes, opinions and images (our brand) will become clearer and even more positive in the minds of our constituents.
- More faculty and staff will subscribe to a sense of responsibility for supporting and promoting the UNO brand.
- The confusion regarding our brand will be resolved.



## The Horizon

- Additional research will be conducted to better understand how all segments of our community (and beyond) view our institution—what is our brand in their minds?
- The marketing implementation for UNO will receive significantly greater financial support.
- We will marshal and organize engagement and on-campus activities (positive momentum exists) to solidify our brand for all constituents.



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