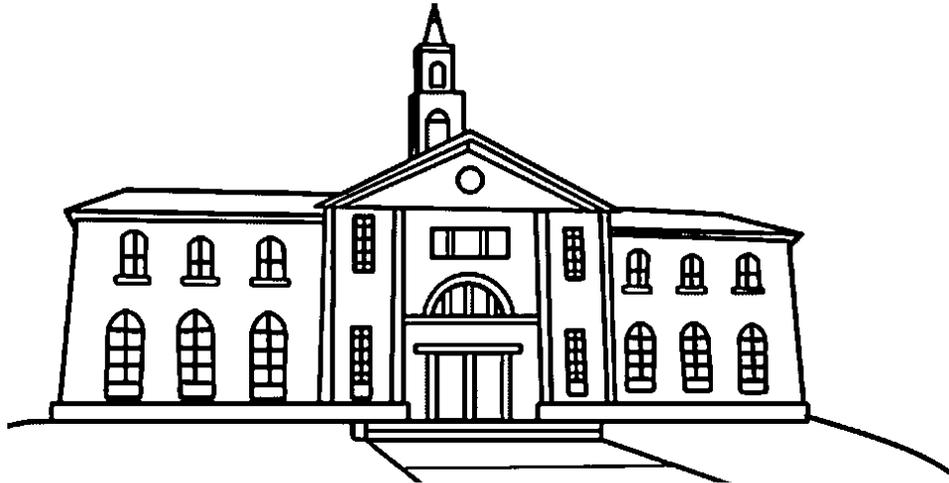


**Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**  
University of Nebraska at Omaha



**100 Day Entry Plan Report**

Sacha E. Kopp  
October 1, 2019

Version 2.0

**FINAL DRAFT**



*"If you're not listening, you're not learning."*

Lyndon B. Johnson

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## 1. Purpose of This Document

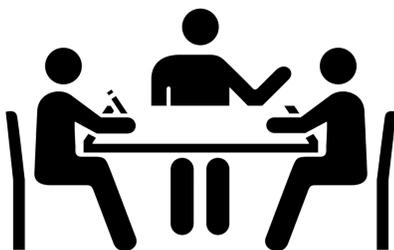
During the interview process prior to coming to UNO, I spoke with many members of the campus community. Your questions and comments helped me learn about the school and the Omaha community and the state of Nebraska we serve. These conversations heightened my excitement to join UNO and all of you in service to this community.

That said, it is essential to be systematic in learning about the campus and its needs. Sporadic conversations or conversations with only select individuals can lead to incomplete information. Therefore, I have sought to follow the “Entry Plan Approach” which includes: developing systematically a set of initial conversations to assess the needs, aspirations, and strengths of the campus; offering initial impressions and feedback to campus stakeholders so as to “calibrate” what I have learned; developing a set of focused initial actions which addresses critical needs identified by all of you; and prioritizing our activities so that all are able to participate, understand, and iterate as we learn more.

### Goals:

1. To get to know the people of UNO both personally and professionally. In turn, I hope the Maverick family will come to know me as fully as possible in this brief period of time.
2. To learn the history and norms of the school, and how these affect how the organization functions at present and may function in the future.
3. To determine concerns/issues in regard to students’ performance, the professional careers of faculty and staff, and our connections to the community.
4. To set clear expectations for myself and others.
5. To ensure alignment of my activities with the UNO Strategic Plan and the Chancellor’s vision as articulated in the September 5, 2019, State of the University address.
6. To formulate, with the UNO community, our priorities and a plan to accomplish them.
7. To build a strong foundation for connection and communication.
8. To establish myself as an interested listener and learner, as well as a supportive and a proactive leader.

To be sure, no process will ever be perfect. Mindful of the rich traditions of the campus and the legacy of strong leadership among the deans and staff in the SVC’s office, what I commit to everyone is to listen, synthesize, and iterate as we learn together how best to tackle the opportunities ahead. Rather than being the stereotype of an individual with a “solution looking for a problem to solve,” I seek to empower the ideas and decision making of the deans, colleges, faculty, staff, and students. Ultimately, all of our efforts should empower and drive forward the UNO strategic vision.



By sharing this document with the campus community, I seek to communicate my activities, communicate and test my learning process, make transparent the process to develop action plans, and learn from you whether there are gaps in my learning that could lead incorrect prioritization. My intent is to develop a shared understanding across all constituencies of exactly what is going on, increase trust, and create a shared commitment to the goals that emerge from this process.

## 2. SVC's Opening Message to Campus

16 July 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your warm welcome to the UNO community. It's an honor to join you and Chancellor Gold in service to our mission to educate, create, discover, and contribute to the economic and cultural life of this community.

Under Chancellor Gold's leadership, UNO will continue to grow as an exemplar metropolitan university. In the past weeks, I talked with many of you, and am grateful for your questions and comments as I begin to learn about UNO and our community. I look forward to learning your aspirations and ideas both as individuals and for the university, and getting to know UNO through your eyes.

In the coming months, it will be exciting to get to know you (and you me); to learn the history, mission, and culture of UNO and how it functions and seeks to function in the future; examine efforts toward student retention and creative/scholarly activities; work with you, the Chancellor, the Deans, and fellow Vice Chancellors to formulate strategic priorities and a plan to accomplish them; and build on UNO's strong foundation of community.

My wife Gretchen and I, and our family, are thrilled to be in Omaha. Gretchen and I both grew up in Iowa, and are pleased to be back in the Midwest, which we call home.

I am grateful to Chancellor Gold, the Vice Chancellors, the Deans, and all of you for the opportunity to join this energetic, collaborative, and forward-looking community.

I am excited about our journey together.

