



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