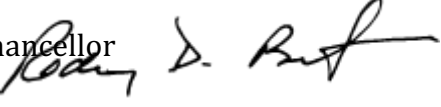




MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Clay Cressler, Chair, Academic Planning Committee

FROM: Rodney D. Bennett, Chancellor 

DATE: September 12, 2025

SUBJECT: Proposed Budget Reductions

Dear Dr. Cressler and Members of the Academic Planning Committee,

As required by the procedures for significant budget reductions and according to the timeline in the framework document we established last month, I am providing you an updated specific plan for reducing UNL's budget by \$27.5M. This plan was developed after close coordination with university leaders and has also incorporated the committee's feedback. The reductions proposed here are consistent with the priorities of the university's strategic plan and the governance rules of the university and its organizational units. I intend to make this plan public later today.

I request the APC's recommendations on the following proposed academic program eliminations, department realignments, and college budget reductions:

Academic Program Eliminations – Six academic programs are proposed for elimination for a total savings of \$7,700,000.

- Community and Regional Planning - \$475,000
The academic program would be eliminated. This includes the Master's in Community & Regional Planning, the undergraduate and graduate minors, and the Urban Design Graduate Certificate. Budget reductions will be achieved through the elimination of positions (4 FTE).
- Earth and Atmospheric Sciences - \$1,850,000
The proposed plan would eliminate the academic department and all programs. This includes the BS in Meteorology & Climatology, the BS in Geology, the MS in Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, the PhD in Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, and all of the associated undergraduate and graduate minors. Budget reductions will be achieved through the elimination of positions (12 FTE). High-performing faculty from the department may qualify for rehire within other UNL units to preserve educational pathways and research expertise.

- Educational Administration - \$1,950,000
The academic department would be eliminated as well as the following programs: the PhD/EdD in Educational Studies, with specialization in Educational Leadership and Higher Education; the EdD in Educational Administration; the Community College Leadership Graduate Certificate, and associated graduate minors. University leaders are considering a plan that would retain the MA in Educational Administration, and Administrative Certification Endorsements would be retained elsewhere in the college. Budget reductions will be achieved through the elimination of positions (17 FTE).
- Landscape Architecture - \$225,000
The academic program would be eliminated. This includes the Bachelor's in Landscape Architecture, and the associated undergraduate minor. Budget reductions will be achieved through the elimination of positions (2 FTE).
- Statistics - \$1,750,000
The proposed plan would eliminate a standalone Department of Statistics offering BS, MS, and PhD degrees and moves the university toward a distributed model that leverages expertise embedded across IANR, UNL and the NU system. The plan proposes to strategically deploy a portion of the state-appropriated funds to continue to offer selected undergraduate and graduate courses and provide coordinated statistical consulting. Budget reductions would be achieved through the elimination of positions (12 FTE).
- Textiles, Merchandising, & Fashion Design - \$1,450,000
The proposed plan would eliminate the academic department and degree programs. This includes the bachelor's degree, master's degree, PhD in Human Sciences with a specialization in TMFD, the associated undergraduate and graduate minors, and the Quilt Studies Graduate Certificate. Budget reductions will be achieved through the elimination of positions (11 FTE).

Department Realignments – Four academic departments are proposed for realignment into two new schools for a total savings of \$2,000,000.

- Departments of Entomology and Plant Pathology – \$1,000,000
The Departments of Entomology and Plant Pathology would be integrated within a new interdisciplinary school. This integration would ensure that teaching, research, and Extension remain aligned with workforce priorities and the long-term vitality of Nebraska's economy and communities.

If the budget plan is approved, the faculty from the two units, working alongside administration, would have the 2026 spring semester to develop the framework for the new school—including the name, operational guidelines, bylaws, promotion and tenure processes, and other faculty governance structures. MS and PhD degrees in Entomology and Plant Pathology would continue to be offered. Budget savings would be realized through natural attrition, including the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP).

- Departments of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication– \$1,000,000

The Departments of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication (ALEC) would be integrated within a new interdisciplinary school. This integration would ensure that expertise within these units is retained in IANR and teaching, research, and Extension programming is aligned with workforce priorities and the long-term vitality of Nebraska’s economy and communities.

If the budget plan is approved, the faculty from the two units, working alongside administration, would have the 2026 spring semester to develop the framework for the new school—including the name, operational guidelines, bylaws, promotion and tenure processes, and other faculty governance structures.

Current BS, MS, and PhD degree pathways would continue to be offered. Budget savings would be realized through an open staff position and natural attrition, including the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP).

College Budget Reductions – Two colleges will have their budgets reduced for a total of \$550,000 in savings.

- College of Engineering - \$225,000
State aided funding for graduate assistantships will be reduced.
- College of Arts and Sciences - \$325,000
State aided funding for graduate assistantships will be reduced.

For the remainder of the budget reductions, I am not seeking APC recommendations, but welcome feedback. These reductions will be implemented through administrative actions and efficiencies, as well as a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) for faculty. I am sharing these reductions with the APC in the spirit of full transparency.

Administrative Reductions, Efficiencies, & VSIP	\$17,250,000
Student Life Reduce state-aided funding for positions and administrative expenses	\$850,000
Decrease Unfunded Remissions Reduce remissions through targeted philanthropy to fund scholarships	\$2,500,000
Executive Administrative & Staff Efficiencies Eliminate positions and create greater efficiencies (Chancellor's Office, EVC's Office, Business & Finance)	\$2,690,000
Administrative & Staff Efficiencies in Colleges College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Fine and Performing Arts, College of Journalism and Mass Communications	\$1,100,000
Voluntary Separation Incentive Program for Faculty	\$5,500,000
Recission Reduce all state-aided budgets by approximately 1%	\$4,610,000