With warmest regards,  
Sacha



### 3. Entry Plan Activities for Key Groups

<p><b>Academic Deans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read previous performance reviews, self-evaluations, 360 reviews.</li> <li>• Read annual reports of the colleges.</li> <li>• Establish regular meetings of academic deans to learn priorities and set goals.</li> <li>• Meet individually and with subgroups of deans to learn priorities, concerns.</li> <li>• Create regular opportunities for informal conversations, social gatherings, and building relationships.</li> <li>• Create process for strategic plan implementation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vice Chancellors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish consistent opportunities for formal and informal meetings.</li> <li>• Be present and available for consistent and collaborative communication.</li> <li>• Interview VC's about the effectiveness of my office.</li> <li>• Learn about ways our respective offices can collaborate on campus goals.</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms for jointly supporting the Chancellor's goals (avoid "hub and spoke").</li> </ul>
<p><b>Faculty and staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify faculty leaders throughout the campus as relayed by deans, other administrators, and faculty.</li> <li>• Meet with faculty leaders and conduct informational interviews.</li> <li>• Attend college meetings.</li> <li>• Attend chairs and directors meetings.</li> <li>• Tour through labs, centers, classrooms, etc with faculty across campus.</li> <li>• Visit with Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Staff Advisory Council.</li> <li>• Continue consultative communication with SAC and Fac Senate leadership.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student Success Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with student success team members over coffee or other informal settings.</li> <li>• Conduct informational interviews about their roles, their experiences, and their priorities for the campus.</li> <li>• Meet with Student Success leadership team</li> <li>• Request priority list of goals and action items as seen by their team.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities for greater collaborative meetings between StSuc team and academic deans, faculty.</li> <li>• Identify investment priorities from Completion Imperative.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Office of Academic Affairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct informational interviews.</li> <li>• Establish formal meetings for OAA.</li> <li>• Hire executive coach for the office team.</li> <li>• Evaluate org chart for the office, roles and responsibilities of team members.</li> <li>• Establish needs for any new positions.</li> <li>• Establish vision, mission, and goals of the office aligned with Strategic Plan priorities.</li> <li>• Create Action Plan for the year.</li> <li>• Establish regular informal and social meetings with team members.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Chancellor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular meeting schedule.</li> <li>• Learn his priorities for campus.</li> <li>• Share experiences learned from campus deans, faculty, staff.</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for collaborative meetings with VCs.</li> <li>• Accompany Chancellor in meetings with campus stakeholder groups, external partners, rural communities, etc.</li> <li>• Develop "action plan" and measures of accountability for me.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alumni and Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit with alumni/community boards of colleges or schools as invited.</li> <li>• Accompany Chancellor on trips to rural Nebraska communities.</li> <li>• Accept invitations from Alumni Foundation to meet with stakeholder groups.</li> <li>• Participate in Omaha Chamber Executive Institute.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with Student Government representatives.</li> <li>• Attend meetings of organizations and affinity groups across campus.</li> <li>• Meet with Student Government Senate.</li> <li>• Attend performances, recitals, student presentations, and student recognition events.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Entry Plan Activities Timeline

May	August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone calls with individual deans.</li> <li>• Phone calls with several members of OAA team.</li> <li>• Request deans self-evaluations, 360 reviews</li> <li>• Confer with BJ Reed and Deb Smith Howell on transition.</li> <li>• Move to Omaha.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual meetings with deans.</li> <li>• Individual interviews with faculty and staff.</li> <li>• Facilitated retreat with OAA and executive coach.</li> <li>• Strategic Planning retreat with deans.</li> <li>• Create job posting for Budget Director.</li> <li>• Review enrollment trends, opportunities with Enrollment Management and deans.</li> <li>• Attend Strategic Plan Steering Committee summary of Completion Imperative ideas.</li> <li>• Met with chairs/directors in campus-wide meeting and at college meetings.</li> <li>• Meet new faculty at orientation.</li> <li>• Finalize priority list (Section 7) with deans.</li> <li>• Craft revised faculty recruiting process in collaboration with the deans.</li> <li>• OIE study on possible campus budget models.</li> <li>• Week vacation with family.</li> <li>• Review data on faculty demographics.</li> </ul>
June	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about OAA and colleges' budget, reserves, commitments.</li> <li>• Individual meetings with deans.</li> <li>• Meetings w members of search committee.</li> <li>• First informal and formal meetings w deans.</li> <li>• Informal interviews with VCs.</li> <li>• Request names of faculty and staff leaders across campus.</li> <li>• First walking tour of campus.</li> <li>• Informal interviews with individual faculty.</li> <li>• Process new requests for faculty hiring, establish accelerated timeline for future hires</li> <li>• Review data on student success, confer with OIE, OAA, deans, Student Success teams.</li> <li>• Hire executive coach for SVC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OAA team meetings to revise org chart, create role of Chief of Staff, AVC for Faculty Affairs, AVC for Curriculum &amp; Programs.</li> <li>• Met with deans and Enroll Mg't developing action plan for strategic (re)enrollment.</li> <li>• Finalize those Completion Plan priorities from SPSC that consensus points to needing funds.</li> <li>• Attend community meetings (MOEC, Midlands Latino Ctr, Learning Communities of Douglas and Sarpie Counties, Scottish Rite).</li> <li>• Met with Academic Affairs offices.</li> <li>• Walkthroughs of Eppley and ASH.</li> <li>• Informal interviews with faculty and staff.</li> <li>• Request space inventories for ASH, Kayser, Allwine, Durham.</li> <li>• Initial interviews for College of Business dean</li> <li>• Created white paper on workforce development w input from deans and other campus leaders (learning exercise for SVC).</li> <li>• Attended faculty stakeholder group meetings (Grad Council, Fac Senate Exec Cmte, Grad Council, Grad Chairs meeting)</li> <li>• Attend welcome events for colleges as invited</li> <li>• Attend student welcome and recognition events, Student Government Senate meeting</li> <li>• Committee selects finalists for AVC Inclusion.</li> <li>• Meet with Student Gov't Senate</li> </ul>

July	October
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking tours of campus buildings</li> <li>• Informal interviews with individual faculty</li> <li>• Meet with faculty stakeholder groups (Senate, WiSTEM, Med Hum, STEM TRAIL, AAUP, etc)</li> <li>• Walk-through of faculty labs, centers, teaching labs, etc.</li> <li>• Review with deans informal “priority list” of campus concerns from faculty conversations.</li> <li>• Finalize budget snapshot of reserves, commitments for presentation to Ewald, Chancellor.</li> <li>• Created op ed on campus efforts toward community engagement using input from deans and other campus leaders (learning exercise).</li> <li>• Meet with Academic Affairs teams</li> <li>• Synthesize Engagement Survey results</li> <li>• Hire executive coach for OAA office</li> <li>• Develop Strategic Planning framework for UNO Goals 2 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Attend campus events and workshops as invited.</li> <li>• Meet with chairs/directors of colleges as invited by deans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning retreat with the deans – Big Ideas process.</li> <li>• Second retreat with OAA and executive coach to develop roles/responsibilities in office and action plan for the year.</li> <li>• Attend community events (Golden Circle, MOEC, STEM Ecosystem, Kiewit)</li> <li>• Announce Sarah Edwards as AVC</li> <li>• Attend stakeholder meetings (SAC, Senate, AAUP)</li> <li>• Share 10 cross-campus themes as part of Big Ideas process. Invite further collaboration from all faculty on the 10 themes.</li> <li>• Campus visits for College Business Admin. dean finalists</li> <li>• Campus visits for AVC Inclusion</li> <li>• Share Entry Plan Report with the campus</li> </ul>

## 5. Individual Informational Interviews with Faculty and Staff

My entry activities were/are intended to enable members of the UNO community and I to learn about each other and for me to see UNO through the eyes of faculty, staff, and students. I hope, through these conversations, to understand what makes UNO special, what has created difficulties for individuals and groups, and your perspectives on what is needed from my leadership. I hope we will thereby work together in setting a direction for the future of UNO.



