October 16, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

At the State of the University Address in September, Chancellor Gold challenged us to think big in our aspirations for the campus. Through the UNO Big Ideas process, you all have been doing just that. I am writing to update you on that process and invite your continued collaboration and brainstorming.

As a reminder, the UNO Big Ideas process is intended to help the campus build additional depth in our scholarly and creative activities for faculty, staff, and students. Building on both existing areas of strength, or special partnerships within our region, we seek to identify those areas which can enhance UNO’s distinction academically, be even more exciting for students, and connect even more with our community.

Last week, the deans reviewed proposals developed across the colleges by faculty and staff. Many excellent ideas were brought forward, and the deans identified 10 major cross-cutting themes that encompassed these ideas. These 10 cross-cutting themes will now be the basis for proposed big ideas. In other words, the deans will be working with all of you to flesh out the ideas you have thus far generated into even more aspirational proposals for funding.

Over the next two months, our hope is that faculty and staff from across all the colleges will examine the 10 themes and ask how they can contribute to one or more of them.

The 10 major themes identified by the deans, and timeline of next steps, are available at this link. As you can see, they encompass exciting concepts such as the medical humanities, global security, vulnerable populations, biomechanics, and more. With each theme is a short summary of the ideas brought forward to date, as well as a contact name or names amongst the deans.

We will be discussing these themes, and inviting collaboration from all of you.

These proposals will be discussed at Chancellors Cabinet, the October 18 Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Faculty Senate, and other venues. I invite you to join in these teams wherever your interests lie.
Formal proposals are due at the end of November. The final step will be in January to select 5 of these 10 proposals as UNO Big Ideas.

Reflecting on the grand opportunities, the broad charge from the Chancellor, and the many talents of faculty, staff, and students, I am excited to see these ideas develop!

With warmest regards,

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