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**Academic Planning Committee  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln**

Dear Members of the Academic Planning Committee,  
I am writing to urge you to reconsider the proposed elimination of the Department of Statistics at UNL. Removal of this program would be a significant setback to the future of UNL, its students, and the State of Nebraska.

**Why the Statistics Department Matters?**

The Department of Statistics offers B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. programs. Its mission includes teaching statistical thinking, data analysis, experimental design, technical computing, and supporting quantitative communication — skills that are fundamental across STEM, social sciences, business, agriculture, health, policy, and more. The department serves many other units: numerous majors outside of “Statistics” depend on statistics courses for their core requirements. Cutting the department risks undermining those programs, either by eliminating support or by weakening the quality of statistical instruction.

**Broader Consequences for UNL & Nebraska**

In a data-driven world, demand for quantitative and statistical skills is growing. If UNL abolishes its statistics department, it will reduce its ability to produce graduates and researchers with these in-demand skills. Many state, local, and private sector organizations rely on well-trained statisticians: in transportation engineering, public health, agriculture, environmental modeling, economics, technology, social policy, etc. Eliminating the department weakens the workforce. The removal of this program would damage UNL’s reputation: for research, for graduate education, for interdisciplinary collaboration. Stand-alone departments that anchor quantitative and analytical research are core to being a research university.

**Personal / Institutional Connection**

As a UNL professor and Director of the Mid-America Transportation Center (a federally-funded \$15 million unit), I have observed multiple instances where the Statistics Department has been critical: in collaborating with other departments, in offering essential courses to students across disciplines, in providing statistical consulting, in training graduate students, and in generating research outputs. The

faculty and students in Statistics bring unique expertise that cannot be replicated if the department is eliminated.

### **Recommendation**

I strongly urge the Academic Planning Committee to:

- Preserve the standalone Department of Statistics, with its full suite of degree programs (BS, MS, PhD).
- Maintain or increase support for its faculty, research, and teaching mission.
- Recognize that statistical education is not a “service” add-on but a foundational element in many academic disciplines, and a strategic asset for UNL and the State.
- Explore alternatives that reduce costs without sacrificing the integrity, cohesiveness, and long-term value of the department.

### **Closing**

Eliminating the Department of Statistics will incur real costs in lost reputation, diminished educational quality, weaker research, fewer graduates filling critical roles, and reduced capacity for interdisciplinary collaboration. Nebraska deserves a flagship university that retains its strengths in quantitative disciplines, supports data literacy and research, and prepares students for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of why the Department of Statistics should be preserved. I stand ready to assist in providing more data, testimony, or other support as needed.

Sincerely,



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