My typical questions in individual meetings went something like this:

1. Tell me about yourself and your career evolution.
2. What was it like for you relocating to Omaha? How have you found this community?
3. Tell me about what brought you to UNO and what you have found special here?
4. What challenges do you see in your job and what are you doing to address these?
5. What do you see as institutional opportunities that are special because of where we are (Omaha, Nebraska, the Midwest)? What do you want your role to be in working toward these opportunities?
6. How do you perceive the institution makes decisions, and how do you learn about them? How would you like to be involved in decision making?
7. How, if at all, have you interacted with my office or with the Senior Vice Chancellor? What have been your impressions?
8. Every institution goes through chapters in its history. UNO has gone through several transitions. Given this recent history, what do you think the institution needs right now from me and my office under my leadership? How can I be most helpful?
9. As a newcomer, I will try to be responsive to various needs as they emerge. How will I know if I'm on the right track? What are the ways this campus offers feedback to leadership?
10. Is there anything you'd like to know about me?

Of course, not every conversation followed the same script. Suffice it to say, my informational interviews were intended to enable us to learn about one another and see from your perspective what is needed for the institution. If these questions don't sound right, or will miss key directions, please let me know.

This effort was not intended to replicate the campus-wide RESPECT survey. The purpose here was more specific to my onboarding and learning the academic needs of the campus.

This effort was also not intended to divert attention away from the UNO Strategic Planning process or the Chancellor's vision as given in the September 5<sup>th</sup> State of the University. Quite the opposite. These conversations sought to understand where we are at so as to be able to deliver impact from across the academic sector on those goals and that vision.

Every comment made during these conversations was kept confidential. The high-level summary in Section 6 has been scrubbed so no identifying comments are included.

## 6. Observations and Learnings



Following a number of meetings and individual interviews, below are a number of high-level comments from faculty, staff, and administrators. For sake of organization, these are grouped in to several categories. There appeared to be general agreement that these are the key issues, though of course it is always the case that the solutions to any of these concerns will require forthcoming conversation.

### Student Achievement

- We could do better in planning for the entering class, given it's the same or nearly so every year. Capacity issues persist. Said one person, "It feels like Ground Hog Day." Gen Ed required courses are not available to freshmen because they are fully enrolled by upper class students. Just 10 courses result in \$22M lost revenue because students transfer in the course credit from other campuses (unable to take at UNO).
- At the same time as course availability is an issue, a substantial number of courses at the university enrolled <10 students in Summer and Fall 2019.
- The deans and colleges could be better empowered and engaged in enrollment planning.
- The Student Success team and the Office of Academic Affairs could work together more closely.
- We offer many services and support for the TLC students, which is great, but how can we deliver the same positive impact for all students.
- Advising is handled very differently in different academic units. Some are fully staffed. Others insufficiently staffed. Some colleges have central advising, others decentralized. We must ensure the path is clear for all students.
- The degree plans of the campus graduate a wide range of students – in some cases 200+ students per year and in some cases 2-3 students per year.
- Grad rates have achieved 53% for the first time ever, which is fantastic. However, grad rates for undeclared students are 8%, indicating that all the hard work of recent past has had the most benefit for students in declared majors.
- Several faculty could point to areas of high DFW rates, specific to certain programs. This suggests we need to review the data and decide whether something can be done about it. Is there low-hanging fruit?
- There is a scarcity of space on campus (classrooms, labs), especially Mon-Tue-Wed-Thurs. Substantially more flexibility on Fridays. Either need more space or use more days of the week.

### Strategic Planning

- Broad consensus that we need to be intentional about resource investment. Little sense of what the priorities should be. How should we decide?
- Several individuals expressed the opinion that graduate program GA lines are more about teaching than research.
- There's a great deal of change at UNO. How do we both celebrate what has made UNO special and remain open to new possibilities?
- Several people could point to ways in which the deans all have a tradition of collaborating, which is great. This suggests that the campus is less siloed than many other institutions. At the same time, several individuals pointed to efforts in which collaboration could improve, either across colleges or with external partners.

- The campus has been (rightly) focused on graduation rates and the Completion Imperative. What about the academic programs? Where do we want to invest? While Goal 1 of the UNO Strategic Plan seems well underway, what about Goals 2, 3, 4?
- There was concern among several that planning meetings don't lead to tangible change, and just lead to papers sitting on a shelf. Want to see actionable steps being taken.

### Budget

- Several felt there is little/no incentive to grow online revenues, given lack of a revenue distribution model to the colleges.
- BJ attempted to shield the colleges from many of the budget cuts of recent years. However, that has left the Office of Academic Affairs with little/no flexibility to assist with new initiatives or cross-campus priorities.
- A new budget allocation process is needed to transparently and judiciously allocate whatever central funds are available, especially as we are not in flush budgetary times.
- Deans don't have a clear role in enrollment – nor incentives such as budget attached to productivity.
- Not all the colleges have adequate expertise or staffing in budgeting. Consequently, the staff in OAA are using a great deal of time processing and fixing paperwork. This leaves little time for long term planning.
- The colleges were submitting adjunct budgets in July, after the fiscal year has started. This suggests we need to do better in prospective budgeting, or else we will be making ad hoc decisions. This is supported by the fact that enrollment is down for the 2019-20 academic year, we hired 80 new faculty this year, and yet the colleges submitted a net 50% increase in adjunct requests.
- The campus has had to hunker down, keeping reserves for budget cuts anticipated each year. This was understandable given the previous years' budget climates. However, it has led to underspending of budget authority and delays implementing much-needed staffing within the colleges and the development of substantial cash reserves in the colleges.
- There has been confusion about our actual budget position within the academic sector, with different numbers being calculated by OAA and Budget/Finance. We need to work together even more closely so that the correct steps forward can be taken with foresight.
- Much has been made about student recruitment as a mechanism to achieve enrollment goals for the campus. The Enrollment Management has made substantial gains in increasing our market share, but such efforts are reaching a plateau, suggesting that there is little ground to be gained in expanding recruitment. At the same time, the campus loses 30-40% of its students each year who do not re-enroll between Spring and Fall – what are the sources of this enrollment attrition?
- Summer 2019 had nearly 1/3 of all undergrad courses with <10 enrolled. This cost approximately \$800k in expenditures, and would have yielded a net zero revenue.
- There was lack of clarity about our priorities about how to grow the budget. Growing enrollment? Growing online? Growing masters programs? Growing sponsored research?
- The campus master space plan is now out of date. While much progress has been made, what are the next priorities for facilities and buildings?
- Given prior years' budget challenges, it has felt to some like the campus was scrambling reactively, not planning proactively.

