Response to Statistics

On behalf of the Executive Leadership Team and data analytics team, the following are responses to questions asked by Statistics faculty regarding the UNL budget reduction process and the metrics that were one part of the process.

- **Metrics one aspect of the budget reduction considerations**
  Per the UNL budget reduction process website, please note the quantitative metrics approach was combined with other qualitative assessments, such as strength of the program, needs of the state, and workforce alignment. Quantitative metrics are one aspect of consideration.

- **Process and expertise in metrics development**
  The metrics analysis part of the UNL budget reduction process was conducted by a team of data analytic professionals, including with graduate-level education and decades of experience working with institutional instructional and research administration data at UNL and other AAU-level institutions. In the metrics development process, feedback was received from UNL campus leaders (Deans, College leadership and Department Executive Officers), as well as the Academic Planning Committee, in Spring 2025. The Academic Planning Committee has also had the opportunity to validate analyses in Fall 2025. At this late stage in the process, the metrics themselves won't be changed.

- **Access to data at the faculty level**
  As the Chancellor has stated at various points in the process, the detailed source system data underlying the metrics calculations cannot all be released in full, given the unprecedented size and complexity of these data. It is also not appropriate to release individual-level data to those beyond their home program or with individuals not holding a supervisory or administrative role with the faculty member's department or college. Much of the raw data is available to Department Executive Officers for their unit, such as through NuRamp, Academic Analytics, PeopleSoft, Watermark's Activity Insights, SAP or HR and financial systems necessary for the operation of a given unit.

- **Academic Analytics Scholarly Research Index (SRI)**
  The SRI was generated for each academic program relative to other AAU public institutions. Importantly, the set of reference institutions for the budget exercise was decidedly other AAU public institutions, an aspirational peer group. This is not the same as the default in Academic Analytics, which is all like programs across institutions of higher education captured in Academic Analytics. The chart distributed at the Board of Regents meeting was SRI relative to all institutions of higher education.

The set of SRI scores across UNL academic programs was converted to Z-scores, as was the case for the other 17 instructional and research metrics included in the budget reduction process. While it is understood that the process of converting to Z-scores does not retain the interpretability of the original SRI for a given program, in terms of where it stands relative to like programs, it does retain the ordering across UNL programs (i.e., those with the highest SRIs relative to like programs will retain the highest Z-scores for this metric). This is a valid use of these data for the specific purpose of the UNL budget reduction metric analyses.

There was a suggestion to consider the SRI percentile rather than index score. While we cannot change the overall metrics at this late stage in the process, we did re-analyze the research metrics replacing SRI with SRI percentile using the AAU public institutions as the aspirational peer group. There is no significant change to the ranked quantitative assessment of programs when using SRI percentile rather than SRI, and there is no change to the departments that ranked in the bottom tier using the quantitative assessment.

- **Jennifer Clarke appointment**
  SAP is the official HR data system for the University of Nebraska, and the official record leveraged to generate faculty appointment data for the purposes of the UNL budget reduction process. As has been pointed out, Jennifer Clarke's appointment in that system has not accounted for a continued appointment in Statistics, along with her appointments in Food Science and Technology and the Agricultural Research Division. The IANR HR team has been made aware of this error and is correcting it.

  In response to Statistics Department concern about this matter, we have reviewed the department research calculations. While we cannot change the overall metrics at this late stage in the process, the changes to the research Z-score would have been .001 lower had Jennifer Clarke's appointment in SAP reflected a .2 FTE appointment in Statistics.

  Additionally, if the authorship on the 2018 book Predictive Statistics, ISBN 9781107028289, had been split between Jennifer Clarke and Bertrand Clarke, the research Z-score would have been .01 lower.

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