

Christopher Bilder

From: Dana Craker <dcraker@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 1:33 PM
To: Bhaskar Bhattacharya
Cc: Christopher Bilder; Erin Blankenship
Subject: 2025 Budget Reduction - Letter of Support

Caution: Non-NU Email

Hi Bhaskar,

I am a 2008 graduate of the UNL Statistics program (receiving my masters). I wanted to pass along the feedback I submitted for the budget discussion (pasted below). Please let me know if I can help in any other way!

Thank you,
Dana Craker

"While I understand universities are under incredible pressure as budgets keep shrinking due to disappearing funding, I cannot understand removing the Department of Statistics at UNL. The field of Statistics applies to literally every other field, making it a foundational area of study. Data is everywhere – continuing to grow at exponential rates – and someone must be able to corral and distill it. Artificial Intelligence is attempting to do so, but it has become increasingly clear that AI needs a lot of monitoring, especially in data fields. We need people with statistical backgrounds to keep it all running and in check!

When I was close to completing my undergraduate degree (in Wisconsin), I was very lucky to have a mentor that planted the seed of going on for my masters degree. And since a previous student of my mentor had gone on to the Statistics program at UNL – and because the program was highly recommended – I travelled out to Lincoln for a short visit to sit in on some classes, meet with program students and impressive faculty, and tour the campus. I was immediately hooked on the program. UW-Madison offered a similar program, and would have been much closer to home, but I felt UNL was the stronger choice. I graduated in 2008 with a Masters of Science in Statistics and am incredibly thankful for the experience. I know I made the right choice, and I cannot thank my professors and mentors enough for all they taught me.

When I graduated, I felt like a kid in a candy shop – I could take my newly acquired skills into literally any industry. I eventually landed in retail marketing. In my first job, even though my co-workers were all data analysts and modelers, none of them had a background in Statistics, so it was rewarding to help improve our processes with more statistically sound methods, improving turnaround timing, accuracy, and insights. In my current role, I am again the only one on the team with a statistical background, making me the subject matter expert for my colleagues when they need to ensure their work is executed correctly. My ability to provide this help is thanks entirely to my education at UNL. And the realization that I am consistently the only one with a statistical background proves the need to not only keep, but grow, this field!

The areas of data analysis, testing, modeling (and everything in between), have only grown since my time at UNL. I know there are even more robust courses and degrees being offered now, and we are going to need those foundations even more in the future. I have been very happy to give back financially to UNL since my graduation because of how much my education there helped me. I do not want other students to miss out on the opportunities I had. Please do not remove this crucial area of study!"