### Faculty and Staff Development

- Faculty recruitment requests had come in only in June, and were only being approved at Cabinet in July-August. This means UNO is substantially behind other campuses, who are using the summer conference season as recruiting opportunities.
- As expressed by some faculty, midcareer faculty are not mentored. Others would say we already do faculty mentoring. Either there are differing views on what is adequate mentoring, or there are differing practices across the colleges and departments. Either way, there is an opportunity for learning from each other and further dialog here.
- There was widespread recognition that there are relatively few senior female faculty mentors
- We lost diverse faculty due to absence of retention tools
- With respect to diversity, there are questions, and possibly even mistrust, whether the institutional leadership has serious commitment to this effort.
- Want all faculty to feel valued, whether their primary contribution is research or teaching. There is concern that a greater emphasis on campus research/creative-activities may come at the detriment of our commitment to teaching.
- There are issues of salary compression taking place across campus. The faculty expressed frustration unanimously with having to conduct annual reviews, given that so little merit money was available to distinguish meritorious performance.
- It was stated that UNO relies far too much on adjuncts. How can the campus prioritize full time employment? How can we make instructors feel like a valued part of the institution?
- There was frustration that no promotional system exists for instructors, eg: Professor of Practice.

#### Philanthropic campaign

- Many expressed a desire for closer collaboration between the academic programs and the Alumni Affairs part of the Foundation, especially in outreach and contact lists.
- Several cited the need to align campaign goals with academic strategic plan. What are our priorities?
- Several expressed a desire for more training in donor cultivation and fundraising.

#### Leadership

- The campus prides itself as a relationship-driven institution. It is essential for the SVC to be a presence on campus. Not just for the sake of visibility, but to be available to listen to peoples' concerns and to be available to explain the priorities and direction of the campus.
- The OAA team is viewed both with respect in the individuals (who have the best interests of the institution at heart) and with concern that the SVC's office was a bottleneck for processes.
- Several people could not identify the roles and responsibilities of the SVC's office, the colleges, the Student Success team, etc. It would be valuable to evaluate which functions need to take place at the SVCs level and which can be delegated to the colleges.
- Several individuals could point to the priorities and direction of the Student Success team, and then wondered what are the priorities of the academic sector?
- Several people had questions about how an outsider coming in as SVC would learn about the values and strengths of the campus. Would the new SVC value the comprehensive programs of the colleges? The engaged metropolitan mission? The teaching mission?
- Numerous individuals cited the need for more communication.
- It was stated we don't adequately prepare new chairs, just for processes, not for leadership.
- The leadership is not as diverse as the faculty ranks.

## 7. Priorities that Emerged from This Process

The following priorities appear to emerge from the observations and learnings of the previous section. These priorities should now become the basis for discussion across the campus. Are these correct? Are there others? The priorities speak only to the “what” informed by the “why” of the previous section. This list does not spell out “how,” “who,” or “when.” That is, these priorities may require actions from the colleges, the Division of Student Success, the Office of Academic Affairs, Business and Finance, or collaborations thereof. Further, these priorities require detailed action plans in order to assess which are feasible and over what time scales.

### Student Achievement

- Ensuring course capacities match enrollments and use of time vectors
- Readiness and placement testing pre-matriculation
- Summer session (online) capacity – expanding access
- INDS major and TLC-like structure for undeclared students.
- Academic advising across the campus
- Student recruitment (internal) and retention staffing across the campus
- Remissions strategies for recruitment+retention
- Building connections between Academic Affairs & Student Affairs offices
- Workforce development in degree plans



### Academic Excellence and Strategic Planning

- Goal 2&3: How do we prioritize investments in programs vis a vis research/scholarship/creative-activity?
- Aligning grad programs (and collections) with research/scholarly/creative mission
- Priority facilities needs? Space allocation that ensures success of programs?



### Financial and Institutional Stewardship

- Creating a budget calendar for decisions
- Online revenues — growing and appropriate level of expenditures
- Increasing sponsored research revenues, foundation philanthropic support, and philanthropic giving.
- Create budget allocation process that provides incentives to colleges and prioritizes resources toward campus-level strategic initiatives (Completion Imperative, Big Ideas process)
- Develop and implement initiatives that increase re-enrollment of students



### Faculty and Staff Development

- Support and advancement of midcareer faculty
- Gender and diversity balance of the faculty
- Salary structure of faculty
- Expanding full time employment of faculty lines, especially in specific priority areas of instruction
- Explore a ladder rank system for instructional faculty.
- Through shared governance, re-examine RPT, last updated 1990
- Staff professional development



It's worth pointing out that these priority areas align well with the UNO Strategic Plan and its four goals (1: Student Centeredness, 2: Academic Excellence, 3: Community Engagement, 4: Institutional Quality), and the Chancellor's vision as set out during the Investiture ceremony.

## 8. Action: Completion Imperative Projects



On August 14, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee met. Consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators from across campus, they formed 6 working groups to brainstorm on topics related to student success. At the August 14 meeting, these groups provided their report after a year's work. Hearing this input, the deans, Vice Chancellor Shipp, and I prepared a set of funding recommendations to the Chancellor. The message below was communicated to the campus community. Thereafter, several working groups formed to implement these excellent projects. The intent is for these to be developed fully this year so as to be deployed for the next (Fall 2020) entering class of students

September 12, 2019

Dear Mavericks,

Last week we marked a new stage in UNO's history as our community came together to [celebrate Chancellor Gold's investiture](#) and the bright future ahead for the campus and our students.

