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To: Jeff Gold, President, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

I write this letter with regard to the proposed dissolution of the Department of Statistics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I understand that the University is in the midst of a serious financial crisis and that some drastic cost-cutting measures are needed.

However, dismantling a Department of Statistics is surely inappropriate. Statistics departments have been flourishing across the country. They are vital in terms of being at the foundation of Data Science. They bring in more external funding per capita than almost every department on a Liberal Arts campus. They provide support and an invaluable resource for research investigation across the entire institution. They should be viewed as one of the most valued groups on the campus. I can assure you, speaking as a former Department chair and long time faculty member, that this is certainly the perspective of Duke University.

I will not get into my deep concerns with regard to institutional abandonment of tenure. I will only note that, while contractual hiring will perhaps be the future for universities, certainly those who were brought in under a tenure umbrella should maintain that umbrella.

This elimination decision, if enacted, would dismantle a vibrant department that has long served as a cornerstone of fundamental research in Statistics, interdisciplinary research, graduate education, and statistical consulting across the university and beyond. I strongly urge you to reconsider this drastic action.

Sincerely,



Alan E. Gelfand
James B. Duke Professor of Statistical Science and
Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, Nicholas School