

## Christopher Bilder

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**Subject:** FW: Proposed Closure of Statistics Department at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln)

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**From:** Ilhan Niaz <in1980@qau.edu.pk>

**Sent:** Sunday, September 14, 2025 9:30 AM

**To:** president@nebraska.edu

**Cc:** Chancellor Bennett <chancellorbennett@unl.edu>; Tiffany Heng-Moss <thengmoss2@unl.edu>; Karen Griffin <kgriffin2@unl.edu>; Christopher Bilder <bilder@unl.edu>

**Subject:** Proposed Closure of Statistics Department at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln)

**Caution:** Non-NU Email

Dear President Jeff Gold and senior managers at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln),

I am writing to you with reference to an appeal by Prof. Chris Bilder that I saw on LinkedIn. You might be surprised to learn that while I'm a historian from Islamabad, Pakistan, the news of the proposed closure of the statistics department at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln) has also been making waves on my university's faculty groups and forums. I suspect that this proposal has created a global moment for the University of Nebraska (Lincoln), albeit one in which its decision-making does not seem consistent with the pursuit of learning for which the institution is otherwise known for.

It is perhaps symptomatic of our times that academics, researchers, teachers, artists, writers, and nearly anyone who is engaged in applying their minds to the advancement of knowledge and the generation of human perspectives, must now defend their vocation on the grounds of economic or administrative efficiency.

As strange as it sounds for a traditionally descriptive discipline like history, but the study of statistics is one of the vital elements in our understanding of how human societies have evolved. You might be familiar with Paul Kennedy's now classic study *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* or Peter Turchin's *Ages of Discord* (a structural and demographic analysis of US history), or any number of other works that deal with economic history (like Piketty's *Capital in the 21st Century*). These historical or philosophical studies draw upon statistical information and concepts to explain our past, our present, and our future.

My own mathematics skills are rudimentary but thanks to countless statisticians, many of them based at universities and public sector organizations, and many more who produce vital work in the public domain, I can draw upon a range of insights that strengthen my discipline in numerous ways. I sincerely hope that your university will reconsider the proposed departmental closure and keep the statistics program going.

With best wishes,

Ilhan Niaz

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