As Chancellor Gold mentioned in his remarks, UNO must tackle audacious goals to be a higher education leader, and the [UNO Strategic Plan](#) sets four very lofty goals. Goal One, Student Centeredness, includes the Completion Imperative. Through the [Completion Imperative](#), we seek to reduce barriers to student success so they can be supported through a series of specific and targeted efforts to help them matriculate from enrollment to graduation.

At the August 14 Strategic Plan Steering Committee, members of the campus community came together to report on a year's work on the Completion Imperative. Faculty and staff committees reported on several major ideas, and the Office of Academic Affairs presented a plan to fund these to Chancellor Gold. As Chancellor Gold announced in his State of the University address, we are excited to get underway.

The ideas include developing expanded access to general education courses, a "Summer Bridge" support program for incoming students who are academically at-risk, a new "Interdisciplinary Studies" program to support otherwise undeclared students, and an enhancement of our academic advising capacity.

Your voice has been heard and the following initiatives will begin implementation in the coming weeks:

### **Expanded Access to General Education Courses**

We are working with specified schools and departments to help faculty develop online course offerings of critical general education courses to help expand our capacity and provide access to a wider number of students. This includes areas like mathematics, speech, English composition, and more.

### **The UNO Summer Bridge Program**

Often times the difference between a student succeeding or not being retained can be attributed to a lack of structural support. To help provide that support at the earliest possible time, we are piloting the UNO Summer Bridge Program in Summer 2020. This effort will allow our most academically at-risk students access to general education courses as well as mentoring from peers and academic advisors at the earliest possible stages of their first full year as a Maverick.

**Interdisciplinary Studies**

Each year, roughly 800 students at UNO have not declared a major, which often means they may feel they don't have a college 'home'. Research shows these students, who are not immediately engaged with a major and faculty, are at much higher risk of not graduating. This is why we are re-introducing the Interdisciplinary Studies (INDS) program within the College of Arts and Sciences, to which those students without an academic major will be assigned. This new major is designed to allow students to declare "areas of interest" and explore programs across all the colleges.

**Enhancements to Academic Advising**

As we continue to grow our incoming first-year student numbers, we also need to grow our own academic support resources. To ensure our first-year students are successful, we will enhance our current staff of academic advisors by adding three new full-time positions to the Academic and Career Development Center; three new full-time advisors to the College of Arts and Sciences; and identifying a campus-wide academic advising coordinator to ensure a consistency of experience for all students, regardless of their area of study.

While these are just some of the initiatives underway as part of UNO's larger Completion Imperative, and many of them are just in their beginning stages, they are examples of truly innovative Maverick thinking and your commitment to our students.

More information on the Completion Imperative, and how you can be involved, can be found on the UNO website at [unomaha.edu/news/the-completion-imperative.php](http://unomaha.edu/news/the-completion-imperative.php).

Please know that your efforts will surely have an incredible impact on our students' lives and the lives of future generations by creating a pathway to success and higher education achievement. For that, we thank you; and we know our students and their families do as well.

Sincerely,

Sacha Kopp, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Daniel Shipp, Ed.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Student Success

## 9. Action: UNO Strategic Plan Goals 2 & 3 “UNO Big Ideas” process



Having received feedback that greater intentionality was required in resource allocation, and also greater transparency, the deans, vice chancellors, and I collaborated to create a new process modelled after the NU System Big Ideas process. The proposed process will build on areas of strength, encourage collaboration across the colleges, build our research and community engagement mission, and encourage partnerships with external entities in the greater Omaha area. The following message announced the process to campus. The process and timeline follows.

22 August 2019

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, the four goals of the [UNO Strategic Plan](#) are (1) Student Centeredness; (2) Academic Excellence; (3) Community Engagement; and (4) Institutional Quality. The UNO community has been fully engaged in planning efforts connected with Goal #1 in its efforts toward the [completion imperative](#).

This year, we will additionally embark on planning for Goals 2 & 3. The plans for identifying and advancing academic programs of excellence should be considered together with our aspirations for community engagement, given UNO’s mission to serve as an engaged metropolitan university.

At the August 14 Strategic Plan Steering Committee “mini retreat,” Chancellor Gold challenged us to think big and ask what big ideas can enhance and grow UNO. In other words, what programs of excellence will allow the academic enterprise help expand and articulate the campus brand and mission? In selecting strategic signature areas of excellence, we identify cross-cutting themes for the campus to which all colleges, in principle, may align. Colleges may participate in one or more of the strategic areas.

The process envisioned will provide full transparency and accountability for the resources invested by UNO administration; we seek to ensure the faculty, staff, and students understand choices for resource investment in these selected areas and are critically involved in the proposal process. The process ensures that resources provided to the colleges and programs are considered in full view of all “opportunity costs.” The process also seeks to ensure that we as a campus track these investments in a timely manner, and adapt if results do not match our aspirations or if new opportunities emerge.

Many ideas already exist within the UNO community and the deans have been working with their faculty and staff as well as each other on collaborative ideas that build on each college’s strengths. This process is intended to converge expeditiously on a set of 4-5 signature themes out of that body of work.

[An outline of the proposed process is available at this link.](#)

It is fully expected that the colleges will, in addition, continue to advance their individual strategic programs. Each college is a comprehensive, multi-program academic unit. This campus-wide planning process governs how we will invest and prioritize central resources and ensure college-level investment toward these campus initiatives.

I look forward to working with you in the months ahead on this important and exciting opportunity to articulate the campus vision and direction for academic excellence, research and creative activities, and community engagement.

Warm regards,

Sacha Kopp  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

### **UNO Strategic Plan Goals 2&3**

Looking at UNO Strategic Plan 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> goals, herein is proposed a framework for a “UNO Big Ideas” or “Signature Areas of Excellence” proposal process. We’ll identify 4-5 areas of excellence that allow all colleges to compete and hopefully may span colleges in cross-disciplinary cluster.

The process:

- Formulate finite list of proposals of academic programs or themes
- Identify metrics for evaluating success of the program
- Identify and rationalize 10-15 aspirational institutions for each program
- Create Proposal / Self-study for each program, comparing UNO to aspirational institutions. Must identify alignments, opportunities, and challenges with respect to:
  - Institutional partners (UARC, MOEC, UNMC, UNL, StratComm...)
  - UNO physical plant resources and deficiencies
  - External funding (federal, state, foundation) opportunities
  - Philanthropic and community organizations in Omaha and Nebraska
  - Student-related outcomes (workforce, experiential opportunities, etc)
- Identify resources required to advance amongst aspirational set of institutions, and the metrics by which progress will be assessed.

Groups for planning discussions

- Planning: Academic Deans, facilitated by external consultant/coach
- Advisory: Ad hoc committee of research-intensive faculty
- Feasibility: SVC, Ken Bayles, Doug Ewald, Dan Shipp, Mike Bird, Makayla McMorris

Progress should be reported to and feedback sought from:

- Faculty Senate
- Staff Advisory Committee
- Chairs/Directors semi-annual meeting
- Strategic Planning Steering Committee
- UNO Vice Chancellors and Chancellor

After initial round of investments are decided

- Track metrics to assess progress toward outcomes.
- Create evaluation team and process/template to
  - Review progress annually, provide guidance for subsequent years
  - Prepare annual progress report and external marketing/PR communications
- Declare success or discontinuation after 3-5 years
- Create sustainability plan within colleges’ budgets
- Incorporate projects into UNO Philanthropic Campaign

In future phases,

- Institute similar review process across programs within colleges
- Solicit next round of “UNO Big Ideas” proposals

### **Timeline for UNO Big Ideas Process**

- We started with approximately 20 possible ideas (pre-proposals) being considered
- Aug 23 – Oct 1: Deans/faculty work on 2.5pg pre-proposals
- Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 3-5pm: deans + SVC + Ken Bayles mini-retreat. Each idea is “pitched” to group
- Oct 1 – Oct 8: Triage 20 pre-proposals in to 10 major themes
- Oct 10: Top 10 big ideas shared with the campus  
Deans share top 10 ideas with their faculty. Invitations to collaborate, etc.  
Deans start working on long proposals (due 11/25)
- Oct 16: SVC reports on top 10 at Chancellor’s Cabinet and Faculty Senate Exec Cmte
- Oct 18: Deans report on top 10 big ideas at Strategic Planning Steering Committee
- Nov 13: SVC reports on 10 ideas at Faculty Senate
- Nov 25: Long proposals due
- Dec 4: Deans report on top 10 ideas at Chancellor’s Cabinet
- Dec 11: Report on top 10 ideas at Faculty Senate
- Dec 13 (date TBD): Campus Forum on top 10 big ideas
- Jan 6: All day retreat with deans. Identify 4 big ideas + 2 alternates
- Jan 8-10 (approx.): confer with Chancellor + VC’s
- Jan 13 – 24: SVC and deans working on budgets
- Jan 31: Public announcement of 4-5 Big Ideas

### **Comparison with Previous “Big Ideas” process (2011)**

Based on feedback from the deans, there is much to be learned from the previous “Big Ideas” process conducted by the campus in 2011.

#### What worked in the past

- Philanthropy
- Administrative support of ideas
- Key faculty drivers
- Diverse leadership across faculty
- Resources from administration
- Tied to areas of existing strength

#### What didn’t work

- Didn’t assess feasibility
- Was done quickly
- No planning process with metrics
- Wasn’t linked to strategic planning
- Philanthropy came later
- No process to add or amend ideas
- No new resources
- Insufficient coordination with NU system

## 10. Organization of the Office of Academic Affairs

### Vision and Mission of the Office of Academic Affairs

Based on conversations across the campus, the OAA team worked to craft a vision and mission statement about its role in support of the campus. In crafting this vision and mission, we are working to define the role of OAA vis a vis the colleges, and ensure the colleges are empowered to undertake their work. The four broad goals below attempt to align with the feedback received from the deans and in informational interviews. Reflecting on the campus climate survey, furthermore, we articulated 6 essential values that inform our work with each other and how we will support the campus culture.

**Vision** The Office of Academic Affairs facilitates the pursuit of knowledge in an inclusive educational environment providing access to exceptional creative opportunities for UNO students, faculty, and staff.

**Mission** The Office of Academic Affairs provides leadership and support to UNO's diverse faculty, students, and staff. In doing so, the office empowers the campus strategic plan; serves as a catalyst for education and innovation; fosters high-level initiatives that transform the scholarly and learning environment. As stewards of resources we remain intentional in investing in academic excellence, community engagement, and student outcomes.



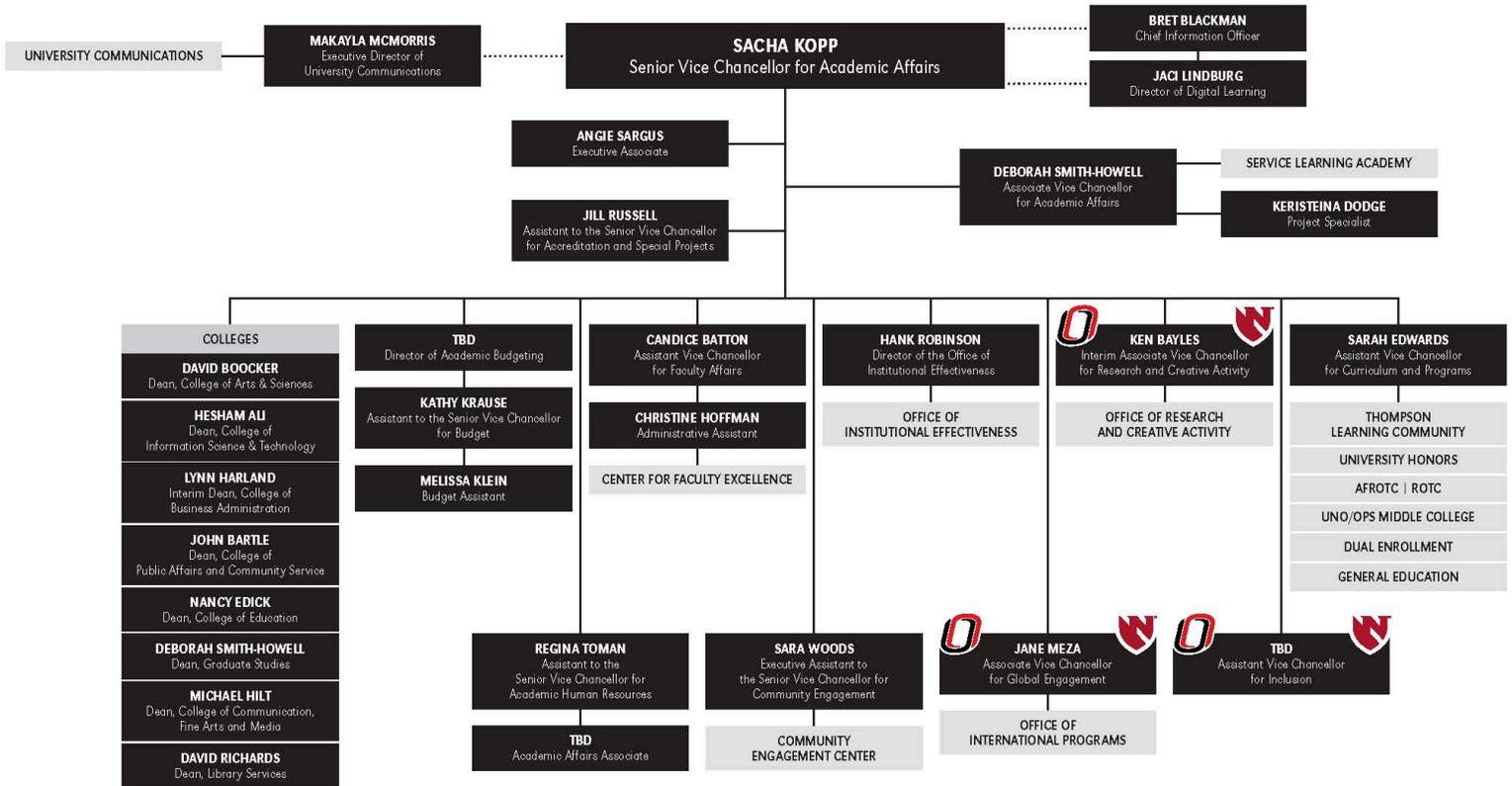
Goals	Student Achievement	Academic Excellence	Faculty Development	Institutional Stewardship
	We promote initiatives and coordinate college programs toward student completion, learning outcomes, and workforce preparation.	We foster planning for excellence, and prioritize strategic investment in programs of distinction, research, and community engagement.	We support the recruitment, advancement, and professional development of top tier faculty.	We cultivate new revenue generation and sound planning that leverages opportunities and faces external realities.

- Values**
- **Leadership:** we foster collaboration across the campus and community, incubate bold ideas and initiate new campus conversations. We cultivate leadership skills in ourselves and others.
  - **Champion:** we champion the mission of UNO and the contributions of everyone in our university and the community who make this mission possible.
  - **Inclusion:** we work to be inclusive of all perspectives, backgrounds, abilities, and identities in our university and in our metropolitan community. We foster two-way communication and learning to support the culture of inclusion.
  - **Transparency:** We foster dialog and data-informed decision-making within our office and the campus academic sector that is forthright, sets goals, builds trust, and embraces opportunities and challenges.
  - **Respect:** We embody highest professional conduct, sincere curiosity, teamwork, communication, and collegiality vital to a thriving, inclusive Maverick family. We communicate well to convey that respect.
  - **Accountability:** We hold ourselves to high standards. We follow through. We set concrete academic goals and institute processes and policies that deliver on these goals.

## Revised Organizational Chart for the Office of Academic Affairs

Following discussions with the campus community about the priorities for the Office of Academic Affairs, we sought to organize the office structure in better alignment with the goals of student achievement, faculty development, financial stewardship, and strategic planning. We created the roles of

- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Curriculum and Programs, bringing in portions of the portfolios of Deb Smith Howell and Candice Batton.
- Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, capitalizing on Deb Smith-Howell’s extensive experience in the office and across campus. She serves as a key advisor to the SVC.
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs, to be filled by Candice Batton, who will advance topics of faculty progression, professional development, diversity, and equity.
- Director of Academic Budget, who will add FTE to a team tasked with servicing the academic sector as well as Division of Student Success.



## **Revised Position Descriptions within the Office of Academic Affairs**

In the process of evaluating the workloads of the OAA team, it was quickly discovered that all current staff and administration were working at 150%. Consequently, there was no capacity to undertake new initiatives or priorities such as those recommended by campus conversations. The re-organization of the team sought to capitalize on the extensive experience within the office, moving new projects to those individuals, while offloading operational functions which are working well. Further, it was sought to identify a new AVC position which logically grouped functions together under one individual, rather than the past state of affairs in which all the OAA team members had confusingly overlapping portfolios.

### **Assistant Vice Chancellor for Curriculum and Programs**

The AVC for Curriculum and Programs shall report directly to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The AVC for Curriculum and Programs oversees the undergraduate academic mission, and is a key partner to the academic colleges as well as the Division of Student Success. The AVC will oversee those programs that span multiple colleges, as well as foster campus-wide discussions on pedagogical innovation in the curriculum. The AVC will provide coordination across the colleges to ensure students across the university can achieve their academic goals. The portfolio of responsibilities shall include:

- Honors
  - University Honors Program
  - National Honors, Scholarships, and Awards
- Communities
  - Thompson Learning Community
  - AFROTC/ROTC
  - Coordination of best practices with college-level learning communities
- Student Support
  - UNO Scholarships and Support Funding
  - Tuition Remission
- Outreach
  - UNO/OPS Middle College
  - Dual Enrollment Programs
- Academic Curricula
  - Curriculum Development and Agreements
  - General Education requirements
  - Degree Program Creation and Assessment
  - Experiential learning
  - Education Policy Advisory Committee
  - Instructional technology, online degrees and courses
- Academic Course Budgeting
  - Course Availability
  - Academic Year Planning
  - Enrollment Management

**Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (Chief of Staff)**  
**Dean of Graduate Studies**

**Key Responsibilities for Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs:**

The Associate Vice Chancellor reports to the Senior Vice Chancellor and works directly with the Senior Vice Chancellor across the range of her/his responsibilities. The Associate Vice Chancellor functions as a senior advisor and facilitator to the SVC on short- and long-term issues and projects. S/he will provide coordination and liaison with the deans, Assistant Vice Chancellors and other senior administrators on matters of interest to the SVC. S/he will facilitate various planning functions and work on the SVC's behalf with senior academic administrators to strengthen operational excellence, communications and interdepartmental relationships. The Associate Vice Chancellor is a key member of the SVC's senior management team and works to insure that the SVC's agenda and initiatives are realized.

- Second-in-command for SVC for Academic Affairs; as requested represents the SVC
- Strategic Planning
  - Support the SVC in creation of planning process/framework
  - Coordinating campus-level goals.
  - Support analysis of efforts in UnePlan
- Strategic Initiatives
  - Creation of new programs or initiatives
  - Enrollment projections
  - Developing new budget calendar and incentive model
- New Programs and Academic Program Review
  - Alignment with institutional priorities and budget
  - Communication with NU System and CCPE
  - On-going monitoring of program completions
- Facilities Planning
- Community Engagement
  - UNO Service Learning Academy
  - Community Engagement Academic Plan development, implementation, and oversight/administration (with Sara Woods)

**Graduate Studies:**

The Office of Graduate Studies is responsible for all aspects of admissions to graduate student processing and support, enrollment management, and the academic governance of all UNO graduate program. In partnership with UG Admissions, Global Engagement, the colleges/programs, and University Communication, Graduate Studies is responsible for recruitment and marketing of UNO graduate programs. Graduate Studies has an Associate Dean and eight staff positions.

## **Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs**

The AVC for Faculty Affairs supports the SVCAA in advancing the mission and development of the faculty at UNO. The overarching goal is a supportive, inclusive environment that fosters excellence in scholarship and teaching. The AVC works in collaboration with the Assistant to the SVC for Academic Appointments and the Director of Academic Budgets. The portfolio of responsibilities shall include:

- Faculty searches
  - Supporting best practices in faculty searches
  - Creating campus dialog on faculty search strategies
  - Monitoring progress of individual faculty searches
  - Monitoring formal offer letters to faculty candidates
- Promotion and Tenure
  - Creating campus dialog on faculty RPT best practices
  - Coordinating with department chairs on RPT practices
  - *Ex officio* chair of campus RPT process review committee
  - Support the SVC in development of promotional track for instructors
- Faculty Recognition
  - Endowed professorship coordination
  - Spearheading national recognition for faculty
  - Coordination of campus-wide faculty awards
  - Faculty Honors Convocation (in collab. with Exec. Dir. of Univ. Communications)
- Annual Review
  - AEFIS
  - Faculty profiles
  - Analysis of Workload data from OIE to assess unit allocations
- Retention and Faculty Life
  - Assess quality of life for faculty across rank, gender, etc
  - Fostering campus dialog on the faculty experience
  - Coordinate with CFE on professional development
  - Coordinate with CFE on new faculty workshops
  - Coordinate with CFE on chair development

## 11. Proposed Metrics for Success



The purpose of metrics to ensure continuous tracking, align resources and plans with outcomes, and develop actionable plans for improvement. Implementing metrics for evaluation allow for continuous quality improvement, and avoids emergencies when key measures of success are observed after the fact to have been in decline. It must be emphasized that “more is not necessarily better” when it comes to monitoring metrics – metrics are a tool to evaluate year-over-year performance relative to academic goals.

We can use metrics to:

- Monitor growth and progress of academic programs.
- Create proactive action plans.
- Inform resource allocation within the colleges.
- Demonstrate accountability of the Office of Academic Affairs.

This section is still in draft form, and requires further vetting with the Deans, Vice Chancellors, and Chancellor. It is hoped to finalize a list of metrics of Fall 2019 semester.

\*\*\*\*\***DRAFT**\*\*\*\*\*

<b>Student Achievement</b>	<b>Academic Excellence</b>	<b>Faculty Development</b>	<b>Institutional Stewardship</b>
1. Enrolled headcount	1. Academic program ranking	1. Diversity by Ethnicity and Gender at all Faculty at all Ranks	1. Annual, On-campus, Online, and Summer session SCH
2. First-to-second year retention	2. Scholarly publications	2. Percentage of full-time faculty	2. Adjunct budget
3. Reenrollment percentage	3. Community partnerships	3. Percent of faculty with terminal degree	3. Cash reserves
4. DFW rates in lower division courses	4. Faculty FTE in programs	4. Salary pool for merit and COLA	4. Number of courses <10 enrolled
5. Number of courses >95% capacity	5. Faculty national honors	5. Time in rank	5. Balance of MW, TTh, and MWF classes
6. Gender and ethnicity of students in programs	6. Media appearances	6. Service-related workload by rank.	6. Philanthropic revenues
7. Experiential Learning	7. Undergraduate majors & minors	7. Research-related workload by rank.	7. Sponsored research revenues
8. Service Learning	8. Graduate enrollment	8. Percentage of adjunct taught courses	8. Tuition remission ROI
9. Graduation rates		9. SCH per faculty	9. Staff FTE
10. Career placement			

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## 12. Where We Go From Here: the Next 100 Days

As I hope is conveyed from the present Entry Plan, it has been my intent throughout these first 100 days to assess the needs and learn the community of UNO. It is my intent to avoid ill-informed decisions, avoid the impulse to act too rapidly out of ill-advised enthusiasm, and avoid the inaction that can result from a lack of an intentional learning plan. Rather, I hope to develop and co-create with the UNO community a set of actions that harness the best ideas of the community, engage the campus in active and thoughtful discourse, foster a sense of shared vision aligned with the UNO Strategic Plan, and invite the entire campus in to the process of our continued success.



Although the critical questions may be clear enough, it is often the case that different perspectives may exist on appropriate answers. Such complexity requires further conversation, about the mission, about the tactics, about the timescale for implementation, and about how best to engage the campus community. I hope everyone will engage in these discussions.

Based on discussions thus far, it seems timely for us to continue exploring the following actions:

Re-Enrollment and Retention: What factors contribute to students not re-enrolling? What strategies can support students academically and continue to complete their degrees? How can we develop academic sector solutions that build on and complement the tremendous successes of the Student Success team? We will explore course availability, strategies for undeclared and transfer students, remissions strategies, and online courses.

Campus Budget Model: How do we incentivize colleges' activities and create accountability for measurable outcomes, while also prioritizing campus strategic objectives? Further, we will revise the calendar of decisions (hiring, sabbaticals/leaves, course planning) to create more accurate, proactive budget plans.

UNO Big Ideas Process: We will continue to develop programs of excellence, emphasizing those that foster cross-campus collaboration, deepen the research and creative activities mission, increase external revenues (grants and philanthropy), student outcomes, graduate program enhancement, and external partnerships. The campus will be engaged in identifying these themes and the tactics to implement them in our academic plan.

Faculty and Staff Development: We will continue exploring tactics that recruit and retain a diverse faculty, expand full time positions within critical areas of the curriculum, and support faculty and staff advancement in rank and remuneration.

Our collaborative learning and discourse about these topics will enable the best solutions. Further, we will ensure that we assess timelines and feasibility accurately, so that we don't launch initiatives without a detailed plan in place. I intend to include all stakeholders, so please let me know if I have omitted anyone or group. I am excited for our continued work together, and excited to see our conversations lead toward efforts aligned at the strategic objectives of UNO.

